



Photo by Paul Smith

Western Great Lakes Region FAN UPDATE

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So Long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, Goodnight!

In the musical ***The Sound of Music*** the Von Trapp children make an appropriate exit after their last performance in Austria departing with this special farewell song. As I approach my last few days before retiring from the Ruffed Grouse Society I want to echo these words to all the folks that had made the last 14 ½ years with the Society special, at least for me.

After 36 in the wildlife field I felt it was the appropriate time to step back and enjoy life and my family a little more. I won't be a stranger though and plan to

do some wildlife consulting in Northeastern Wisconsin and continue my work on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Board. I have several important things on my personal to-do list that have been neglected for far too long and still have a few goals that I would like to accomplish someday.

Without a doubt I have worked with many fine folks along the way. The staff of Federal, state and county land management departments, industry, foundations and state and local associations that have partnered with the Society to improve habitat and recreational hunting opportunities for our members as well as state and federal legislators who have reached out to work with the Society.

Ruffed Grouse Society staff, some of whom are no longer with the Society, and those folks currently on staff. Though only a few in number compared to some of the other national conservation organizations, your RGS staff is very passionate about what they do and work hard to do things the right way. I especially want to thank those staff biologists Andy Weik, Linda Ordiway, Eric Ellis, and Ted Dick, the MN forest game bird coordinator, who put up with me as their supervisor (and as a liaison to Ted's position) and who continue to do great things for the Society and its members. I get special joy in hearing and seeing all the good things these folks have accomplished in their regions on your behalf.

Though I could highlight each RGS staff member I just want to also especially thank two who I work very closely with. Dan Dessecker, Director of Conservation policy, who took a chance and offered me the Regional Biologist position with the Society back in 2000 and has remained a sounding board and mentor for me over all these years. Dan is returning at least in the interim as the supervisor of the biologists program, a role he held for many years, in addition to his other duties.

I also need to make special mention of Dave "Swede" Johnson, the Regional Director who I have spent most of my years with. As many of you know Swede is very passionate about the work he does which is infectious to say the least. He has kept me going through rough times and clearly goes above and beyond the call of duty to do his best for the Society and its mission.

Lastly, I need to especially thank all the Chapter committee folks as well as the dedicated members of RGS who have pushed me to work hard for them. The dedication and passion all of you have is what makes working for RGS special. I will miss that and miss all of you. Thank you so much for all the support you have personally given me over the past 14 ½ years and thank you for the notes, kind words, gifts and farewells at several recent RGS events. I wish all of you the best and may this fall's hunts be your best ever.

I have certainly been “living the dream”, working for 36 years in a field related to one of my main hobbies. Hope to see many of you again in the grouse and woodcock woods where we can enjoy sharing our stories about the great times we continue to have carrying the passion on to those that follow us. And as the song by the Von Trapp Family ended, so do I, “Goodbye, Goodbye, Goodbye”.

Gary

Ruffed Grouse Society Donates \$45,755 to Support Habitat and Trails Projects in Wisconsin

MADISON (DNR Release) -- Eleven habitat and trail projects will be conducted across Wisconsin thanks to a \$45,755 from the Ruffed Grouse Society that the state Natural Resources Board accepted at its meeting Wednesday in Madison.



DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp presents a plaque acknowledging a \$45,755 donation from the Ruffed Grouse Society for habitat and trail projects in Wisconsin to Jim Shurts, president of the John Keener Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society.

WDNR Photo

The Ruffed Grouse Society is dedicated to the preservation of the sporting tradition by creating healthy forest habitat for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other wildlife. The Society is donating the \$45,755 from its

Wisconsin Drummer Fund Program, the largest amount of funding and most projects funded since the organization started the fund in 2010.

"We are grateful for our continued partnership with Ruffed Grouse Society and the great restoration work made possible through donations like this," said Department of Natural Resources Deputy Secretary Kurt Thiede.

This donation will help fund the following projects in Wisconsin:

- Lower Wolf River Bottoms alder regeneration;
 - Radley Creek alder and aspen regeneration;
 - Sawyer County State Wildlife Areas trails and openings management;
 - Flambeau River St. Forest hunter walking trail;
 - Eldorado Marsh State Wildlife Area opening management;
 - Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership;
 - White River Wildlife Area disabled hunter trails;
 - Pete DeFoure County Forest Unit oak savanna maintenance;
 - Cylon Wildlife Area alder regeneration; and
 - Marathon County alder regeneration.
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Willow Flowage Area - 15-year Master Plan Review

Call for Action – Comments Needed by June 18th

The Department of Natural Resources is seeking public comment on a review of the Willow Flowage Scenic Waters Area Master Plan. Citizen involvement is encouraged and the public is invited to share their thoughts and suggestions about current and future management of this popular public property. Though a primary feature of this area is the 6,400 acre flowage there is approximately 20,000 acres of upland habitat surrounding the flowage, much of it with a large aspen component and off road hunting opportunities.

The Department of Natural Resources encourages citizen involvement and invites you to share your thoughts and suggestions about current and future management of this popular public property. The review process will assess the adequacy of the current master plan. Findings and recommendations will be

reported to the Natural Resources Board for final determination and approval of changes or revisions if needed.

The DNR will be holding a Public Meeting on this process on June 4, 2015 from 3-6 p.m. at the Nokomis Town Hall, 2541 Lake Nokomis Road, Tomahawk, Wis.

Complete information, maps and documents, or to comment online visit: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/MasterPlanning/WillowFlow/>. To send written and email comments, request print materials or comment forms please contact: Bob Dall, WDNR, 107 Sutliff Ave., Rhinelander, WI 54501 (715-365-8993) Robert.dall@wisconsin.gov . For questions contact: Tom Shockley, Willow Flowage Property Manager DNR Service Center, 8770 Highway J, Woodruff, WI 54568 (715-356-5211) or email at tom.shockley@wisconsin.gov .

Potential comments could include your thoughts on the following:

- 1) Maintaining the high component of young forest habitat especially aspen on the area for game and non-game species.
- 2) Maintaining large areas that would be available for non-motorized recreational pursuits including walk in hunting experiences.
- 3) Manage a significant amount of the aspen acreage in small blocks of different age classes to promote habitat for ruffed grouse.
- 4) Management to promote ruffed grouse and woodcock brings in hunters from all over the country to pursue these birds each fall and adds to the area's economy.

June 15 – Last Day to Sign-up for 2015 WI Coverts Project

The next Wisconsin Coverts Project workshop targeting private landowners with an interest in managing their lands with a wildlife emphasis will be held August 13 through 16 at the Kemp Natural Resources Station near Woodruff, Wisconsin. These three-day sessions have had rave reviews from past attendees that have become Covert Cooperators through past workshops and are open to folks from Illinois, Upper Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Now starting its 21st year, 610 cooperators have attended past workshops. Sharing with others what they have learned these Coverts Cooperators have influenced the management of over 825,000 acres of land in the region. This workshop is highly recommended for those landowners interested in better understanding their role as stewards of their property. For additional information on the workshop contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or by email at jlneck@wisc.edu . Attendance is limited. More information is available on the Coverts Project website at http://forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu/wl_extension/wicovertsproject.html . Deadline for applications is June 15.

Open House and Compartment Review for Baraga Forest Management Unit

The Michigan DNR will host an open house on June 23, 2015 and seek public comment on proposed forest management activities for the 2017 Year-of-Entry compartments on the Baraga Forest Management Unit. The open house will be held from 3 P.M. to 7 P.M. at the DNR Baraga Customer Service Center at 427 US 41 North, Baraga, MI. Compartments under this review are located in Baraga, Houghton, Ontonagon and Keweenaw Counties.

A formal compartment review to finalize proposed management activities for these areas is scheduled for July 14, 2015 beginning at 9:30 AM at the Baraga Customer Service Center. Maps and write-ups can be accessed on the DNR web page (www.michigan.gov/dnr) under Forestry, Your State Forests, Annual Compartment Review Process, 15 Forest Management Units, Baraga, YOE 2017. Copies are also available form Brad Carlson at 906-353-6651.

Michigan DNR Produces Map for Morel Hunters

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has produced an [interactive map](#) that highlights the state's 2014 wildfires and prescribed burns – each more than 10 acres in size – to help mushroom hunters in their quest for morels.

“Morel mushrooms are often found in locations where large fires occurred the

previous year,” explained Paul Kollmeyer, resource protection manager for the DNR Forest Resources Division. “We’ve created this map to give our customers the information they are looking for in a mobile-friendly, easily accessible package.”

The DNR’s interactive Mi-Morels map provides forest covertype information, latitude and longitude coordinates, and state land boundary information.

Morel mushrooms commonly sprout in locations burned by wildfires or prescribed burns with a forested cover type; grass or sunlit open settings are less likely to produce the tasty fungi.

“While the map may provide details on the cover type that was burned, it's up to the user to investigate whether morel mushrooms are growing at any location on the map,” Kollmeyer said. “Just because a spot is marked on the map, it doesn’t mean morels will be growing at the area identified. We’re providing a resource, but it’s up to the hunters to head out to the forest and see what’s available.

“Whether you find morels, a day spent walking in the woods, enjoying the spring beauty, is a day well spent.”

The information and data in the map on burn locations, state forest cover type, and state land boundaries are available for users to interact with and download via the [DNR Open Data portal](#). This site gives the citizens and public land users of Michigan access to Michigan DNR spatial data and information.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is not responsible for the incorrect identification of morel mushrooms. [For more information on safe mushroom hunting, visit the DNR’s website.](#)

Upcoming RGS Events in the Region

May 30 – Habitat Work Day on the Eagle River/Florence Ranger District of the Cheq/Nicolet National Forest. Contact Dave Bartz at 920-743-6004 for info.

June 15 - Sign Up Deadline for 2015 WI Coverts Workshops

August 13 to 16 – 2015 WI Coverts Workshop, Kemp Natural Resource Station, Woodruff, WI. Contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or email at jlnack@wisc.edu.

August 15 – Park Falls Chapter Habitat Work Day. Contact Jim Teal at 715-339-4346 for info.

August 19 – 37th Annual Twin Cities Habitat Banquet at the Earle Browne Heritage Center, Brooklyn Center, MN. Contact Tim Tordoff at 605-670-8360 for info.

August 22 – 23rd Annual Iowa Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet at the Holiday Inn, Dubuque, IA. Contact Eric Van Hook at 319-361-2827 for info.

Reminder

To insure that you continue to receive timely FAN updates, please notify me of changes in your email address.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions:
Gary Zimmer, Sally B. Searle Coordinating Biologist,
Ruffed Grouse Society
PO Box 116, Laona WI 54541 Phone: (715) 674-7505
Email: garyz@ruffedgrousesociety.org

The Ruffed Grouse Society is North America's foremost conservation organization dedicated to preserving our sporting traditions by creating healthy forests for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other wildlife. For information on the Ruffed Grouse Society, please call 888-564-6747 or check out the RGS website at www.ruffedgrousesociety.org.