



Ruff Country News Minnesota

Winter Edition December 2016

Meadow Kouffeld and Ted Dick



Butch, a 9.5 year old setter belonging to Marty Niewind of Grand Rapids, MN waits for the flush and shot. Hunting over aging gun dogs reminds us of how precious each grouse and woodcock season truly is.

Season's Greetings from the snowy Northwoods. The 2016 bird seasons are sadly winding down following what was a very warm fall. The first major snow event here dumped 18 inches in Grand Rapids on November 18, but surprisingly most of it melted within 10 days. In general the grouse hunting for many people was pretty good-better than 2015; we hope it was for you. One

definitive measure of hunting success comes from the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt. Hunters there killed 17% more grouse than they did last year; an increase that matched up nicely with the increase shown in the Minnesota Drumming Survey.

In this edition of the *Ruff Country News Minnesota* we have some important updates

on major habitat projects including our receipt of \$250,000 for woodcock and grouse habitat enhancement across the state. And we are also proud of the recent addition of a \$2,400,000 acquisition partnership with Minnesota Deer Hunters Association in St. Louis County to go along with a similar \$3,600,000 project in Cass and Hubbard

Counties. That's \$6,250,000 in 2016-a very good year for grouse hunters in Minnesota. So throw a log on the fire, kick back, relax with your favorite bird dogs and read them the stories about better grouse hunting to come. **And thank you for supporting the Ruffed Grouse Society.** -TED

RGS Receives Conservation Partners Legacy Grant for Habitat

In the fall edition of the *Ruff Country News Minnesota*, we told you about a grant application RGS submitted for ruffed grouse and woodcock habitat enhancement. Since then we've been notified that the project proposal was funded for the entire amount: \$230,000. Adding matching funds from your Minnesota Drummer Fund, project management by RGS personnel and letters of support from cooperators (MDHA, Woodcock

MN) brings the total value of the project to \$270,000!

The plan is to divide the money into several different projects spread across the forested part of the state over the next three years. Following is a list of some of the projects and locations:

General Location	\$ Allotment	Description
Grand Rapids Area	36,000	Woodcock roosting areas mowing and brush setback
North Shore	30,000	Brush regeneration on Superior National Forest
Roseau	30,000	Brush regeneration
Whitewater WMA	35,000	Aspen harvest-disturbance/young forest creation
Tower	16,000	Woodcock roosting area mowing/brush regeneration
Bemidji	30,000	Woodcock roosting area mowing/brush regeneration
Park Rapids	30,000	Brush Regeneration
Carlos Avery WMA	10,000	Young Forest Enhancement

For you members in the Twin Cities area, you can see that we have a project at Carlos Avery in Anoka County and we're excited to have a new project in southeast Minnesota near Rochester on the Whitewater Wildlife Management Area. We had another in the works with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on

the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge near Carver but we ran into some delays there and had to remove it from the grant. Hopefully we can find another way to work there.

Minnesota hunters are fortunate in that a tremendous amount of grouse habitat gets

created through regular timber harvest. As Dan Dessecker would say: "Simply put: grouse habitat creation is trees on trucks". But we also know that we can greatly improve forests for grouse and woodcock by manipulating the alder/willow edges where they like to live. These types of mechanical enhancements are some of the best ways we know of to improve habitat conditions outside of our regularly

occurring, properly designed, timber harvests. We will also coordinate with habitat assessment biologists to monitor use by young forest species like woodcock both before and after treatment on some sites. We hope to start some of these projects as soon as ground conditions allow and we'll have pictures and more updates as the work gets done.

RGS Included in Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis Stakeholder Advisory Group

During November 2016, the DNR, Governor Dayton and the forest industry were in conversations regarding concerns with the current supply of timber, rising timber prices and the impact to wood mills in Minnesota. The Governor has committed "to do everything we can to support the industry during this critical time." The outcome is that the Governor has provided immediate direction to DNR to analyze the impacts of a potential increase in harvest on state lands to meet 1 million cords per year. Currently the state is hiring an outside consultant to analyze

the feasibility of such an increase. In addition, the MN DNR has developed a Sustainable Timber Harvest Analysis Stakeholder Advisory Group to provide professional input during this analysis process. The Minnesota regional biologist, Meadow Kouffeld, was selected as one of a handful of professionals to give input on potential increases in timber harvests on state land, impacts to user groups, and long term sustainability and impacts. The first meeting will take place December 20, 2016 in St. Paul, MN.

Upcoming Events: Pheasant Fest, Minneapolis, MN.

February 17-19, 2017: The National Pheasant Fest and Quail Classic will be taking place in Minneapolis this year! The Ruffed Grouse Society will be manning a booth at the event and look forward to getting a chance to meet members and non-members alike. This event is a great opportunity to get our message out to thousands of upland game bird enthusiasts.

This event is sure to be a fun one with vendors from around the nation, a broad spectrum of conservation organizations, demonstrations, and, of course, lots of dogs. We hope to see you there.

Thank You!

RGS will continue to work to improve our forests for ruffed grouse and woodcock as well as promote the future of hunting. Don't forget, if you are looking for a gift for someone on your list but aren't sure what to get them... consider the gift of membership! They get the magazines and membership and you contribute by bringing a new member to the fold and support grouse and woodcock!



A pointer pup enjoys the warmth of a wood fire at Pineridge Grouse Camp. Photo courtesy of Jerry Havel.

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