



RD Chatter

December 2008

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New Banquet Incentive Program

Fall Update

As the fall banquet season winds down, RGS is ending the year in a stronger financial situation than many other wildlife conservation organizations – thanks to your hard work! So far this year a total of 90 banquets were held, and 21 met or exceeded their 15% growth target and raised more than \$25,700 for local projects.

***Tailfeathers* Membership Drive Initiated**

In an effort to enlist its current members to help RGS grow, a unique membership drive has been initiated. It's called *Tailfeathers* and is a brand new program for 2009. For signing up a certain number of new members, current members will have the opportunity to receive a unique RGS thank-you and a ticket for a special raffle. *Tailfeather* rules and guidelines will be released this coming spring – so stay posted!

Dream Hunt Raffle Sales Receive Boost

Committees and Regional Directors Partner to Sell Tickets

Members can now raise money for their chapter projects by selling RGS National raffle tickets – a benefit to both their chapter and RGS! This year's raffle is the Upland Bird Dream Hunt, and tickets are \$50.00.

Regional Directors will be partnering with their committees to increase ticket sales in the upcoming months. For every ticket a chapter member sells, \$5.00 will be added to the funds of a local habitat project. The project to receive the funds will be selected by the chapter – with RGS giving final approval before dispersing funds. To participate in this rebate offer contact your Regional Director.

Win an Upland Bird Dream Hunt
October 2-10, 2009

**The Ruffed Grouse Society
 2008-2009 National Raffle**

First Place
 A week long, all-expense-paid trip consisting of two guided upland bird hunts for the winner and guest. Travel from October 2 to 10. Start at Bear Paw Mountain Outfitters in Havre, Montana and hunt for sharp-tail grouse and Hungarian partridge from October 3 to 5. Join the RGS National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota from October 6 to 9.
 Both first place winner and guest will receive an SKB model 785 over-and-under shotgun. Each SKB will have a commemorative RGS logo medallion on the receiver, and is available in 20- or 28-gauge, with 26- or 28- inch barrels. The SKB has a retail value of \$2399.00
 All transportation included. Hunting dates are final. Approximate retail value of total package: \$18,000.

Second Place
 The second winner will receive a \$1,000.00 Cabela's gift certificate.

Third Place
 The third place winner will receive a custom-fitted pair of upland hunting boots from Russell Moccasin. Approximate retail value: \$400.00.

Winners will be drawn on June 30, 2009 at RGS headquarters in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania.
 To purchase raffle tickets call 1-888-564-6747.
 Donation for each ticket is \$50.00.
 Only 2500 tickets to be sold.

RGS Co-Recipient of State Forester's Association Award

RGS was recently honored for efforts to increase the importance of forest management and stewardship opportunities for forest landowners in the 2008 Farm Bill legislation.

At its annual meeting in Hyannis, Massachusetts, the National Association of State Foresters announced member organizations of the Forests in the Farm Bill Coalition as recipients of the 2008 Stan Adams Current Achievement Award for Partnerships.

The Forests in the Farm Bill Coalition, of which RGS is a partner organization, was formed specifically to increase opportunities for America's private forest landowners to access cost-share and other management assistance via the 2008 Farm Bill programs. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) of the new Farm Bill now explicitly supports those forest management practices compatible with environmental quality and that provide economic and environmental benefits to the larger society, including the retention of nationally scarce young-forest habitat.

"This award clearly demonstrates the value of partnering with those who share a common interest and philosophy with regard to the need to manage our forests in a sustainable, ecologically sound manner in order to maximize both wildlife and economic benefits," said RGS Executive Director and CEO Mike Zagata.

The 2008 Adams award was presented to Becky Carter of The Nature Conservancy, who accepted the honor on behalf of the entire Forests in the Farm Bill Coalition, which includes over 30 organizations.

RGS Biologist to Advise New England Forestry Foundation

RGS Northeast Regional Wildlife Biologist Paul Karczmarczyk was recently elected to a seat on the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) Board of Advisors.

Karczmarczyk will join other regional experts in the fields of natural resources, forest industry, economics and business management in aiding NEFF with their mission of working with private and community landowners to insure that working forests remain a viable part of the New England landscape.

In 2006, RGS and NEFF formally signed a Memorandum of Understanding that partnered the two organizations in jointly providing technical expertise on wildlife habitat management and the formulation of conservation easements to interested forest landowners. Between 2003 and 2006, the organizations were joint recipients of substantial funding from the USDA Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program to carry out habitat treatments on numerous NEFF community forests.

"NEFF's forward-looking approach to resource conservation, and willingness to manage their lands in a way that diversifies and balances habitat needs of all wildlife using them, sets a forest stewardship standard I'd love to see other land trusts in the Northeast follow," said RGS biologist Paul Karczmarczyk.

The New England Forestry Foundation maintains over 130 community forests, and additionally holds over 120 conservation easements which affect more than 1.1 million acres of working forestland throughout the northeast. Information on NEFF can be found on their website at: www.neforestry.org.

National Forest Law BLOG Created

An online log on national forest law was created by Ryan Woody of Matthiesen, Wickert & Lehrer, S.C. To read current developments in the ever-changing landscape of National Forest laws and regulations, visit www.nationalforestlawblog.com.



RGS Travel

RGS members and others may now book their travel needs through RGS. As a means of expanding and diversifying RGS' income stream, the Society is now in the travel business with its own websites, www.RGSTravel.org or www.RGSTravel.com. Both will take you to the same website that will appear in your browser address window as: <http://www.ytb-travel.com/ruffedgrousesociety>.

The site is maintained by YTB Travel network and powered by World Choice, a segment of Travelocity.com.

RGS Grows Habitat Management Machinery Program

RGS has secured two additional CAT machines, equipped with cutting implements for habitat management, and now has three units working in the East to create grouse and woodcock habitat. Plans to obtain at least two more units for the Midwest in the near future are being pursued.

Follow up: First Timber Sale Results Will Benefit RGS Capital Campaign

The Richard King Mellon Foundation funded a land purchase whereby the Western PA Conservancy generously gave RGS the right to harvest timber, appraised at five million dollars on 2,300 acres of land in Pennsylvania, in a manner consistent with creating grouse habitat. The first timber sale has been let for \$127,000 on 85 acres. Funds raised from the timber sale will also go toward the RUFF Campaign, a capital fund-raising effort to endow RGS biologists.

REGIONAL NEWS

Your regional **NEWS** updates.

Please Forward this on to your friends. If you have someone that wishes to receive this, have them e-mail me their address.

Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to post information that fits with this newsletter.

There are many events around the state in which to take part. Again it is difficult for RGS to mail a flyer out to everyone in the state, so please check the website for events around the state: ruffedgrousesociety.org

Proposed Winter Events

Southwestern Michigan Chapter – Kalamazoo, MI - Will be hosting a Pheasant Hunt at Willow Lake: 6 birds, 2 guns in January. Look for the information on the website later in December. They are also planning a parent and youth hunt in February.

Michiana Chapter – Michigan City, IN – Will host their annual sportsman's banquet & memorial pheasant shoot on Saturday, February 7, 2009. Look for the information on the website later in December.

Chapter Workshops

Coming up next month at the Ralph A. MacMullan Center, the chapters will be gathering for their annual workshop to discuss a series of topics and issues. It is made up of representatives from all the state chapters in Lower Michigan. Because of the diversity of the state, the Upper Peninsula will host their workshop in February.

This has become a very informative and useful tool for chapters to exchange ideas and voice concerns in an open forum.

Fall Grouse Hunting Reports

The fall season is coming to an end and in the North Country the snow is already covering the ground that could make the December season shorter than we would like.

I always survey each year for grouse and woodcock reports from our members around the state. This year was a mixed bag of comments on the woodcock season. Many found numerous birds, but they seemed to come through at varying degrees of flights, with many others including myself finding very few birds, with most being locals. The grouse reports, on the other hand, were very good with reports of numbers being as good as last year to extremely good in other areas. People reported the U.P. of Michigan seemed to have a significant increase. Let us hope that this trend will continue. Below are pictures from some great fall days afield as well as actual reports.



Grouse & Woodcock reports from around the state!!

"I would have to say that my dog is a woodcock dog. She is a poor grouse dog but we did get a few. I did not see the numbers of grouse that others did but more than last season. It seems like the grouse were in specific areas and not as many of them in other spots. My dog pointed just dozens of woodcock and I shot limits everyday. I sure don't think there is a shortage of them. Maybe my next dog will be a true grouse dog that is capable of pinning those damn birds down. Here is a good photo of my setter Molly and one of those grey rockets."

"I think grouse numbers have flattened out after the bounce year of 2006. I suspect our peak will not be reached until after 2010 which in a way is good news as we have that many more years of upswing hunting ahead of us. That being said, I've one special dog right now and he puts birds in front of the gun with regularity. I've shot as well as ever and put a few in the bag. Attached are a couple pics from my grouse camp the first week of November."

"We shot a lot of woodcock, twenty two in the Upper Peninsula near Gwinn, but due to inept gun handling, not too many grouse, six. The weekend of November 1st had me hunting off of Howard Road in your backyard! I managed six woodies and two grouse on the east side of the road. All in all I heard more grouse than I have in the past ten years but really didn't get many good opportunities to shoot, just typical grouse conditions."

"Grouse numbers seem up this year and hunter's WAY down. Last year was the first year the gal from WI published the book for my hunting area. So this year the area is no longer "new" and of course the economy hasn't been really great. I hunt in the Evert state forest block so it is not too far from Lansing, GR, etc. So I was bit surprised. On the woodcock front, I think I had my best year. Numbers seemed slightly better than last year or I'm getting better at finding them. I have been a serious bird hunter only for a couple of years so I'm still learning"

"I only got up to Grayling once this year but had great hunting all three days (aside from a porcupine encounter...) It was my dog Blaze's first grouse/woodcock trip, so most of the time was spent working with him and not shooting busted points - but we moved a couple dozen grouse per day and several woodcock, which were likely still local birds."

"I did not see as many grouse this year as expected. Seemed to be about the same as last year. A lot more woodcock, though. All in the Roscommon/Mason Tract area. "

"My hunts were generally limited to one 160 acre parcel in Antrim County. During the woodcock migration it was not unusual to encounter a dozen birds in two hours. The same parcel was also producing five to ten grouse flushes per two hours of hunting "

"Overall impressions are that this was a solid season, better then '07, but not as good as '06. I hunted hard in five different counties. I found that some areas that avoided massive amounts of mid-June rain that brought record flooding had birds, but you could move down the road just five miles and find very few birds in similar habitat. The flooding in June had impact on the birds that is for sure. Overall it was a "good" season but not "great" - I would take years like this every year though. The weather played a factor again this year, at times we had heat that we could not hunt in. Weather in '06 was perfect with rain every week and the coolest Sept. I can remember. Cover was thick and lush with large amounts of berries this season. This concentrated birds in November and it was either feast or starve for the hunters.

I was and remain encouraged by the amount of clearcutting taking place on state forests in the counties I hunt; and I was pleased that for the first time in my life I found some brand new cuttings on the Manistee National Forest around the Pere Marquette River in Mason County."

"Good numbers this year!"

Fall Banquets & Events Wrap Up

Grand Rapids Chapter – Grand Rapids, MI – Hosted their 27th annual banquet (last Wednesday of August) at Noto's. The banquet exceeded last year's net and one lucky youth took home a Ruger Red Label donated by an anonymous member.

Le Grand Traverse Chapter – Traverse City, MI – Hosted their 31st annual banquet, (imagine 31 years) and moved to a new location, Great Wolf Lodge, and day. Moving to the 2nd Saturday of September proved to be the right thing to do with increased attendance. In fact, it filled the facility to capacity. One of the chapter's largest banquets. Hugh McMaster was presented the "Sportsman of the Year Award" by the chapter and also awarded for his ten plus years of serving on the committee. Paul Fisher was awarded his Ten Year Award.

Southeast Michigan Chapter – Detroit, MI – Hosted their 31st annual banquet the 3rd Tuesday of Sept., (another land mark). Moving to a new location, Laurel Manor in Livonia, MI, proved to be the right move. With the new facility and with exceptional services, the banquet was a success. The chapter presented Keith Charters the "Sportsman of the Year Award". Also receiving an award was Steve Graebner for his "Ten Year Award" serving on the committee.

Mid U.P. Chapter – Marquette, MI – Hosted their 19th annual banquet (last Thursday of Sept.). The banquet was a great success with increased attendance and sponsors. A scholarship award was presented to a graduate student at Northern Michigan University for his continued studies in the environmental department.

North Woods Chapter – Crystal Falls/Iron Mtn, MI – Hosted their 4th annual banquet (1st Thursday of October) at the George Young Recreation Center. This has turned into a destination banquet for grouse hunters from across the country that are in the area hunting. They now are having reservations from RGS members made a year in advance.

Thunder Bay Chapter – Alpena, MI – Hosted their 6th Annual Steak Fry at the Doctor's Hunt Club on Wednesday, October 22. This has become a holiday for most in and out of the area; where all meet at day's end to share stories, renew old friendships, and plan the next hunt. Cocktails are available and a great steak dinner is prepared by the chapter committee, with some fun auctions and raffles, as their dogs reign king over the night's event.

RGS Michigan Gun Dog of the Year Results

This event has become one of the premier events in the state. These participants are your member's personal hunting dogs that compete in local chapter fun trials. The top four gun dogs that place at each local trial are then invited to compete in this trial. A total of 28 dogs were invited this year; with 24 competing. Below are the winners and results. Each year one of the chapters takes over as the host. This year's hosting chapter was the Jim Foote Chapter, Gaylord, MI. Scott Steele was the event chair. Great job, Scott!!!

This was held at Montney Farms in Clare, MI, owned & operated by Al Montney, a fellow member. Thank You, Al !!

All participants and volunteers should receive an award for having the fortitude to deal with the miserable weather on that day. As the saying is told – "grouse hunters are the toughest hunters in the woods."

Placements:

1st Place – Rip / EP - Owner Paul Fisher

2nd Place – Sadie / GSP – Owner Chris Ritter

3rd Place – Abby / GSP – Owner Scott Steele

4th Place – Hilde / Lab – Owner Fritz Heller

Judges: David Lloyd & Ken Moss



****Christmas Gift to a Hunting Buddy****

2008/2009 RGS Upland Bird Dream Hunt Raffle

(For every ticket a chapter member sells, \$5.00 will be added to the funds of a local chapter habitat project)

First Place Prize - All Expense Paid Trip for Two to hunt from October 3-5, 2009 for sharptail grouse and Hungarian partridge at Bear Paw Mountain Outfitters in Havre, Montana followed by participation in the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota from October 6-9. Both hunters also receive an SKB model 1785 o/u shotgun. Approximate value of package: \$18,000.

Second Place Prize - \$1,000 Cabela's Gift Certificate

Third Place Prize - Custom fitted pair of upland hunting boots from Russell Moccasin Co. Approximate value of boots: \$400.

Donation for Tickets are \$50 each, with winners drawn on June 30, 2009.

To Purchase Raffle Tickets Contact: Doug Doherty

at 231-549-5063 or rgdrrd@centurytel.net or mail the following to:

03695 Cobb Rd, Boyne Falls, MI 49713

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

Tickets @ \$50.00 Each = \$ _____ Total Enclosed

CHECK (Payable to RGS) CASH CREDIT CARD

Please do NOT mail CASH!

CC# _____

Exp. Date _____

Billing Address _____

Billing Zip _____

Signature _____

Wishing all of you Safe & Happy Holidays

“MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL”

Thank you for your continued support!!!

**Douglas R. Doherty
Regional Director
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