



Western Great Lakes Newsletter

National News

Winter 2009

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Have you seen us lately?

Brand New Website Generates Growing Interest

RGS recently launched a complete revision of our website, www.ruffedgrousesociety.org. News updates, regional sporting events, exciting raffles and detailed information about habitat work are now in a format that is easier to read, navigate and explore. Great RGS merchandise, along with special deals on high-end shotguns, are available by clicking the "Shop RGS" tab on the homepage. Check us out today – and take your grouse hunting to the next level.

Centurion Member Wins Kimber

Charles Hulbert of Tewksbury, Massachusetts recently became a Centurion member and won a Kimber Valier Grade II shotgun.

For every 10 new Centurions that join the Ruffed Grouse Society a raffle is held and a Kimber – or comparable shotgun – is awarded to the winner. To learn about becoming a Centurion, which begins at the \$1,000 donation level, call our membership department at 412-262-4044.

2010 National Raffle

Win a CT 28 Gauge Shotgun. The Shotgun that Winchester Made Famous, "Baby Frame"

This one of a kind gun features 28" barrels, choked IC/M with two beads, a straight English stock crafted from AAA fancy feathercrotch walnut to a checkered butt, and a 14 ½" LOP. The approximate retail value is \$32,000.

If you're interested in a chance to win this gun, tickets are \$100.00 and can be purchased through your local Regional Director or by contacting RGS headquarters at 412-262-4044. Up to 1,500 tickets will be sold.

Last year's National Raffle winner, James Farrell, won the upland bird dream hunt, which included attending the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota this past October.

New England Wildlife Biologist Joins RGS Team

Andrew P. Weik joined the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) as New England regional wildlife biologist, and will begin his work in the new year. Weik will be responsible for implementing on-the-ground forest management, landowner and land manager education programs throughout New England.

Weik's extensive experience includes five years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Northeast Region at Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge. Moosehorn is the only national wildlife refuge dedicated to woodcock management. His work at Moosehorn, along with his lengthy work history in various wildlife programs, makes Weik a superior fit for the RGS position.

One specific project that Weik hopes to see through to conclusion this year is the revision of the RGS publication, "A Woodcock in the Hand" (Sepik, 1994). The booklet is unique in that it details tips on examining, aging, and sexing American woodcock as well as information on population monitoring and conservation. Though currently out of print, the need and interest in the booklet have not waned.

RD Message

The fall fundraising season in my territory was certainly not without some elements of drama. We began with the Annual Sponsor shoot held by the Green Bay, WI. Chapter on July 31st, and concluding with the Wisconsin Rendezvous held at Boyd's Resort in Fifield, WI. on October 16-18. In between we battled the weather, 80 degrees for the Hayward hunt/shoot on Sept 12th to 10" of snow in the Western U.P. on Oct 22nd, and the economy. All told grouse numbers were up slightly in some areas to significantly up in still others. Just this past week I had the opportunity to talk to several grouse hunters who related stories to me regarding flush counts in some areas of over 5 birds an hour. Some of their best days out in years! On the financial side, some banquets showed significant increases in sponsors and revenue, others held their own, and still a few showed declines. Most of those declining were in areas heavily dependent on the auto or construction industry. Some bright spots existed territory wide and I'm really looking forward to next year!!

I'm currently working on re-forming chapters in Rochester, Mn., Eau Claire, WI., Rhinelander/Tomahawk, WI., and Winchester/Manitowish Waters, WI. If you'd like to join our efforts please call or contact me by e-mail. With the current financial situation in most states, volunteer fund raising groups like RGS can make the difference in wildlife habitat work.

Now a little political diatribe; Recently I've talked to many people who have related the poor deer numbers to the growing wolf population. I don't have data or an opinion about that issue, but I do have strong feelings about the lack of timber management happening on federal and state lands. Currently the Ottawa National Forest that encompasses 1.1 million acres, has one active logging operation. The forest plan for the Ottawa calls for 90 MBF of timber harvest per year. They are on target this year for 35MBF. About 1/3 of their goal. In a few years the harvest number in the plan will increase to about 130 MBF!! When we look at the decline in early succession species and the cause of the decline, data clearly points to the lack of habitat, directly relating to the decline in timber harvest, for that decline.

Recently the Ironwood Daily Globe published an article from the Sierra Club highlighting their concern over the growing shortage of biomass for a variety of proposed projects in the Great Lakes Region. Excel Energy has proposed converting a second boiler at the Ashland, WI. generating facility to wood byproducts. Flambeau River Papers of Park Falls, WI., has implemented a plan to generate 20 million gallons of cellulosic ethanol per year to be energy independent, while using waste from the paper making process. Another positive note is Flambeau River Papers operation also has a positive carbon impact of 140,000 tons per year and uses 30% recycled fiber for their operation.

The perceived fiber shortage is a creation of the publicity arm of the "Greens" and is designed to cause the uneducated public to react negatively to these plans when brought before a public hearing. Nothing could be farther from the truth. There are huge backlogs of logging sales on federal forests, all being held up by challenges from a variety of environmental groups.

A large number of small mills have closed in the region over the past decade with more to come, as the supply of forest products tightens further. Currently, to implement a logging project on federal land it takes nearly six years from conception to implementation. On the local level, that time frame drops to as little as thirty days. In the event of a natural disaster like a tornado, on county or private land, clean up can begin immediately. On federal land it can be years before anything can be done. Historically, the Sierra Club and other "Green" organizations have fought against any timber harvesting plans on public lands, and in the West have fought logging on private lands as well. Many people in the region have a "forty" where they hunt, recreate and enjoy nature. How will they react when a "green organization" takes you to court to stop you from harvesting timber on the land you've owned and paid taxes on for years or generations. That day may not happen soon, but it will happen in the future. The more people become disjointed from the environment and live in cities, the harder it will be for those of us living the rural life to continue to enjoy those things we hold dear. We need to become more active and vocal now. The environmental groups are well funded and years ahead of us regarding how to sway opinions and make their agendas happen. Join RGS to help in the fight to preserve young forests.

Just as we are coming up with new tools to accomplish our habitat work such as our ASV forestry machine we need to develop new tools to raise the funds that fuel our conservation work. We are looking towards some new type of events such as major fundraisers' with high dollar (\$500/plate) events targeting a smaller previously untapped part of our community. We are also incorporating our Board of Directors to host intimate "Dine with a Sportsman" or Wine and Cheese Parties. We are looking to work with some of the bigger hunt clubs to host special parties for their membership and raise awareness and dollars for the RGS mission.

Another change we will be instituting in 2010 is a major emphasis on membership and attendance numbers. An increase in membership will ensure our success, assist us in securing grants, increase advertising rates and give us a bigger pool of potential volunteers, donors, and future leaders. To accomplish this we will now require that all banquet attendees become RGS members. We will be offering a new family membership where each family member becomes a member with one magazine going out to the family. Instead of \$25 each for all family members attending an event the cost will be \$40 and cover all family members. Those attending will also need to pay for their dinner. Hopefully this will lead to an increase in attendance as well membership numbers. We need to emphasize the cost savings and benefits to the family membership as we solicit attendees to our events.

RGS will be budgeting money for projects and that chapters with successful events will be able to keep some of what they raise in a "Drummer Fund" for statewide projects.

All of these new ideas will dovetail with our current banquet fundraisers and allow us to fund more projects nationally and locally through our chapters working to raise the funds. Stay tuned for more news and please share any new ideas you may have as we meet to start the planning for our 2010 banquet season.

Upcoming Events:

Sat. Feb 20, 2009 27th Annual Muscoda, Wi Banquet Tickets: Dave Duffy 608-604-4084

Sat March 27, 2009 (Tent) Crandon ,Wi Banquet

Thurs May 06, 2009 31st Annual T. Stanton Armour Chapter Chicago Banquet