The Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society are North America’s foremost conservation organizations dedicated to preserving our hunting traditions by creating healthy forest habitat for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other wildlife. RGS & AWS work with landowners and government agencies to develop critical habitat utilizing scientific management practices.
The RGS & AWS habitat program works with landowners and government agencies to create healthy forest habitat for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other forest wildlife utilizing scientific management practices.

**HEALTHY FORESTS**

**2019**

- **$3,714,217**
  - Total habitat project funding from all sources

- **$248,428**
  - Dedicated for habitat projects from regional Drummer Funds

- **85**
  - Drummer Fund projects for forest wildlife

- **27**
  - Miles of roads and trails created or enhanced

- **12,518**
  - Habitat acres directly impacted by RGS & AWS programs

- **12,518**
  - Enhanced

- **451 McCormick Road**
  - Conshohocken, PA 19428

- **527,492**
  - Dedicated habitat funds from all sources

- **17**
  - Regional Drummer Fund projects

- **19**
  - Miles of roads and trails created or enhanced

- **1,328**
  - Habitat acres impacted by RGS & AWS programs

**MICHIGAN, INDIANA & OHIO**

- **$527,492**
  - Dedicated habitat funds from all sources

- **17**
  - Regional Drummer Fund projects

- **19**
  - Miles of roads and trails created or enhanced

- **1,328**
  - Habitat acres impacted by RGS & AWS programs

**MINNESOTA, WISCONSIN, IOWA & ILLINOIS**

- **$2,428,192**
  - Dedicated habitat funds from all sources

- **27**
  - Regional Drummer Fund projects

- **90**
  - Forest Wildlife Specialist private land projects

- **7**
  - Miles of roads and trails created or enhanced

- **8,905**
  - Habitat acres impacted by RGS & AWS programs

**NEW YORK & NEW ENGLAND**

- **$525,059**
  - Dedicated habitat funds from all sources

- **18**
  - Town Forest and private land projects

- **703**
  - Habitat acres enhanced by RGS & AWS programs

---

**CHARITY NAVIGATOR**

Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society Awarded 4-Star Rating for the Fifth Consecutive Year

Benjamin C. Jones
Ruffed Grouse Society
451 McCormick Road
Conshohocken, PA 19428

On behalf of Charity Navigator, I wish to congratulate Ruffed Grouse Society on attaining the coveted 4-star rating for demonstrating strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

The nonprofit sector is advancing and expanding. As our organizations evolve, so do the desires and interests of our supporters. Astute donors are seeking greater accountability, transparency, and for concrete results from us. With more than 3 million American charities, Charity Navigator aims to accentuate the work of efficient and transparent organizations. The intent of our work is to provide donors with essential information to give them greater confidence in both the charitable decisions that they make and the nonprofit sector.

Based on the most recent information available and in conjunction with our updated financial methodology, we have issued a new rating for your organization. We are proud to announce Ruffed Grouse Society has earned our 4-star rating for the fifth consecutive year. This is the highest possible rating and indicates that your organization adheres to sector best practices and executes its mission in a financially efficient manner. Attaining a 4-star rating verifies that Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in your area of work.

Only 15% of the charities we evaluate have received at least five consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that RGS & AWS outperforms most other charities in America. This exceptional designation from Charity Navigator sets Ruffed Grouse Society apart from its peers and demonstrates to the public its trustworthiness. Approximately only a quarter of rated charities have achieved this distinction!

Futures, Business Week, and Kiplinger’s Financial Magazine, among others, have profiled and celebrated our unique method of applying data-driven analysis to the charitable sector. We evaluate ten times more charities than our nearest competitor and currently attract more visitors to our website than all other charity rating groups combined, thus making us the leading charity evaluator in America. Our data shows that users of our site donate more than they planned to before viewing our findings, and in fact, it is estimated that last year Charity Navigator influenced approximately $10 billion in charitable gifts.

Your achievement and the 4-star rating will enhance your organization’s fundraising and public relations efforts. Our favorable review of Ruffed Grouse Society’s financial health and commitment to accountability & transparency is now visible on our website.

We wish you continued success in your charitable endeavors.

Sincerely,

Michael Thanhear
President and CEO
Starting on July 19, 2019, a series of powerful storms impacted vast areas of Wisconsin – a total of more than 1.1 million acres. Langlade, Oconto, Polk and Barron counties were among the most substantial hit areas with 286,000 acres of destroyed forest. To put it mildly, with a combination of straight-line winds in excess of 80 mph and tornadic activity, this was the biggest blowdown event in the states recorded history, and impacts were felt across ownerships. Estimates are that enough wood was blown down in that one event to feed Wisconsin’s entire forest products industry for three years. The damage was so widespread that it would prompt the governor to declare “A State of Emergency Due to Extreme Severe Weather.”

Road clearing, trail re- hab and commercial timber harvesting are still ongoing. The effects have delayed some RGS & AWS Drummer Fund habitat projects, and even impacted hunting areas. Going into the spring of 2020, wildland firefighting staff are on edge and preparing for high fuel loading caused by the blowdown. In the future, the blowdown situation will further be complicated by tree diseases, and Forest Managers are also aware of problems they may face with regenerating aspen stands. Coming to the aid of our public lands partners to help ensure healthy habitat continues, RGS & AWS stepped up to offer assistance in one of the hardest-hit areas, Langlade County.

Langlade County Forestry and Parks Department manages 120,002 acres of public forest land (the states seventh-largest). With over 10,000 acres of county forest impacted, it was hit especially hard by the blowdown event. As part of the extreme damage was sold as commercial timber salvage sales over the past six months; however, many mid-aged aspen stands that are considered unmerchantable were too young to be harvested commercially. Unlike young forests, those same mid-aged stands are also too old to spring back easily after being hit by a wind event. Mid-aged stands need to be treated and sheered with forestry mowers, or the aspen will eventually die out and transition to other tree species. Time was also of the essence to salvage blowdown before it rots in the woods and is no longer usable – this is where RGS & AWS helped provide additional assistance with Wisconsin storm cleanup.

Working with the county, RGS & AWS identified multiple project areas due to their proximity to grouse management areas and areas of the worse severity of the storm damage. In total, RGS & AWS combined $20,000 with $21,975 in county match to finish an area of 485 acres of storm salvage and 120 acres of aspen sheering to ensure the long-term stability and hunting opportunity of the county forest and help get the community back to a sense of normalcy after the storm.

In total, RGS & AWS combined $20,000 with $21,975 in county match to finish an area of 485 acres of storm salvage and 120 acres of aspen sheering to ensure the long-term stability and hunting opportunity of the county forest and help get the community back to a sense of normalcy after the storm.

~ Jon Stigerwaldt
RGS & AWS Wildlife Biologist
West Nile Virus (WNV) has been a disease of interest to the Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society for several decades. As the leading ruffed grouse conservation organization and a consistent advocate for scientifically-based forest and wildlife conservation, RGS & AWS and our members have supported WNV research, monitoring and surveillance efforts across the United States.

West Nile Virus Background

Previously known from Europe, Africa and Asia, WNV was first detected in North America in New York State in 1999. It was confirmed as infecting wild New York grouse the following year. West Nile Virus is a general disease of concern, as it can affect humans following exposure from being bitten by infected mosquitoes – the same path by which humans become infected with WNV.

The disease has likely been infecting wild ruffed grouse for years, as groups of birds became infected and died. There is strong evidence that WNV has limited its range over time due to continued declines. The disease has been effectively controlled by surveillance and quick response to control efforts.

As 2019 marked 20 years since WNV was first detected in North America, our Annual Report represents an appropriate time to recap some of the many projects that RGS & AWS and our members have supported over the years. We extend our sincere thanks to the agencies, partners and collaborators. RGS & AWS has assisted in numerous states, regions and time periods. A PGC and RGS & AWS collaboration to test hunter-harvested grouse during the 2015-16 Pennsylvania hunting season documented grouse exposure to WNV in every region of the state. The research indicated areas with high-quality and abundant habitat show a strong population recovery between peak WNV periods. Regions with lower-quality and less abundant, more fragmented habitat show weak recovery and population declines.

Expanding Geographic Concerns and Coordination

In the Great Lakes region, confirmation of ruffed grouse infected with WNV first occurred in Michigan in 2002, in Minnesota in 2003 (documented at the RGS & AWS National Hunt) and Wisconsin in early 2019. The disease has likely been infecting grouse in all three states for many years. Still, growing interest and concern led to initiating the first of an intended three-year regional monitoring effort in 2018. The Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan Departments of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress and RGS & AWS are all collaborators. RGS & AWS has assisted with funding, logistics or coordinating communications through the effort to distribute blood and tissue sampling kits to grouse hunters in each state. Results won’t measure population-level impacts, but improved understanding of year-to-year variation in WNV activity and an assessment of the spatial variation of exposure in the region will help identify conditions that could predispose local grouse populations to more significant WNV impacts.

The first-year results from more than 700 samples from the three states were compiled in 2019. Analyses of antibodies in the blood and examination of feathers for the presence of viral genetic material showed that ruffed grouse are being exposed to WNV. Still, some are surviving and clearing the virus from their bodies. Exposure did vary, with similar rates of 12% in Minnesota and 13% in Michigan, but 29% in Wisconsin. Possible causes of this variation will be examined as further data is analyzed, including the second sampling during the 2019 season.

The best means of helping ruffed grouse populations tolerate the added stress of WNV outbreaks is to improve the quality, quantity and connectivity of habitat. Collaboration to achieve such habitat improvement will increase resilience and rebuff adverse disease outbreaks, plus aid conservation of grouse (and many other forest wildlife species) even in years and areas with little or no WNV exposure.

~ Brent Rudolph
RGS & AWS Chief Conservation & Legislative Officer
STAFF PROFILE

Nick Biemiller: Forest Conservation Director,
Southern Appalachian Region

With funding donated specifically for the purpose, the Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society have moved forward with a new Forest Conservation Director position in the Southern Appalachian Region. The generous gift, from a donor who wished to remain anonymous, was placed in a restricted account late in 2019 as recruitment ensued. The Society announced that Nick Biemiller was selected for the role from a highly qualified group of applicants. In the newly-developed position, Biemiller will build and manage a network to achieve forest wildlife goals across several states. The region includes northern Georgia and South Carolina, western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, southwestern Virginia and Kentucky.

“Having a dedicated person in the southern Appalachians has been a priority since my first day at RGS & AWS. Ruffed grouse are hanging on by a thread and we have to put our best foot forward. With his deep understanding of forestry and wildlife conservation, Nick is the right person for the job,” said Ben Jones, RGS & AWS President & CEO.

In his most recent role, Biemiller served as Southeast Region Director for the Forest Stewards Guild for three years, where he promoted forest stewardship across the southeast, including several projects with a wildlife forestry focus. Biemiller earned his bachelor’s degree from Warren Wilson College and a Master of Forestry degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Nick has been immersed in working forests and the diverse goods and services that they provide, including clean air and water, recreation, wildlife habitat and forest products.

“The southern Appalachians have been home for about nine years, and I have a strong passion for forest and wildlife conservation in this region,” said Biemiller. “I believe that good forestry should be performed in a way that enhances wildlife habitat and the ecological integrity of forests. In the southern Appalachian context, this is especially true for disturbance-dependent forest types. My approach to forestry is rooted in a strong conservation ethic and I feel it’s my professional calling to integrate conservation impact and forest management.”

As a Forest Conservation Director, Biemiller will draw on a diverse forestry and wildlife background to promote the RGS & AWS mission and increase habitat impact on private and public land in the southern Appalachian region.

When he’s not working in the woods, Biemiller can most often be found with a fly rod in his hand on a trout stream, tying flies on a bench, gardening or on a trail with his dog. “I’m excited to build our model of working forests in the southern Appalachians and build capacity for scientifically-supported forest management to improve habitat for ruffed grouse, woodcock and all forest wildlife.”

CHAPTER PROFILE

Mohawk Valley Chapter: Albany, New York

My mind raced with thoughts as I made my way to the inaugural Mohawk Valley Chapter Sportsman’s Night Out. The chapter was newly formed – only six months old, and I had been Regional Director for three and a half days. Still, I was at ease knowing Lisa Ross, Regional Director of Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Georgia, would be helping me out. My good hunting buddy Sam Glasbergen was the banquet chairman for the event. Unbeknownst to me at the time, Sam had behind him a rock-solid committee made up of bird doggers, grouse and woodcock hunters and those who care about healthy forests and abundant wildlife.

Before the event, the Mohawk Valley committee had sold 300 tickets for an over/under shotgun, and had pushed tickets sales that far exceeded everyone’s expectations. The night went off without a hitch, and the chapter had an incredibly successful event, with 125 people in attendance and net proceeds over $10,000 for the night. Follow-up meetings have always had a full house, with the help of folks like Steve Roest, Eliott Shanklin, Josh Shaul, Leigh Gibson, Amanda and Chris Mohr, Susie Thomas and many more. The committee has always asked what more can they do to further the RGS mission.

On a sweltering day last July, the committee, made up of folks from all generations and walks of life, met at Partridge Run, a state WMA in Berne, N.Y., to complete a habitat improvement project. The crew worked for seven hours, clearing brush and releasing apple trees. Despite the oppressive heat and vicious mosquitoes, they powered through. A true group of conservationists, uniting for a common goal of improving wildlife habitat.

The key to this committee’s significant success in such a short time is an easy one: engagement, whether it’s a committee meeting, habitat workday or just getting together to shoot sporting clays, they’ve kept up the momentum.

Even today, as I write this amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mohawk Valley chapter is chomping at the bit to get out and get some habitat work done and push the RGS & AWS mission, despite having their spring fundraiser canceled.

– Joe Lavoque
RGS & AWS Regional Director
In the southern Appalachians, in the 1930s, 40s and 50s, the southern Appalachians were being abandoned, the great lakes states, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Tennessee, but because I live in the southern Appalachians, that's the emphasis for what I'm trying to do now. To help the king of gamebirds, to restore it to its former status. I appreciate what RGS is doing to that end.

We truly appreciate all you've done and are continuing to do Mr. Wells. Thank you so much for all you do for the Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society's mission of creating healthy forests, abundant wildlife and promoting conservation ethic.

~ Sean Curran, RGS & AWS Vice President of Mission Sustainability
## STATEMENT OF FINANCES

### THE RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY

#### STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

**December 31, 2019 and 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>$1,442,251</td>
<td>$746,673</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable - trade</td>
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<td>140,467</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promises to give - net</td>
<td>591,534</td>
<td>796,671</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants receivable</td>
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<td>172,974</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inventory</td>
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<td>291,484</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
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<td>71,781</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketable securities</td>
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<td>4,806,335</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land held for investment</td>
<td>492,000</td>
<td>492,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property and equipment - net</td>
<td>202,737</td>
<td>412,334</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$8,414,639</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,930,719</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line of credit</td>
<td>$1,114,232</td>
<td>$919,488</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note payable</td>
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<td>23,256</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts payable</td>
<td>238,199</td>
<td>234,318</td>
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<td>Accrued retirement</td>
<td>41,178</td>
<td>38,574</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accrued expenses</td>
<td>100,803</td>
<td>53,480</td>
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<td>Deferred grant income</td>
<td>31,614</td>
<td>34,044</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other deferred revenue</td>
<td>4,920</td>
<td>9,956</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,549,619</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,313,116</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NET ASSETS</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without donor restrictions</td>
<td><strong>$5,404,024</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,617,603</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Undesignated (500,172) (228,149)</td>
<td>5,404,024</td>
<td>5,364,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Designated by the Board for quasi-endowment</td>
<td>5,404,024</td>
<td>5,136,430</td>
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<tr>
<td>With donor restrictions</td>
<td><strong>$5,404,024</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,617,603</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Perpetual in nature 14,045</td>
<td>124,840</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Membership services</td>
<td>591,534</td>
<td>796,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chapter operations 1,982,424</td>
<td>1,982,424</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- General education and outreach</td>
<td>626,227</td>
<td>626,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Habitats projects 1,489,454</td>
<td>1,489,454</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research</td>
<td>51,224</td>
<td>51,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advocacy</td>
<td>51,203</td>
<td>51,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Support services: Administration</td>
<td>440,367</td>
<td>440,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fundraising</td>
<td>171,369</td>
<td>171,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,450,760</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,450,760</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net assets released from restrictions</strong></td>
<td><strong>$372,769</strong></td>
<td><strong>$409,252</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without donor restrictions</td>
<td>1,076,021</td>
<td>(1,076,021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With donor restrictions</td>
<td>1,076,021</td>
<td>(1,076,021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total non-operating income (expenses)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$460,363</strong></td>
<td><strong>$656,938</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Net investment return</td>
<td>965,172</td>
<td>981,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gain on disposal of property and equipment</td>
<td>22,220</td>
<td>22,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Return of Dew Scholarship Fund</td>
<td>166,966</td>
<td>166,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Uncollectible promise to give</td>
<td>(950)</td>
<td>(950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Depreciation expense</td>
<td>179,113</td>
<td>179,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total non-operating income (expenses)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$460,363</strong></td>
<td><strong>$656,938</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

#### THE RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY

#### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

**Year Ended December 31, 2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPERATING REVENUE</th>
<th>Without Donor Restrictions</th>
<th>With Donor Restrictions</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$362,023</td>
<td>$848,602</td>
<td>$1,210,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant income</td>
<td>470,246</td>
<td>190,667</td>
<td>660,913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership dues</td>
<td>649,655</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>649,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate sponsors</td>
<td>32,700</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banquet and event revenue</td>
<td>2,270,328</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,270,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales of merchandise</td>
<td>73,034</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>73,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising income</td>
<td>56,671</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>56,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timber sales</td>
<td>25,817</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry clearing and consulting</td>
<td>53,177</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous income</td>
<td>8,309</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,001,970</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,039,269</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,041,239</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPERATING EXPENSES</th>
<th>Without Donor Restrictions</th>
<th>With Donor Restrictions</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program services:</td>
<td>Membership services 668,492</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>668,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chapter operations</td>
<td>1,982,424</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>51,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting services: Administration</td>
<td>440,367</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>440,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fundraising</td>
<td>171,369</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>171,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total operating expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,450,760</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>5,450,760</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Change in net assets from operations | **(372,769)** | **(409,252)** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NON-OPERATING INCOME (EXPENSES)</th>
<th>Without Donor Restrictions</th>
<th>With Donor Restrictions</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Net investment return</td>
<td>965,172</td>
<td>16,575</td>
<td>981,747</td>
</tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>22,220</td>
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<td>- Depreciation expense</td>
<td>(179,113)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(179,113)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total non-operating income (expenses)</strong></td>
<td><strong>460,363</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,575</strong></td>
<td><strong>476,938</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in net assets</td>
<td>267,594</td>
<td>(20,177)</td>
<td>247,417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets at beginning of year</td>
<td>5,136,430</td>
<td>1,481,173</td>
<td>6,617,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net assets at end of year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,404,024</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,460,996</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,865,020</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Gullion Circle

The late Gordon W. Gullion, known as “Mr. Grouse”, was universally acknowledged as the world’s leading expert on ruffed grouse ecology.

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