



Public Lands Wildlife Forester- Southwest Virginia

Assistant Hardwood Silviculturist

Location: Norton, VA

Supervisors: Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society

Region: Southern Appalachians

Starting Date: November 1, 2021

Term of Position: November 2021 to November 2023, with a possibility of position extension.

Background and Primary Duties:

Established in 1961, the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is North America's foremost conservation organization dedicated to creating healthy forests, abundant wildlife, and promoting a conservation ethic. Together with the American Woodcock Society (AWS), established in 2014, RGS & AWS work with landowners and government agencies to develop critical wildlife habitat utilizing scientific management practices.

The Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society (RGS & AWS) in partnership with the George Washington and Jefferson (GW-Jeff) National Forests are looking for a motivated individual to work effectively with the GW-Jeff across three Ranger Districts, the Clinch Ranger District, the Eastern Divide Ranger District, and the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. The Southwest Virginia (SW-VA) Public Lands Wildlife Forester will function as an Assistant Hardwood Silviculturist on the GW-Jeff, providing silvicultural planning support and on-the-ground field forestry capacity across all three Ranger Districts.

The position will coordinate vegetation management project planning, design, implementation, and monitoring on National Forest lands. Active forest management efforts will be implemented to achieve timber, silviculture, and wildlife objectives from the Jefferson National Forest's Forest Plan. In particular, the position will focus on restoring forest structure, composition, and age-class diversity to assist the recovery of at-risk wildlife identified in the Forest Plan, including species identified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need from the Virginia State Wildlife Action Plan, while also promoting forest health and timber production objectives.

Increasing the availability of structural and age-class diversity is an important conservation action necessary for reversing the decline of multiple at-risk wildlife species in the region, including ruffed grouse, American woodcock, golden-winged warbler, and cerulean warbler. Our objective is to reverse downward population trends through sustainable forest management by implementing silvicultural practices that are in line with Best Management Practices for forest wildlife in the Appalachian region.

This position will also function as a liaison between RGS & AWS, the GW-Jeff, and the new state-wide Virginia Hardwood Forest Habitat Initiative. The position will represent RGS & AWS and the GW-Jeff in regular meetings and collaborative efforts.



Qualifications:

- A passion for forestry and wildlife conservation.
- In-depth understanding of forest management including forest operations, silviculture, forest product markets, and environmental regulation. Ability to assess wildlife habitat and make connections between forest management and wildlife habitat needs.
- Technical expertise in field forestry, including preparing silvicultural treatments, forest inventory, timber marking, boundary layout, and GPS data collection. Experience in fire ecology and management is a plus.
- Experience in long-term forest management planning, including growth and yield modeling, database management, and the utilization of decision support software (e.g., ExamsPC, FVS and REGEN3).
- Excellent spoken and written communication skills, networking skills, well organized, and ability to engage with a diversity of collaborators. Experience managing complex projects under deadlines.
- Knowledge of USDA Forest Service processes, regulations, policies, and directives (e.g., NFMA and NEPA). Previous experience working with the Forest Service or another federal land management agency is preferred.
- Ability to use Excel, ArcGIS, Google Maps, and other computer mapping systems to identify and delineate project boundaries.
- Willingness and ability to travel frequently throughout southwest Virginia and perform arduous field work on steep terrain and a variety of weather conditions.
- A degree in forestry or closely related field, with 3+ years of experience and/or a graduate degree in natural resource management.
- Proven ability to manage multiple projects, produce effective results and meet deadlines. Applicant must be self-motivated, responsible and have ability to solve problems.
- The position will be required to participate in specific training programs to use partner facilities and equipment. Applicant must have a valid driver's license.

Position Summary:

The SW-VA Public Lands Wildlife Forester's **main duties** will include working with RGS & AWS staff and USDA Forest Service staff, as well as local partners such as the Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, US Fish and Wildlife Service, conservation nonprofits, consulting foresters, procurement foresters, timber purchasers, and other contractors to:

- Implement active forest management that achieves Objectives from the Jefferson National Forest's Forest Plan and benefits healthy forests and abundant wildlife.
- Assist with silvicultural planning and project development for vegetation management projects on the GW-Jeff, including prescription writing, mapping, vegetative modeling, implementing common stand exams, and performing old growth surveys.
- Lead the administration of noncommercial treatments and commercial timber harvests to achieve desired forest conditions, including preparing bid announcements, selecting contractors, forest road maintenance, and performing site inspections and evaluations.



- Coordinate RGS & AWS' Stewardship Agreements with the GW-Jeff National Forests, including the Timberdoodle Stewardship Project on the Clinch Ranger District.
- Assist with monitoring efforts, including the potential to assist with wildlife monitoring (e.g., ruffed grouse drummer surveys).
- Lead volunteer efforts with RGS & AWS members and the public, including monitoring efforts, information or interpretive programs, and habitat workdays.
- Communicate the importance of active forest management to RGS & AWS members and the public during field trips, presentations, blog posts, and local media pitches.
- Maintain a database to track performance, achievements, and outcomes.
- Write and submit regular summaries, and interim and annual reports to RGS & AWS and partners.

The SW-VA Public Lands Wildlife Forester will be based out of the USDA Forest Service Clinch Ranger District Office in Norton, VA. The Forester is an RGS & AWS employee and represents RGS & AWS in its work. The Forester will be supervised by RGS & AWS' Southern Appalachian Forest Conservation Director in partnership with the GW-Jeff. There will be a 60-day probationary period.

COVID-19 Update:

RGS & AWS has organizational policies in place regarding COVID-19. We are following recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other local guidance as applicable. We are closely tracking the continued uncertainty regarding the Delta Variant.

The USDA Forest Service continues to emphasize maximizing telework due to the threat of COVID-19 and the Delta Variant. As such, the Forester may need to perform office work remotely and attend regular virtual meetings.

Compensation:

The salary is \$50,000 per year plus benefits, health insurance, and retirement options. A vehicle will be available for the Forester. A purchasing card for business and travel expenses, computer, printer, cell phone, office supplies will be provided. Training and support as needed to excel.

Application Instructions:

Please send a cover letter and resume to Nick Biemiller (RGS/AWS) at nickb@ruffedgrousesociety.org by 11:59pm on October 8, 2021. If you have any questions, please contact Nick at 412-719-0625.