



Forest Wildlife Specialist- Forester

Tennessee- All Lands

Location: Knoxville, Tennessee

Employer: Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society

Region: Southern Appalachians

Starting Date: September 1, 2022

Term of Position: September 2022 to September 2025, with a possibility of position extension.

Background and Primary Duties:

The Ruffed Grouse Society and American Woodcock Society (RGS & AWS) in partnership with the Cherokee National Forest (CNF) and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) are recruiting a wildlife-oriented forester to work in Tennessee (TN). The position's primary focus will be on 1) private and state lands in the North Cumberland Plateau, and 2) National Forest lands on the Cherokee National Forest in East TN.

The Forest Wildlife Specialist will provide forest management support for project planning, design, implementation, and monitoring on public and private lands. Active forest management will be implemented to achieve forest habitat objectives from TN's State Wildlife Action Plan and CNF's Forest Plan. The position will focus on restoring forest structure, composition, and age-class diversity for at-risk wildlife and Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN).

Increasing structural and age-class diversity is an important conservation action to reverse decline of multiple SGCN 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 in line with Best Management Practices for forest wildlife in the Appalachian region.

Qualifications:

- A passion for forestry and wildlife conservation.
- In-depth understanding of forest management including operations, silvicultural systems, forest product markets, and environmental regulation. Ability to assess wildlife habitat and make connections between forest management and wildlife needs.
- Technical expertise in field forestry, including management plan preparation, forest inventory, timber marking, boundary layout, and GPS data collection. Experience in prescribed fire and burn plan preparation is a plus.
- Excellent spoken and written communication skills, networking skills, well organized, and ability to engage with a diversity of forest landowners and conservation partners.
- 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 US Forest Service, or another federal land management agency is preferred.



- Knowledge of NRCS landowner cost-share programs, especially EQIP or WLFW, preferred.
- Experience working with private landowners as well as Federal or State agencies is desired.
- 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 the Southern Appalachian region of TN and perform arduous field work on steep terrain independently.
- A degree in forestry or closely related field, with 3+ years of experience or a graduate degree in forestry or 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 Forest Wildlife Specialist's **main duties** will include working with RGS & AWS staff, USDA Forest Service staff, TWRA staff, and local partners such as the TN Division of Forestry, US Fish and Wildlife Service, NRCS-TN, conservation nonprofits, consulting foresters, timber purchasers, and other contractors to implement active forest management that benefits healthy forests and abundant wildlife.

- Coordinate and provide oversight on commercial timber harvests and noncommercial silviculture and wildlife treatments to restore early successional habitat and benefit wildlife populations, including restoration and maintenance of old fields, shrublands, and other brushy wildlife habitats, particularly on moist soils or at high-elevations via mechanical disturbance, prescribed burning, or planting of appropriate vegetation; and restoration and maintenance of strategically located herbaceous wildlife habitats for brood rearing and foraging or as singing grounds or roosting areas for American woodcock.
- Seek funding to expand partnership opportunities, and to garner new and additional support from partners, including but not limited to the timber industry, Federal and non-Federal entities, tribal entities, and RGS & AWS members and volunteers.
- Lead the administration and implementation of RGS & AWS agreements with CNF, including the Double G Stewardship Project on the Tellico Ranger District and future activities within the Pond Mountain Stewardship area. This includes preparing bid announcements, selecting contractors, conducting forest road maintenance, and performing site inspections and evaluations for commercial timber sales and noncommercial treatments.
- Assist with silviculture and wildlife habitat project planning, development, and implementation on CNF, including drafting or recommending silviculture prescriptions and habitat treatments, mapping (GPS and GIS), data entry and analysis, vegetative modeling, stocking surveys, plantation survival surveys, tree planting, inspecting and reporting on contractor work, and implementing common stand exams and other field data collection.



- Perform outreach to recruit landowners for NRCS programs, including direct mailings, site visits, networking, and events. Facilitate private landowner enrollment in NRCS programs and conduct or oversee NRCS conservation planning and program participation.
- Prepare NRCS-compliant forest management plans for private landowners and lead site visits to provide technical assistance and connect landowners to financial assistance through the Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) programs.
- Provide technical assistance to private landowners in TN with a focus on the North Cumberland Plateau region. This includes performing site visits and direct outreach, leading or participating in education and training events, aiding in NRCS contract development, and assisting with implementation of commercial timber harvests and noncommercial treatments.
- Assist with the development and implementation of active forest management projects on state lands, including Catoosa WMA, North Cumberland WMA, and Lone Mountain State Forest.
- Assist with wildlife monitoring efforts for ruffed grouse, songbirds, and other forest wildlife in focal areas.
- 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 Forest Wildlife Specialist will work from a home office or partner agency office in the greater Knoxville area. The location is flexible, but the candidate should be prepared to travel to field locations on the North Cumberland Plateau and East TN multiple times per week as needed. The Forest Wildlife Specialist is an RGS & AWS employee and represents RGS & AWS in its work. The Forest Wildlife Specialist will be supervised by the RGS & AWS's Southern Appalachian Forest Conservation Director in partnership with CNF and TWRA. The Forest Wildlife Specialist must be capable of working highly independently. This includes developing a program of work and daily tasks that are integrated and consistent with the program of work of partner agencies. There will be a 6-month probationary period for the purposes of determining the suitability of the employee to their new position.

Compensation:

The salary for the position is \$50,000.00, plus benefits, health insurance, and retirement options. A vehicle will be available for the position, with the possibility of mileage reimbursement or a vehicle stipend. A purchasing card for business and travel expenses, computer, printer, cell phone, office supplies will be provided.

Application Instructions:

Please send a cover letter and resume to Charles Faires (RGS & AWS) at charlesf@ruffedgrousesociety.org by **11:59pm on August 19, 2022**. If you have any questions, please contact Charles at 412-443-0905.