



Job Type: Public Lands Project Coordinator – Western Upper Peninsula

Job Title: Copper Country Forest Habitat Project Coordinator

Location: Kenton, MI

Supervisors: Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society

Region: Great Lakes/Upper Midwest

Starting Date: January 15, 2023

Term of Position: January 2023 to December 2024, likely to be extended with additional funding

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 Ottawa National Forest are looking for a motivated individual to work effectively with the Ottawa across six Ranger Districts including the Kenton, Bergland, Ontonagon, Bessemer, Watersmeet, and Iron River Ranger Districts. The Copper Country Forest Habitat Project Coordinator will function as a **Wildlife Forester** on the Ottawa National Forest, providing habitat/timber treatment planning, timber sale and habitat project administration, contract development and oversight support and on-the-ground field assessments, stand evaluations, and project layout for improving habitat and hunter walking trails across the six 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 wildlife, silviculture and timber objectives as defined in the Ottawa 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 Eastern forest birds that are dependent on specific forest types such as early successional, open, or fire dependent ecosystems within the northern hardwood forests of the Upper Peninsula. Habitat can be improved with active forest management using stewardship principles, specifically for ruffed grouse, woodcock, golden-winged warbler and whip-poor-will. Some of the greatest opportunities to bring back these habitats at the scale needed to adequately support population of some high priority species are on public lands. Habitat improvements will benefit game and non-game species and much of the work will be focused along established hunter walking trails. 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 Upper Great Lakes Region. Improvement projects will also benefit the visitor experience for those that utilize these trails for hiking, wildlife viewing and hunting.

This position will also function as a liaison between RGS & AWS, the Ottawa National Forest, and the American Bird Conservancy Forestry for Michigan Birds initiative. The position will represent RGS & AWS in regular meetings and collaborative efforts.

Qualifications:

- A passion for wildlife conservation and forestry.



- 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 forest inventory, timber marking, boundary layout, and GPS data collection. Experience in fire ecology and management is a plus.
- 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 the western Upper Peninsula and perform arduous field work on steep terrain and a variety of weather conditions.
- A degree in forestry and/or wildlife or closely related field, with 2+ 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 Copper Country Forest Habitat Project Coordinator's **main duties** will include working with RGS & AWS staff and USDA Forest Service staff, as well as local partners such as the American Bird Conservancy, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, US Fish and Wildlife Service, conservation nonprofits, consulting foresters, timber purchasers, and other contractors to:

- Implement active forest management that achieves Objectives from the Ottawa National Forest's Forest Plan, the Ottawa Trail Improvement Project, and provides benefits for healthy forests and abundant wildlife.
- Assist with habitat improvement planning and project development for vegetation management projects on the Ottawa, including recommending timber prescriptions that benefit birds and wildlife, mapping, vegetative modeling, implementing common stand exams, and performing a variety of surveys that may include collecting data on birds/wildlife, old growth stand conditions, or snag/wildlife trees.
- 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.
- Lead the administration of other contracts such as trailhead improvements or road access for habitat treatments.
- Coordinate RGS & AWS's Stewardship Agreements with the Ottawa National Forest, including the Glinda Stewardship Project (aspen harvest) along the Blue Road Hunter Walking Trail on the Kenton 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 Copper Country Forest Habitat Project Coordinator will be based out of the USDA Forest Service Kenton Ranger District Office in Kenton, MI. The Project Coordinator is an RGS & AWS employee and represents RGS & AWS in its work. The Project Coordinator will be supervised by RGS & AWS' Great Lakes/Upper-Midwest Forest Conservation Director in partnership with the Ottawa National Forest. There will be a 90-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 variants.

The USDA Forest Service continues to emphasize hybrid working arrangements that includes telework due to the adaptive policies for minimizing risk of COVID- 19 and variants. As such, the Wildlife Forester may need to perform office work remotely and attend regular virtual meetings.

Compensation:

The Salary Range is **\$50,000–\$59,900** per year plus benefits, health insurance, and retirement options. A vehicle or monthly vehicle stipend will be available for the Project Coordinator. A purchasing card for business and travel expenses, computer, printer, cell phone, office supplies will be provided. Training and support as needed to excel in this position.

Application Instructions:

Please send a cover letter and resume to Jon Steigerwaldt (RGS/AWS) at jons@ruffedgrousesociety.org by **11:59pm on December 25th**. If you have any questions, please contact Jon at 412-720-6033