



**Somerset/Bedford/Fulton/Fayette Counties
RGS Members
We Need Your HELP!**

**We are looking for members interested in helping
organize an active RGS chapter in this southwestern
Pennsylvania area**

**If you are a member who would like to become more active, I
would welcome the opportunity to meet you and discuss the
future direction of this chapter.**

If you are interested in volunteering your time please contact:

**Lisa M. Rossi
RGS Regional Director
724-693-9032
rgslmt@msn.com**

**I know the summer months are just around the corner with busy activities but
your input is vital to create an active RGS Chapter in the near future**

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you soon

**Lisa M. Rossi
RGS Regional Director**

Pennsylvania Habitat Update 2009

Pennsylvania continues to be one of RGS' most active states in terms of chapters, membership, fund-raising and habitat projects. Like many states in the East, however, PA has lost a tremendous amount of grouse and woodcock habitat over the last 40 years. Since the 1960's, the amount of quality grouse and woodcock habitat has declined by nearly 1.6 million acres. These forests have not disappeared, they've just gotten older. PA has far more forest now than it did 100 years ago. This means that the trend in habitat is reversible!

Because of the relatively large amount of public lands, there is still excellent grouse and woodcock hunting to be found, especially in the northcentral part of the state. The potential for reversing the trend in grouse and woodcock habitat and populations is very good in other parts of the state, as well. Pennsylvania could easily be the premier grouse and woodcock hunting state in the East south of Maine. Last year's mild winter plus an apparent excellent hatch this spring may have contributed to excellent hunting in many areas of the state this fall and winter.

Advocacy remains an extremely important component of the RGS mission. Enthusiastic support for timber management on public lands by RGS members is critical, and RGS members have been vocal in support of habitat management. While RGS bases its unwavering support for forest management on sound science, there are plenty of well organized groups who base their opposition for forest management on deception, emotion and litigation. We have to get our message out.

Most of our members want to know what RGS is doing in their neck-of-the-woods. The list of current projects that RGS is directly involved in changes each year. RGS has on-going projects at Bald Eagle State Park (Centre Co), Raystown Lake (Huntingdon Co), State Game Lands 110 (Berks Co), Forbes State Forest and many other game lands, to name only a few.

RGS is working with the Forbes State Forest in Somerset County to manage thousands of acres of timber for grouse and woodcock. An 85 acre timber sale is currently being cut and another sale is being planned.

The Jim Bashline project at Raystown Lake has now resulted in over 1300 acres of timber management and is producing good numbers of grouse and woodcock. Many other habitat improvements totaling hundreds of more acres also have been completed.

RGS has identified and started work on a woodcock habitat project on state game lands 82 in Somerset County in memory of Bill Goudy, who died in January 2007. Bill worked tirelessly on behalf of the American woodcock throughout his career and for the Ruffed Grouse Society for many years before retiring a few years ago. Please contact your RGS regional staff about financial support of the Bill Goudy Memorial Project.

Focusing on the bigger picture, RGS coordinated the development of the National Ruffed Grouse Management Strategy which is now approved and final. RGS biologists also authored several sections of the National Woodcock Management Strategy (still in preparation) and are co-authoring two chapters of a book on the ecology and management of grouse in the southern Appalachians.

If you have never attended an RGS event, written a letter or attended a meeting to support grouse and woodcock management, make it happen in 2009. To find out how, contact **Mark Banker, Regional Biologist**, 814-867-7946, rgsbank@comcast.net or **Regional Directors Lisa Rossi (Western PA)**, 724-693-9032, rgslmt@msn.com; **Dave Hansroth (Eastern PA)**, 412-303-1405, rgshans@comcast.net, and **Ken Waite (northern tier)**, 315-406-5016, rgsknw@twcny.rr.com. *Updated January 2009.*