



APPALACHIAN HIGHLANDS CHAPTER
November 15th, 2010
NEWSLETTER

The Lonesome Pine District of the Boy Scouts of America recently held its 1st Annual Team Clay Target Shooting Competition to benefit the Scouting program throughout Wise, Lee and Scott Counties in Virginia. More than 30 participants were on hand for this exciting event which was held at the beautiful Wax Family Farm in Big Stone Gap, VA. The competition consisted of a 3-man team format in which teams completed 4 rounds of shooting for a total of 90 team shots.

Teams placing in the competition included:

1st Place - Mark Honaker (RGS Appy Highlands Chapter Member), Josh Meade, and Jeff Jones
(Team Sponsor - Mountain Forest Products, LLC)

2nd Place - Allen Mullins, Jody Bentley, and Andy Skeen
(Team Sponsor - Mountain States Health Alliance)

3rd Place - Mike Godsey, Doug Nickels, and Randy Stanley
(Team Sponsor - M&M Septic Service/Nickels Heating and Cooling)



Also participating in the event was the team of Dominic Nickels, Austin Falin, and Zane Mullins (l to r in photo) who were sponsored by the Ruffed Grouse Society-Appalachian Highlands Chapter. This team was made up of Boy Scouts from Troop 603 in East Stone Gap, VA. The team was very competitive in the competition, finishing only 6 shots behind the 3rd place team.

The proceeds from this event will benefit the Scouting program and will ensure its continued success. The Lonesome Pine District serves more than 600 youth and adult volunteers and is proud of the impact that the Scouting program has on its communities. Thank you to all the event and team sponsors who helped make this event such a success.

Tales from the Northwood and Beyond

Here are reports from members who travelled north for birds in October.

Dale Myers reports: *"I went to the UP of MI Oct.2-7 to bird hunt. Even though drum counts were up this Spring, my best day was moving 5 grouse and 3 woodcock...got a shot at one grouse and all 3 timberdoodles. Bagged one woodcock. Beautiful country! This was my first trip to UP. Salmon fishing was fair in lower penninsula. Brought enough home to eat and share."*



Gary Mac Quillen reports: *"I've been in the grouse woods of VA once this season and moved a few birds. The real highlight of my season thus far was bagging a nice eight pointer with a smoke pole on opening day".*

Ronnie Frazier reports: *"Shadow comes to an abrupt stop from her energetic run in the dark, wet world of New Hampshire's northwoods. Going on point in mid air she stands motionless, except for the quivering*

nerves I know are there. This is why I'm here, why I drove over a thousand miles and find myself walking in the rain. I walk towards Shadow expecting the flush, the rush of wings as the grouse erupts going left to right at warp speed. I shoulder the 20 and fire instinctively, not even seeing the target the moment the gun fires. Yes I am amazed that the grouse falls and Shadow begins her trip to retrieve; but wait, she stops short, pointing. I am puzzled. As I walk toward Shadow to get her to go get the dead bird, another grouse rockets skyward and this one too falls to the little 20. It don't get much better than this.

Hunting in Pittsburg, NH is hunting in moose country. It is hard, difficult walking. It is swampy everywhere, stairstep walking on level ground, tundra like uneven ground. Next step I go up to my knee in water and mud. It's like this everywhere and it's raining.

This far north is wilderness, I mean real wilderness, miles and miles of miles and miles. No cell phone towers, no ATV users, no permanent houses. Break down here or break a leg, have a medical emergency, you may never be found.

I averaged flushing 2 grouse per hour, nothing to get excited about but better than in the Appalachian mountains. I am certain one could find more birds with better weather and knowledge of where to go. I managed to bring home 9 grouse in 5 days of hunting, which proves that even a blind hog finds an acorn once in a while. Had superb dog work since most grouse taken were juvenile birds which set well. Only flushed a handful of woodcock which is a plus for me since I don't shoot the little worm eaters anyway. Another plus is no porcupines were encountered on this trip.

There is moose sign everywhere, tracks as big as cows, the average moose weighs 1000 pounds and stands 6 ft. high at the shoulder. There are over 6500 moose here in a town of 850 people. Radio alerts with stats like low beam lights only shine on their legs and at speeds over 50 the body of the moose comes thru the windshield.

The terrain is hilly, rolling compared to the Appalachian mountains. The views are spectacular. Roads are not paved, muddy and belong to the timber companies, literally. There are grouse here, but don't expect groomed trails or logging roads as we know them. It's wilderness hunting. Beware of the logging trucks, tractor trailers hauling logs on THEIR roads.



Any time you venture into a new place. finding the right habitat and location to hunt is a challenge. In New Hampshire if it is not posted you can hunt there. The timber companies own hundreds of thousands of acres all open to hunting. Thursday I hunted on the U.S. side of the of our border with Canada. Shadow is standing on point with her head held high, indicating a bird is in the tree(photo to left). I walk up to her and no bird flies. I walk around her and still no bird. Shadow moves but still points up toward the trees. I take a couple pictures of her on point and move deeper into the brush when I see the grouse walking on a limb 10 feet above me. At the same milisecond it flies in a downward sweep and is lost in the red spruce forest.

If you're coming to NH to grouse hunt you better have good boots, it is wet, waterproof boots are mandatory. I stayed at Lopstick where the staff was A+ all the way and reasonably priced. However, there are lots of places to stay and most are vacant. Check the deer and moose season dates, you don't want your dog in the woods at that time.

Dogs are welcome as are hunters, this is a hunting town. Locals are friendly and helpful and willing to share information on where to hunt. And that is my report from the northwoods for 2010; you never know what adventure awaits."

Mike Giles reports: *"I ventured to northeast South Dakota for pheasants the last week in October. This was a first encounter with "ditch parrots" for the dogs and myself. "Drivers" and "blockers" are used to hem them in so they won't run off though I didn't have the manpower for such tactics. These "nitroburners" outran my dogs on several occasions though my posse did manage to pen a few down in heavy cover of mostly cattails. You've got to stomp 'em out when they're penned down in the thick stuff. We hunted the fringes of soybean and corn fields, which dominate countryside. The and deer are humongus from gorging on these grains. I jumped one buck that looked like a linebacker! He'd of been a wallhanger for this back east hillbilly but the locals wouldn't have considered him as anything special.*

We were there during a record low pressure system that registered air pressure at 150 mb, four inches of snow with drifts up to 4 feet and winds at 50 mph. We didn't hunt for two days on account of this storm that gave us time a little rest after our first two days of hunting. We waded mud for two days prior to the storm and waded snow on the next two days after the storm. I wished all week that I'd of packed my knee high "bog busters" and my camera. My pups were drunk on pheasant scent the whole time we were there. There were plenty of birds and, despite my poor shooting, managed to bring home a few. My shooting shoulder was blue halfway down to my elbow.

Although we hunted private land, there are plenty of lands open to public hunting on Walk in Areas (WIA's). South Dakota publishes an atlas of WIA's throughout the state that are available at hunting license outlets.

They call pheasants the king of gamebirds out there. After hunting them four days, I'd still say the ruffed grouse is the king. The locals are very friendly and the prices are reasonable for everything (#4, 3in., steel shot @ \$12.00/box). It was a great trip and I'll go back."

Tom Griffin reports: *"We were hunting in Price county Wisconsin & the dogs all three of them pointed. We moved in & released them & they ran another 10 yards & pointed again. We thought we had a runner so we released them & they ran another 15 yards & locked down on a big hollowed out tree. I got close & saw something black starting to move then a very large black bear stuck his head out. Needless to say we collared the dogs & got the hell out of there. Another strange thing happened earlier that day. The dogs pointed @ a bush & we walked in and a large black cat came out. We were deep in woods with no houses within 5 miles. Never seen that before."*

"The strange thing is that last year I also had an encounter with a big ole bear-he ran right past me & I swatted (lightly tapped) him on the butt with my shotgun barrel & he never stopped or looked back-he was on a mission!-same county in Wisconsin as this year."

Spencer Young reports: *"I've hunted opening day and last Saturday and had decent shows of birds both times. Last Saturday was probably the best day I've had in VA, with numerous drums heard and six or seven flushes, all within 2.5 - 3 hours. Plenty of berries and successful trapping seemed to have helped the grouse in this part of Russell county. I watched Winston abandon me for the scent of a bird out in front of my buddy and since we were still unable to bring one home that's as successful as I could feel that day."*



Intrepid Travelling Wingshooter Ronnie Frazier writes: I attended The Second Annual Upland Bird Hunt In The Pennsylvania Wilds sponsored by the Allegheny Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society in the Pennsylvania Wilds for the first time, but it won't be my last. This was a most enjoyable experience with the most hospitable and gracious host anyone would ever want. Photo: I to r: Dave Shackelford, Bill Hasley, Ronnie Frazier, Adam Hostetler) A job well done and my hat is off to the many who made it possible. The weather was lousy, cold rain and blowing snow as my hunting partner, Adam Hostetler, our huntsman and guide Bill Hasley and his most proficient setter Clyde, my brittany

Shadow and I hit the clearcuts in search of Mr. Ruff. At the end of the day we had managed to fly 19 grouse and had 4 in the bag, beautiful dog work and no one minded the weather. Day 2 brought dryer weather and 20 flushes and 2 birds killed. I cannot thank Bill enough for giving of his time, effort and money to give Adam and I a successful hunt. And Adam proved to be deadly with his double 16 ga. with the most impressive ratio of shots fired and grouse bagged; me on the other hand, well, I love the smell of cordite- bang bang!. Also shared the time with huntsman Randy Patterson and hunter David Shackelford, two fine gentlemen. It seems that when it comes to this fraternity of grouse hunters, north, south, setters, brittanys, whatever, we are all brothers with a common interest, the King of gamebirds.

And by the way I must attract law enforcement since we were checked by Pennsylvania Wildlife Officers, Bill citing that this was his second check in 40 years of hunting. Both Officers were true professionals and gentlemen who also belong to our brotherhood of grouse hunters. Honestly, we appreciate them and the work that they do in an often thankless job.

You will want to put this event on your must do list for next year, I know I will."

Mike Giles further reports: *"My bird dog senses the approach of fall. During the summer, she's a free spirited hooligan that stalks field mice and bellys up in the creek to nibble on tender shoots of grass. A Jekyll/Hyde transformation occurs every year about this time. As the air gets cooler and the days shorter her free spirit gives way to a professionalism and keenness of demeanor that says: "Fur is for fun, feathers mean business, I'm ready to do your bidding in the grouse woods." When I put on my hunting clothes and grab my shotgun it's a certainty to her.... "The boss is fixing to hit the the big woods for grouse and I will be in that truck when it pulls out of this driveway." THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR is upon us once again. I wish you all a safe and happy hunting season."*

Our 16th Annual Sportsman's Banquet is just around the corner and we're beginning to make plans for this event. It will probably be around the same as last year somewhere in the Tri-cities TN/VA. It's always tricky trying to avoid race weekend at Bristol since they don't announce the date of the first race until after the new year. We raised close to \$1,000 for the "Drummer Fund" at our banquet last year and I'm confident we'll at least double the amount in our fund this year. These funds will be used to fund habitat project(s) in TN and/or VA. We've got funds available in our chapter account to sponsor events like the Boy Scout Skeet Shoot and purchase of wildlife seed mixture for timber cuts in the Cherokee National Forest. Please let Mike or Parker know if you know of an event or project near your home that will further our mission of promoting conditions suitable for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and related wildlife to sustain our sport hunting tradition and outdoor heritage.

Last Word

"I love the smell of cordite....bang, bang!"

Ronnie Frazier

Contacts

President and Virginia Habitat Chair: Mike Giles Michael.A.Giles@comcast.net

Vice president and Tennessee Habitat Chair: Parker Street prstreet7@embarqmail.com

Regional Director: Bruce Wojcik rgsbruce@comcast.net

The Ruffed Grouse Society: rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org