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To: FAN Member
Subject: FAN Update

Western Great Lakes Region FAN UPDATE

Volume 10, Issue 4 December 14, 2010

Happy Holidays to All

As I'm writing this, good roosting snow is piling up in the Upper Midwest and things have changed quickly from a late fall scene outside to a winter snow laden landscape. It is definitely time to take a look back at the past year and send out holiday greetings to all of our dedicated RGS members and supporters. With your help RGS has once again been very active and making some significant moves forward. As you will see in the following FAN Update there has been a lot happening in this region this year and I thank you for the support and help that you have provided me and the

Society to reach our goals. Below you will see a summary of some of the things that have been accomplished in the past year in this region. Merry Christmas to you and your families and may the New Year be a good year for all of us and for the birds we enjoy so much. *Gary Zimmer*

2010 SENIOR REGIONAL BIOLOGIST REPORT

Here's a summary of the 2010 Regional accomplishments:

- **Attended 38 meetings with resource agency staff/legislators and provided RGS input to 22 public land management projects.**
- **Involved in 23 media contacts (includes press releases/television and radio interviews).**
- **Conducted 11 reviews of existing or proposed Management Area Projects.**
- **Conducted 13 on-site habitat consultations.**
- **Participated in 16 chapter meetings, 2 youth events, 4 outdoor shows and 4 field events.**
- **Attended 13 chapter banquets.**
- **Responded to approximately 1,500 individual requests for information.**
- **Produced four FAN Update newsletters and one Call to Action to nearly 700 members.**
- **Prepared six grant applications that helped generate $134,050 for habitat and educational projects.**
- **Represented RGS on Lake States Resource Alliance, Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association and the National Forest Resource Advisory Committee.**
- **RGS habitat equipment (forestry loaders with mulchers) completed over 817 acres of habitat improvement work in Michigan and Wisconsin.**

Comments Strongly in Support of Early Successional Habitat Improvement Project in Northern Wisconsin

Approximately 120 comments have been received for the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest's Early Successional Habitat Improvement Project to improve habitat for wildlife dependent on young forest conditions on 12 designated Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock Habitat Management Areas. Analysis is ongoing but early indications are that only two comments

were received that were not in favor of the project. An overwhelming response of support came from RGS members.

We also appreciate Chain O' Lakes Chapter member Kurt Krueger's posting in the Vilas County News Review requesting readers comments on the project. Forest Service staff will analyze all the comments and use them to determine any changes needed in the project. A preliminary project decision will be made in the future and there will be another public comment period before a final decision will be made. You will be kept posted as this develops. Thanks to all the RGS members who sent in supporting comments for this important project.

Huron-Manistee Hunting Ban Update

Below is a portion of a recent press release from the Huron-Manistee NF re the Circuit Court decision that requires the Forest to consider banning hunting on portions of the Forest.

"The Forest Service is beginning a formal review of the Land and Resource Management Plan of the Huron-Manistee National Forests.

As a result of a ruling by the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, the Forest Service will prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement to assess the environmental impacts of a proposed ban on firearm hunting, subject to existing rights, and snowmobile use on National Forest System lands within Semiprimitive Non-motorized Management Areas and a ban on firearm hunting, subject to existing rights, in the Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area. This analysis will allow the agency to make a decision in accordance with federal regulations.

On September 29, 2010, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a favorable District Court ruling in a lawsuit involving the Huron-Manistee. Kurt Meister, a Michigan attorney, claimed that the Forest Service failed to address his concerns about noise created by gun hunters and snowmobiles in Semiprimitive Non-motorized Management Areas and the Wilderness."

The Forest will soon release a Notice of Intent to review the Forest Plan in light of the above referenced Circuit Court decision. The NOI will provide for a 45-day public comment period. This is only the first step in a protracted process that could take 12-18 months to complete. RGS members will be notified when this is posted and encouraged to provide individual comments.

Iowa Voters Support Sales Tax Hike for Conservation

On November 2nd Iowa voters strongly supported the Water and Land Legacy amendment, a measure designed to fund future conservation efforts in that state. The measure will amend the Iowa constitution and set aside 3/8 of 1% of the next increase to the state's sales tax for conservation projects. The vote was 62% in favor, 38% opposed.

The amendment creates the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. The account is expected to receive $150 million a year from a future sales tax increase. Such an increase must be approved by the state legislature. "This was a historic step toward improved conservation in Iowa," said Sean McMahon, chairman of Iowa's Water & Land Legacy, a group created to support the amendment. McMahon said establishment of the fund would lead to cleaner water, less-severe floods and better wildlife habitat.

The fund could be used only for specified outdoor recreation and conservation work, and can't be raided for other purposes. A majority vote was required for approval. Iowa's state sales tax is 6%.

Minnesota voters approved a similar amendment to fund conservation in 2008; however, that 3/8 of 1% increase in the state sales tax went into effect shortly after the vote and has already generated hundreds of millions of dollars for water quality, wildlife and state park projects.

Changes Ahead for Michigan DNRE

Governor Elect Rick Snyder plans to split the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) into two separate agencies. Snyder named former Agriculture Director Dan Wyant as Department of Environmental Quality Director, while DNRE Science and Policy Office Chief Rodney Stokes will become Director of the Department of DNR. Former Agriculture Deputy Director Keith Creagh, who just retired, will become head of the renamed Department of Agriculture & Rural Development. The three departments will work together in the Quality of Life Group.

Seedlings Available from the Wisconsin DNR for 2011

Landowners thinking about doing some tree planting on their woodlots next Spring will want to talk to a Wisconsin DNR forester or private consulting forester *now* - and spend some time looking at the wealth of tree planting information on the State Nursery Program webpage at http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/Nursery/ . Foresters can advise landowners on a wide range of issues (timber protection, forest health, wildlife management opportunities, forest aesthetics, etc.) and can also provide information on tax incentive and cost-sharing programs. Landowners interested in planting projects may also want to look at the Wisconsin Seeding Catalog (http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/Nursery/WisconsinStateNurseryCatalog.pdf) and the Tree and Shrub Order Form (http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/nursery/order/trees.htm) on the DNR website. In addition to listing available tree and shrub species (and prices), the publications offer detailed information on site preparation, plantation maintenance, and the supplies needed to maximize planting success. "Seedlings grown at the state nurseries are high-quality native species grown from seed harvested in Wisconsin," according to Nursery Specialist Avery Dorland.

Ties To The Land Workshops Set for Spring 2011

Ties To The Land is a workshop that focuses on ways to maintain family ties to the land from generation to generation, building awareness of key challenges facing family forest ownership, and motivating families to address those challenges. This workshop is a mix of presentations and practical exercises to help families develop techniques needed to address these issues. Attendees will receive a copy of the Ties to the Land workbook and additional resources designed to help families continue to improve communications about the future of their woodlands.

Ties To The Land workshops are facilitated by the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (WWOA) and are two session classes. Preregistration is required for these workshops. Registration is $95 per individual or $120 per couple for non-WWOA members or $50 per individual or $60 for couples for WWOA members. Contact the WWOA office for a registration form at 715-346-4798 or wwoa@uwsp.edu .Spring workshops are scheduled for Baraboo on Feb. 15 and March 8, Burlington on Feb. 19 and

March 19, Eau Claire on Feb. 19 and March 19, Fennimore on March 31 and April 14, Fond du Lac on March 9 and 23, La Crosse on Feb. 16 and March 9, Spooner on March 8 and 22, Waupaca on March 7 and 28, and Wausau on March 1 and 15.

USDA Releases Final WHIP Rule

On 23 November 2010, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) released the final rule for the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP). Under the new rule, WHIP lands should "protect, restore, develop, or enhance important migration and other movement corridors for wildlife." WHIP was reauthorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, as a voluntary program for landowners interested in improving and developing fish and wildlife habitats on certain agricultural and forested lands.

The new priority to restore and enhance wildlife habitat contributes to the long-term goals of WHIP: reducing the impacts of invasive species, reversing aquatic wildlife decline and at-risk species, and encouraging activities that promote native fish and wildlife habitats. The new rule also restricts eligible lands to only agricultural, private and non-industrialized forest land, and Native American lands; clarifies that pivot corners and irregular areas are eligible habitat; increased the percentage of annual funds available for enrollments longer than 15 years to 25%; provided the Secretary of Agriculture discretionary authority to address state, regional, and national conservation priorities; and established an annual limit in payments to $50,000 per person or legal entity.

WHIP is available in all 50 States and applications are accepted on a continual basis. Applications are evaluated by the State Conservationist and must address issues regarding natural resources such as climate change, soil quality, grazing lands, water quality and quantity, and forest health. Visit NRCS' website for more information about WHIP.

Scott Walter New WDNR Upland Wildlife Staff Specialist

Longtime RGS member and ruffed grouse researcher, Scott Walter of Viola has been selected to be the next Upland Wildlife and Farm Bill Staff Specialist by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Scott has

been a professor of biology at UW Richland Center for the past 11 years and headed up the recent SW Ruffed Grouse Ecology Study that provided valuable insight into the causes for the declining grouse populations in SW Wisconsin. He has been a speaker for the Wisconsin Coverts Project, an active member of the Southwestern Wisconsin Chapter of RGS and a member of the DNR's Ruffed Grouse Committee. Scott will start in the position on January 3 at the Wisconsin DNR central office in Madison.

RGS Biological Program Back to Being Fully Staffed

With the addition of two new biologists, RGS will be represented biologically across all regions once again. Larry Visser has been hired as the Michigan and Ohio biologist, and Ted Dick, due to a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and RGS, is the new Minnesota biologist devoted to developing and implementing the state's new strategic plan for ruffed grouse. Ted's position is shared between the Minnesota DNR and RGS, in an innovative arrangement that is the first of its kind for RGS. You can read more about Larry and Ted in the upcoming Spring 2011 issue of *Ruffed Grouse Society* magazine.

Enter the 2010/2011 RGS 50th Anniversary National Raffle

Three Chances to Win, Only 1,000 Tickets to be Sold

1st Prize: Remington Model 1100 "F" Grade
28-Gauge Semi-Auto Shotgun
Hand Engraved by Remington's Master Engraver Don Talbot - One of a Kind

2nd Prize: Caesar Guerini Apex
28-Gauge Over/Under Shotgun
Hand Engraved Grouse on Trigger Guard - One of a Kind

3rd Prize: Kimber Valier Grade II
20-Gauge Side/Side Shotgun

To Purchase Tickets Contact:
Gary Zimmer at 715-674-7505 or rgszimm@newnorth.net
or mail the following to:
RGS, PO Box 116, Laona, WI 54541

Name _____

Mailing Address_____

City _____**State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone Number _____

_____**Tickets @ $100.00 Each = $**_____ **Total Enclosed**

CHECK (Payable to RGS) **CASH (Do NOT mail)** **CREDIT CARD**

CC # _____**Exp. Date** _____

Billing Address _____ **Billing Zip** _____

Signature _____

2011 is RGS' 50th Anniversary!!

In 2011, the Ruffed Grouse Society celebrates its 50th Anniversary as one of the longest running conservation organizations. Special items commemorating the anniversary will include a collector's knife, belt buckle, several unique shotguns, a unique lost-wax process cast of a ruffed grouse, carved woodcock and apparel with the 50th Anniversary RGS logo. These items will be at our 2011 banquets in limited quantities, and available through our website at http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/shoppingcart/magento/, some of them currently.

RGS 50th Anniversary Publication Available

Celebrate 50 years of conservation by purchasing a copy of the unique, limited edition 50th anniversary publication of the RGS. This high quality, perfect bound publication will be a collector's item for years to come.

Issue price is $14.95 plus shipping. Order online at www.ruffedgrousesociety.org, or by phone at (888) 564-6747.

Orders placed before January 1, 2011 will arrive mid-January, 2011. Orders placed after January 1, 2011 will arrive within 2 weeks.

Great Christmas Present for a Grouse Hunter

***Serious Grouse Hunting, Book 1* is a book written for all grouse hunters looking to improve their grouse hunting success. The book, written by Jay Kumar and Brendan Haines, is an insightful treatise on how to up your grouse game, with and without a dog. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of each book will be donated to the Ruffed Grouse Society. You can order your book at SeriousBirdHunting.com, or by mail - send a check for $34.95 (includes $5 s/h) to Sasquatch Media, 11 Maple St, Lebanon, NJ 08833.**

Reminder

To insure that you continue to receive timely FAN updates,
please notify me of changes in your email address.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions:

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The Ruffed Grouse Society is the one international wildlife conservation organization dedicated to promoting conditions suitable for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and related wildlife to sustain our sport hunting tradition and outdoor heritage. For information on the Ruffed Grouse Society, please call 888-564-6747 or check out the RGS website at www.ruffedgrousesociety.org.