



Chapter Coverts

Chapter Newsletter— Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois

RGS Fall Banquet/Event Season

The Ruffed Grouse Society's Fall Banquet/Event Season is in full swing. In only a few more weeks the summer of 2008 will be only a memory. Our RGS Regional Biologists and all state DNR agencies throughout the region report good hatch results and predict increased grouse and woodcock numbers for the upcoming bird season. We are all beginning to think about the chill of October and being in the grouse woods. All of us at RGS wish for you and your hunting partners many safe and enjoyable days in the woods this fall.

A great way to get ready for this hunting season is to attend an RGS Banquet or Event in your area. Please make plans to join us for a fun-filled evening while we help to raise funds for a great cause!

Below is a listing of upcoming events in our region:

September 18th— Marinette, WI Banquet

Contact: Robert Zutter 715-735-7311

September 25th— Ironwood, MI Banquet

Contact: Dave Johnson 715-492-5858

September 25th— Milwaukee, WI Banquet

Contact: Paul Seul 414-254-1861

October 14th— Marshfield, WI Banquet

Contact: Jamie Kuhn 715-743-3752

October 16th— Park Falls, WI Banquet

Contact: Tony Blattler 715- 332-5121

We Need Your Help!!

Hayward, WI Area RGS Supporters

After many years of well regarded and much appreciated commitment to the RGS cause, a good number of the Hayward, WI committee decided to form their own organization to support youth causes in the area. We would very much like to continue the nearly thirty year RGS tradition in the Hayward/Cable area, but now we need to find the people who will help us do so. Please contact Steve Gadow at 608-437-6455 if you're willing to become an RGS committee member in the Hayward/Cable area.

Other Area RGS Supporters

If you are interested in starting an RGS Chapter in your area, I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you. If you did have an active RGS chapter in your area, but it no longer exists, and you would be willing to donate your time I need your help. I am asking all current RGS members to consider becoming involved with their local chapter or start a new active chapter in your area. If this is of interest to you, please contact me. The Society is looking toward the future and our future consists of our Members. The Members who make things happen are called Committee Members. If you would like to become an RGS Committee Member please contact: Steve Gadow, RGS Regional Director, 608-437-6455 or e-mail at rgssteve@mhtc.net.

**RGS Committee Member Make Things Happen
Become Part Of The Process
Join An RGS Committee In Your Area**

RGS To Offer High Grade Upland Bird Guns At All Events

RGS will be offering several high grade shotguns at our fall banquets—

The SKB Model 785 Medallion Field 20 or 28-gauge shotgun, available with either 26” or 28” barrels. This beautiful firearm has a RGS Logo Medallion on each side of the receiver (Retail Value \$2399.00).

Also available will be the AYA Model No.4/53 Boxlock shotgun, 20 or 28-Gauge, 28” barrels, nickel silver (Retail Value \$3300.00).

Both of these guns will be on display at every RGS banquet. Please stop by when you’re at the dinner and look them over.

The Ruffed Grouse Society

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Please forward this on to your friends
If you have someone that wishes to receive this, please e-mail me their address.
Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to post information that you feel
belongs in the RGS quarterly newsletter---rgssteve@mhtc.net.



National News

Wouldn't it be nice to know what to expect in the woods this fall? Visit www.ruffedgrousesociety.org, **Interactive Areas > News** to read your state grouse and American woodcock forecast today.

New Banquet Incentive Program Gains Momentum

Every single chapter did a great job during the spring banquet season and 15 met - or exceeded - the 15% growth target, and raised more than \$18,000 for local projects. A heartfelt thank you to each and every member for all you've done this year, and years past, to make RGS the successful organization that it is today. Great job!

2008 – 2009 RGS National Raffle Announced

Win an Upland Bird Dream Hunt

October 2-10, 2009

First Place

A week long, all-expense-paid trip consisting of two guided upland bird hunts for the winner and guest. Travel from October 2 to 10. Start in Havre, Montana and hunt for sharp-tail grouse and Hungarian partridge from October 3 to 5. Join the RGS National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota from October 6 to 9.

Both first place winner and guest will receive an SKB model 785 over-and-under shotgun. Each SKB will have a commemorative RGS logo medallion on the receiver, and is available in 20- or 28-gauge, with 26- or 28- inch barrels. The SKB has a retail value of \$2399.00.

All transportation included. Hunting dates are final. Approximate retail value of total package: \$18,000.

Second Place

The second place winner will receive a \$1,000.00 Cabela's gift certificate.

Third Place

The third place winner will receive a custom-fitted pair of upland hunting boots from Russell Moccasin. Approximate retail value: \$400.00.

Winners will be drawn on June 30, 2009 at RGS headquarters in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania.

To purchase raffle tickets use the form below or call 1-888-564-6747. Donation for each ticket is \$50.00. Only 2500 tickets to be sold.

Note: Please do **NOT** send CASH through the mail. This option appears on the order form only for hand-delivered orders via one of the banquets or other events that Steve Gadow attends.

Working Toward Better Woodcock Habitat Update on Meeting Goals Outlined in the Woodcock Conservation Plan

Lack of public understanding of the role of forest management in the conservation of forest wildlife is the single greatest impediment to establishing habitat for ruffed grouse and woodcock. Individual private landowners, who control 71% of the forest land within the range of the woodcock, often view the cutting of trees as detrimental to wildlife – rather than as an essential wildlife habitat management tool. Because of this misconception, many landowners are reluctant to implement the very forest management practices that can benefit woodcock and so many other types of wildlife.

These attitudes can also affect habitat management on public forest lands. Our public forests are managed to meet the needs and expectations of the general public. Agencies responsible for the management of these lands may either voluntarily, or under pressure, refrain from using timber harvests to create young forest habitat because some consider the harvest of timber to be unsightly.

RGS continues to take steps to expand the use of active forest management on both public and private forest lands. For example, RGS is leading the efforts of a host of wildlife conservation organizations to change the way the federal government pays for fighting wildfires.

Although wildfire suppression in the western United States may seem unrelated to forest habitat management in the eastern part of the nation, because so much of the US Forest Service budget now goes toward firefighting, assistance to private forest landowners and other critical programs are being cut back throughout the country.

Over the past 8 years the agency budget, which supports landowner assistance programs, has been slashed by 89%. This means far fewer dollars for landowner education and cost-share assistance for on the ground habitat management activities and the continued loss of young forest habitat.

On a more positive note, RGS, in cooperation with other conservation groups, was able to increase the funds available to private forest landowners in the 2008 Farm Bill. The bill also directs state natural resource agencies to initiate statewide forest resource assessments to identify the most pressing forest conservation needs. These assessments will further document declines in young forest habitats and lend support to efforts aimed at stemming these declines.

CEO Named to Sustainable Forestry Initiative Board of Directors

RGS Executive Director and CEO Dr. Michael D. Zagata was recently named to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Board of Directors, a diversified multi-stakeholder group of professionals representing a variety of interests in the forestry community.

SFI is a fully independent non-profit organization devoted to improving responsible forest management, and its volunteer Board of Directors represent environmental, social and economic interests equally.

In accepting the position, Dr. Zagata said, “The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is a credible mechanism for assuring that our forests are managed for sustainability. I’m excited about the opportunity to join with other SFI Board members in developing public awareness of the fact that different species require different habitats and those differing habitats are found in young, middle-aged and old-growth forests. That means if we are going to have a variety of wildlife species that we must work to assure that we have forests of all ages, not just old growth forests.”

RGS Receives Timber Rights

In 2008, RGS received timber rights for 15 years on a 2300 acre tract of land in Somerset county, Pennsylvania. The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy purchased the land with funding from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and the Conservancy transferred the timber rights to RGS. The land, which now belongs to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Forestry Bureau, has an appraised timber value of five million dollars. Plans for future management of the land by RGS include harvest of timber to create prime young-forest habitat for ruffed grouse and related wildlife. Funds received from the timber sales of the property will be used to grow the endowment for RGS biologists.

Wayne National Forest Project

RGS recently signed an agreement with the U. S. Forest Service to help maintain native shrubs and other wildlife habitat on approximately 400 acres of reclaimed strip mines on the Wayne National Forest in eastern Ohio. The Forest Service is battling invasive shrubs like autumn olive and multi-flora rose on these sites. The land provides habitat for a range of wildlife, particularly rare songbirds found nowhere else in the forest. RGS and the Forest Service will share the cost of up to 500 hours of operation of a Caterpillar multi-terrain loader, mulching head, and operator to eliminate the exotic invasive species and make room for native grasses and shrubs. The Forest Service will provide fuel and RGS will provide maintenance and repair of the equipment. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife is also working with RGS to provide transportation of the heavy equipment. This project is the first of its kind between the Wayne National Forest and RGS.

RGS Pursues Funding for Habitat Equipment

In partnership with the Richard King Mellon Foundation, California University of Pennsylvania and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, RGS has been acquiring habitat management equipment owned and operated cooperatively by RGS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The equipment has been used in seven states on private, state and federal property to manage aspen, alder, and various other species.

The equipment program has been so successful that RGS is pursuing additional funding for equipment in the Midwest, particularly in Wisconsin and Michigan. RGS is also working with the state of Maryland to upgrade their current equipment and cooperatively purchase a new, more versatile machine. The equipment to be purchased is particularly useful for managing alder – a classic woodcock habitat – as well as non-commercial aspen and the abundant brush-lands located throughout the Lake States.

Executive Directors Report

By the time you read this, the leaves will have fallen, the woodcock will have headed south, your heart will have leapt toward your throat at the flush of the "King of Game-Birds" and, with skill mixed with a sprinkling of luck, and you may have been fortunate enough to have enjoyed a grouse for dinner. If things go as planned, I hope to have shared those experiences with you.

The spring banquet season for RGS was successful – both in terms of generating some of the revenue needed to support the Society and in terms of generating additional funding for local projects. Fifteen chapters exceeded their target for increasing the net from their banquets and, as a result, over \$18,000 went back to them for local projects. Several other chapters worked very hard and, in spite of difficult economic times, had successful banquets. All of you are to be congratulated.

Your Society has an excellent team in place. The regional directors have, according to many of you, made significant strides in improving their relationship with their volunteers and the biologists continue to do great work in their regions. The headquarters staff is dedicated to better serving the membership. Your Board is committed to putting RGS in a position whereby it can fulfill its mission. To that end, I am proud to announce that they moved to initiate a Capital Campaign called RUFF (Restore Upland Forests Future) in September of 2008. The goal of the campaign is to raise \$5 million additional dollars to fully endow the biologists. By the time you read this, you may have already been contacted for a donation. With the money from RUFF campaign and from the former PIC campaign and the new funds from the Richard King Mellon Foundation that will come as a result of the Society's ability to harvest timber over 15 years on 2,300 acres in PA the Society will be able to endow the biologists, including filling the vacant biologist position in MI. By doing that, your Society will be able to use the money that is now being used to fund the biologists to fund other things, like Coverts, that are central to its mission. If you like what you see going on in the Society, help us meet the campaign's funding goal. If you don't like what you see, help us get better and then help us meet the funding goal. We need your support, in all the forms that support takes, if we're going to succeed. For the sake of the resource and our ability, and the ability of future generations, to enjoy it, we simply can't afford to fail.

Mike

Planning a vacation soon? Visit www.RGSTravel.org for all your travel needs.

DREAM HUNT FLYER