

**AMENDED RETURN**  
**Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax**  
Under section 501(c), 527, or 4947(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code (except black lung benefit trust or private foundation).

OMB No. 1545-0047  
**2009**  
Open to Public Inspection

The organization may have to use a copy of this return to satisfy state reporting requirements.

**A** For the 2009 calendar year, or tax year beginning and ending:

<b>B</b> Check if applicable: <input type="checkbox"/> Address change <input type="checkbox"/> Name change <input type="checkbox"/> Initial return <input type="checkbox"/> Termination <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amended return <input type="checkbox"/> Application pending	Please use IRS label or print or type. <b>C</b> Name of organization: <b>RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY</b> Doing Business As: Number and street (or P.O. box if mail is not delivered to street address) / Room/suite: <b>451 MCCORMICK ROAD</b> City or town, state or country, and ZIP + 4: <b>CORAOPOLIS, PA 15108</b>	<b>D</b> Employer identification number: <b>54-0846925</b>
		<b>E</b> Telephone number: <b>412-262-4044</b>
<b>F</b> Name and address of principal officer: <b>MICHAEL D. ZAGATA</b> <b>451 MCCORMICK ROAD, CORAOPOLIS, PA 15108</b>		<b>G</b> Gross receipts: <b>3,063,900.</b>
<b>I</b> Tax-exempt status: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 501(c)(3) (insert no.) <input type="checkbox"/> 4947(a)(1) or <input type="checkbox"/> 527		<b>H(a)</b> Is this a group return for affiliates? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <b>H(b)</b> Are all affiliates included? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If "No," attach a list. (see instructions)
<b>J</b> Website: <b>WWW.RUFFEDGROUSEOCIETY.ORG</b>		<b>H(c)</b> Group exemption number: <b>&gt;</b>
<b>K</b> Form of organization: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Trust <input type="checkbox"/> Association <input type="checkbox"/> Other <b>&gt;</b>		<b>L</b> Year of formation: <b>1961</b> <b>M</b> State of legal domicile: <b>VA</b>

**Part I Summary**

<b>1</b> Briefly describe the organization's mission or most significant activities: <b>DEDICATED TO PROMOTING CONDITIONS SUITABLE FOR RUFFED GROUSE (CONT. ON SCHEDULE O)</b>		
<b>2</b> Check this box: <input type="checkbox"/> If the organization discontinued its operations or disposed of more than 25% of its net assets.		
<b>3</b> Number of voting members of the governing body (Part VI, line 1a)	<b>3 16</b>	
<b>4</b> Number of independent voting members of the governing body (Part VI, line 1b)	<b>4 16</b>	
<b>5</b> Total number of employees (Part V, line 2a)	<b>5 29</b>	
<b>6</b> Total number of volunteers (estimate if necessary)	<b>6 0</b>	
<b>7a</b> Total gross unrelated business revenue from Part VIII, column (C), line 12	<b>7a 0.</b>	
<b>b</b> Net unrelated business taxable income from Form 990-T, line 34	<b>7b &lt;54,561.&gt;</b>	
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>8</b> Contributions and grants (Part VIII, line 1h)	<b>Prior Year 3,894,151. Current Year 1,786,707.</b>
	<b>9</b> Program service revenue (Part VIII, line 2g)	
	<b>10</b> Investment income (Part VII, column (A), lines 3, 4, and 7d)	<b>90,175. 61,327.</b>
	<b>11</b> Other revenue (Part VII, column (A), lines 5, 6d, 8c, 9c, 10c, and 11e)	<b>814,440. 949,719.</b>
<b>12</b> Total revenue- add lines 8 through 11 (must equal Part VIII, column (A), line 12)	<b>4,798,766. 2,797,753.</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>13</b> Grants and similar amounts paid (Part IX, column (A), lines 1-3)	
	<b>14</b> Benefits paid to or for members (Part IX, column (A), line 4)	
	<b>15</b> Salaries, other compensation, employee benefits (Part IX, column (A), lines 5-10)	<b>1,435,607. 1,301,095.</b>
	<b>16a</b> Professional fundraising fees (Part IX, column (A), line 11e)	
	<b>b</b> Total fundraising expenses (Part IX, column (D), line 25)	<b>13,506.</b>
<b>17</b> Other expenses (Part IX, column (A), lines 11a-11d, 11f-24f)	<b>1,762,495. 1,400,050.</b>	
<b>18</b> Total expenses. Add lines 13-17 (must equal Part IX, column (A), line 25)	<b>3,198,102. 2,701,145.</b>	
<b>19</b> Revenue less expenses. Subtract line 18 from line 12	<b>1,600,664. 96,608.</b>	
<b>Net Assets or Fund Balances</b>	<b>20</b> Total assets (Part X, line 16)	<b>Beginning of Current Year 5,961,588. End of Year 6,576,031.</b>
	<b>21</b> Total liabilities (Part X, line 26)	<b>977,966. 896,162.</b>
	<b>22</b> Net assets or fund balances. Subtract line 21 from line 20	<b>4,983,622. 5,679,869.</b>

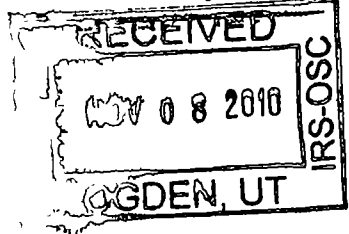
**Part II Signature Block**

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return, including accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete. Declaration of preparer (other than officer) is based on all information of which preparer has any knowledge.

**Sign Here**  
Signature of officer: *M. D. Zagata* Date: **10/28/2010**  
**MICHAEL D. ZAGATA, PRESIDENT AND CEO**  
Type or print name and title

**Preparer's Use Only**  
Preparer's signature: *[Signature]* Date: **10-26-10** Check if self-employed:  Preparer's identifying number (see instructions): **400323233**  
Firm's name (or yours if self-employed, address, and ZIP + 4): **LOUIS FLUNG & COMPANY LLP**  
**4 GATEWAY CENTER, 9TH FL**  
**PITTSBURGH, PA 15222** EIN: **25-1627458** Phone no.: **(412) 281-8771**

May the IRS discuss this return with the preparer shown above? (see instructions)  Yes  No  
932001 02-04-10 LHA For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the separate instructions. Form 990 (2009)



Part III Statement of Program Service Accomplishments

1 Briefly describe the organization's mission:

ESTABLISHED IN 1961 THE RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY IS THE ONE INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PROMOTING CONDITIONS SUITABLE FOR RUFFED GROUSE, AMERICAN WOODCOCK & RELATED WILDLIFE TO SUSTAIN OUR SPORT HUNTING TRADITION & OUTDOOR HERITAGE

2 Did the organization undertake any significant program services during the year which were not listed on the prior Form 990 or 990-EZ?

Yes No

If "Yes," describe these new services on Schedule O.

3 Did the organization cease conducting, or make significant changes in how it conducts, any program services?

Yes No

If "Yes," describe these changes on Schedule O.

4 Describe the exempt purpose achievements for each of the organization's three largest program services by expenses.

Section 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations and section 4947(a)(1) trusts are required to report the amount of grants and allocations to others, the total expenses, and revenue, if any, for each program service reported.

See Schedule O for Continuation(s)

4a (Code: ) (Expenses \$ 318,736. including grants of \$ ) (Revenue \$ )

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES: SERVICING MEMBERSHIPS INCLUDING THE PUBLICATION OF THE "RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY" MAGAZINE (SAMPLE ATTACHED), REGIONAL DIRECTOR NEWSLETTERS (PER 4b, EXAMPLES ATTACHED AND PAST ISSUES AVAILABLE ON RGS' WEBSITE), ANNUAL REPORT TO SPONSORS (2007 ATTACHED AND AVAILABLE ON RGS' WEBSITE); CHAPTER ACTIVITIES INCLUDING GENERAL MEMBER MEETINGS, DOG TRAINING CLASSES, SHOOTING INSTRUCTION FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS, BIRD IDENTIFICATION ALONG WITH SEXING AND AGING TECHNIQUES, ECT.; PROVIDE RECOGNITION FOR SERVICE BY OUR VOLUNTEERS, SUPPORTING FOUNDATIONS, PROGRAM PARTNERS ; AND OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS ALSO PROVIDE ADVERTISING DOLLARS THAT REDUCE THE COST OF THE MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS.

4b (Code: ) (Expenses \$ 1,842,180. including grants of \$ ) (Revenue \$ )

VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS: WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT EDUCATION INCLUDING WORKSHOPS SYMPOSIA AND HABITAT CONSULTATIONS WITH FOREST LANDOWNERS AND LAND MANAGERS; PUBLICATIONS (SPECIFIC RGS ISSUES WITH SAID ARTICLES HABITAT OTHER PUBLICATIONS AND TREASURED TRILOGY OF THE UPLANDS ATTACHED), PRINTING ACQUISITION AND DISTRIBUTION, AND CHAPTER EXPENSE AS WELL AS PRESS RELEASES TO EDUCATE THE GENERAL PUBLIC ABOUT ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO RGS' MISSION (EXAMPLES ATTACHED); REGIONAL DIRECTORS NEWSLETTERS, EXAMPLES ATTACHED AND PAST ISSUES AVAILABLE UNDER CONTACT US>REGIONAL DIRECTORS>NEWSLETTERS ON RGS' WEBSITE); VARIOUS REGIONAL BIOLOGIST ACTIVITIES INCLUDING PERIODIC PUBLICATION OF FOREST ACTION NETWORK (FAN) NEWSLETTERS (EXAMPLE ATTACHED AND OTHERS ON RGS' WEBSITE UNDER CONTACT US>BIOLOGISTS>FAN

4c (Code: ) (Expenses \$ 307,930. including grants of \$ ) (Revenue \$ )

PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS: DIRECT GRANTS TO COUNTY, STATE AND FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES TO ENHANCE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS (WMAS) - - STATE MAP EXAMPLE ATTACHED SHOWING BOTH THE MANAGEMENT AREA PROGRAM (MAP) PROJECTS AND ACRES INVOLVED (ALL ACTIVE STATE MAPS ARE AVAILABLE ON RGS' WEBSITE AND GREATER PROJECT DETAIL IS AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS), OR PROVIDING FIVE TREE-HARVESTING MACHINES TO ASSIST IN MANAGING THE WMAS AND PRIVATE LANDS. THIS PROGRAM WAS EXPANDED IN 2008 TO INCLUDE NOT ONLY PUBLIC BUT PRIVATE LAND IMPLEMENTATION AND WE'VE RECEIVED TIMBER RIGHTS VALUED AT \$5,000,000 ON 2,300 ACRE TRACT IN PA. THIS AREA WILL BE USED AS A MODEL FOR EARLY SUCCESSIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT. AN ADDITIONAL LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM WAS STARTED IN 2009 - THE RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY WILL MANAGE 7,000 ACRES OF LAND OWNED

4d Other program services. (Describe in Schedule O.)

(Expenses \$ 18,907. including grants of \$ ) (Revenue \$ )

4e Total program service expenses \$ 2,487,753.

**Part IV Checklist of Required Schedules**

		Yes	No
1	Is the organization described in section 501(c)(3) or 4947(a)(1) (other than a private foundation)? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule A</i>	X	
2	Is the organization required to complete Schedule B, Schedule of Contributors?	X	
3	Did the organization engage in direct or indirect political campaign activities on behalf of or in opposition to candidates for public office? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part I</i>		X
4	<b>Section 501(c)(3) organizations.</b> Did the organization engage in lobbying activities? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part II</i>		X
5	<b>Section 501(c)(4), 501(c)(6), and 501(c)(29) organizations.</b> Is the organization subject to the section 6033(e) notice and reporting requirement and proxy tax? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule C, Part III</i>		
6	Did the organization maintain any donor advised funds or any similar funds or accounts where donors have the right to provide advice on the distribution or investment of amounts in such funds or accounts? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part I</i>		X
7	Did the organization receive or hold a conservation easement, including easements to preserve open space, the environment, historic land areas, or historic structures? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part II</i>		X
8	Did the organization maintain collections of works of art, historical treasures, or other similar assets? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part III</i>		X
9	Did the organization report an amount in Part X, line 21; serve as a custodian for amounts not listed in Part X; or provide credit counseling, debt management, credit repair, or debt negotiation services? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part IV</i>		X
10	Did the organization, directly or through a related organization, hold assets in term, permanent, or quasi-endowments? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part V</i>	X	
11	Is the organization's answer to any of the following questions "Yes"? <i>If so, complete Schedule D, Parts VI, VII, VIII, IX, or X as applicable</i>	X	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the organization report an amount for land, buildings, and equipment in Part X, line 10? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part VI.</i></li> <li>• Did the organization report an amount for investments - other securities in Part X, line 12 that is 5% or more of its total assets reported in Part X, line 16? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part VII.</i></li> <li>• Did the organization report an amount for investments - program related in Part X, line 13 that is 5% or more of its total assets reported in Part X, line 16? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part VIII.</i></li> <li>• Did the organization report an amount for other assets in Part X, line 15 that is 5% or more of its total assets reported in Part X, line 16? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part IX.</i></li> <li>• Did the organization report an amount for other liabilities in Part X, line 25? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part X.</i></li> <li>• Did the organization's separate or consolidated financial statements for the tax year include a footnote that addresses the organization's liability for uncertain tax positions under FIN 48? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Part X.</i></li> </ul>		
12	Did the organization obtain separate, independent audited financial statements for the tax year? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule D, Parts XI, XII, and XIII.</i>	X	
12A	Was the organization included in consolidated, independent audited financial statements for the tax year? <i>If "Yes," completing Schedule D, Parts XI, XII, and XIII is optional</i>	Yes No X	
13	Is the organization a school described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii)? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule E</i>		X
14a	Did the organization maintain an office, employees, or agents outside of the United States?		X
14b	Did the organization have aggregate revenues or expenses of more than \$10,000 from grantmaking, fundraising, business, and program service activities outside the United States? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule F, Part I</i>		X
15	Did the organization report on Part IX, column (A), line 3, more than \$5,000 of grants or assistance to any organization or entity located outside the United States? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule F, Part II</i>		X
16	Did the organization report on Part IX, column (A), line 3, more than \$5,000 of aggregate grants or assistance to individuals located outside the United States? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule F, Part III</i>		X
17	Did the organization report a total of more than \$15,000 of expenses for professional fundraising services on Part IX, column (A), lines 6 and 11e? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule G, Part I</i>		X
18	Did the organization report more than \$15,000 total of fundraising event gross income and contributions on Part VIII, lines 1c and 8a? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule G, Part II</i>	X	
19	Did the organization report more than \$15,000 of gross income from gaming activities on Part VIII, line 9a? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule G, Part III</i>		X
20	Did the organization operate one or more hospitals? <i>If "Yes," complete Schedule H</i>		X

**Part IV Checklist of Required Schedules** (continued)

	Yes	No
21 Did the organization report more than \$5,000 of grants and other assistance to governments and organizations in the United States on Part IX, column (A), line 1? If "Yes," complete Schedule I, Parts I and II		X
22 Did the organization report more than \$5,000 of grants and other assistance to individuals in the United States on Part IX, column (A), line 2? If "Yes," complete Schedule I, Parts I and III		X
23 Did the organization answer "Yes" to Part VII, Section A, line 3, 4, or 5 about compensation of the organization's current and former officers, directors, trustees, key employees, and highest compensated employees? If "Yes," complete Schedule J	X	
24a Did the organization have a tax-exempt bond issue with an outstanding principal amount of more than \$100,000 as of the last day of the year, that was issued after December 31, 2002? If "Yes," answer lines 24b through 24d and complete Schedule K. If "No," go to line 25		X
b Did the organization invest any proceeds of tax-exempt bonds beyond a temporary period exception?		
c Did the organization maintain an escrow account other than a refunding escrow at any time during the year to defease any tax-exempt bonds?		
d Did the organization act as an "on behalf of" issuer for bonds outstanding at any time during the year?		
25a Section 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations. Did the organization engage in an excess benefit transaction with a disqualified person during the year? If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part I		X
b Is the organization aware that it engaged in an excess benefit transaction with a disqualified person in a prior year, and that the transaction has not been reported on any of the organization's prior Forms 990 or 990-EZ? If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part I		X
26 Was a loan to or by a current or former officer, director, trustee, key employee, highly compensated employee, or disqualified person outstanding as of the end of the organization's tax year? If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part II		X
27 Did the organization provide a grant or other assistance to an officer, director, trustee, key employee, substantial contributor, or a grant selection committee member, or to a person related to such an individual? If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part III		X
28 Was the organization a party to a business transaction with one of the following parties, (see Schedule L, Part IV instructions for applicable filing thresholds, conditions, and exceptions):		
a A current or former officer, director, trustee, or key employee? If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part IV		X
b A family member of a current or former officer, director, trustee, or key employee? If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part IV		X
c An entity of which a current or former officer, director, trustee, or key employee of the organization (or a family member) was an officer, director, trustee, or direct or indirect owner? If "Yes," complete Schedule L, Part IV		X
29 Did the organization receive more than \$25,000 in non-cash contributions? If "Yes," complete Schedule M		X
30 Did the organization receive contributions of art, historical treasures, or other similar assets, or qualified conservation contributions? If "Yes," complete Schedule M		X
31 Did the organization liquidate, terminate, or dissolve and cease operations? If "Yes," complete Schedule N, Part I		X
32 Did the organization sell, exchange, dispose of, or transfer more than 25% of its net assets? If "Yes," complete Schedule N, Part II		X
33 Did the organization own 100% of an entity disregarded as separate from the organization under Regulations sections 301.7701-2 and 301.7701-3? If "Yes," complete Schedule R, Part I		X
34 Was the organization related to any tax-exempt or taxable entity? If "Yes," complete Schedule R, Parts II, III, IV, and V, line 1		X
35 Is any related organization a controlled entity within the meaning of section 512(b)(13)? If "Yes," complete Schedule R, Part V, line 2		X
36 Section 501(c)(3) organizations. Did the organization make any transfers to an exempt non-charitable related organization? If "Yes," complete Schedule R, Part V, line 2		X
37 Did the organization conduct more than 5% of its activities through an entity that is not a related organization and that is treated as a partnership for federal income tax purposes? If "Yes," complete Schedule R, Part VI		X
38 Did the organization complete Schedule O and provide explanations in Schedule O for Part VI, lines 11 and 19?		
Note. All Form 990 filers are required to complete Schedule O.	X	

**Part V** Statements Regarding Other IRS Filings and Tax Compliance

		Yes	No
1a	Enter the number reported in Box 3 of Form 1096, Annual Summary and Transmittal of U.S. Information Returns. Enter -0- if not applicable		
1a	141		
b	Enter the number of Forms W-2G included in line 1a. Enter -0- if not applicable		
1b	0		
c	Did the organization comply with backup withholding rules for reportable payments to vendors and reportable gaming (gambling) winnings to prize winners?		
1c			
2a	Enter the number of employees reported on Form W-3, Transmittal of Wage and Tax Statements, filed for the calendar year ending with or within the year covered by this return		
2a	29		
b	If at least one is reported on line 2a, did the organization file all required federal employment tax returns? <b>Note.</b> If the sum of lines 1a and 2a is greater than 250, you may be required to e-file this return. (see instructions)	X	
2b			
3a	Did the organization have unrelated business gross income of \$1,000 or more during the year covered by this return?	X	
3a			
b	If "Yes," has it filed a Form 990-T for this year? If "No," provide an explanation in Schedule O	X	
3b			
4a	At any time during the calendar year, did the organization have an interest in, or a signature or other authority over, a financial account in a foreign country (such as a bank account, securities account, or other financial account)?		X
4a			
b	If "Yes," enter the name of the foreign country: See the instructions for exceptions and filing requirements for Form TD F 90-22.1, Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts.		
4b			
5a	Was the organization a party to a prohibited tax shelter transaction at any time during the tax year?		X
5a			
b	Did any taxable party notify the organization that it was or is a party to a prohibited tax shelter transaction?		X
5b			
c	If "Yes," to line 5a or 5b, did the organization file Form 8886-T, Disclosure by Tax-Exempt Entity Regarding Prohibited Tax Shelter Transaction?		
5c			
6a	Does the organization have annual gross receipts that are normally greater than \$100,000, and did the organization solicit any contributions that were not tax deductible?		X
6a			
b	If "Yes," did the organization include with every solicitation an express statement that such contributions or gifts were not tax deductible?		
6b			
7	<b>Organizations that may receive deductible contributions under section 170(c).</b>		
a	Did the organization receive a payment in excess of \$75 made partly as a contribution and partly for goods and services provided to the payor?	X	
7a			
b	If "Yes," did the organization notify the donor of the value of the goods or services provided?	X	
7b			
c	Did the organization sell, exchange, or otherwise dispose of tangible personal property for which it was required to file Form 8282?		X
7c			
d	If "Yes," indicate the number of Forms 8282 filed during the year		
7d			
e	Did the organization, during the year, receive any funds, directly or indirectly, to pay premiums on a personal benefit contract?		X
7e			
f	Did the organization, during the year, pay premiums, directly or indirectly, on a personal benefit contract?		X
7f			
g	For all contributions of qualified intellectual property, did the organization file Form 8899 as required?		
7g			
h	For contributions of cars, boats, airplanes, and other vehicles, did the organization file a Form 1098-C as required?		
7h			
8	<b>Sponsoring organizations maintaining donor advised funds and section 509(a)(3) supporting organizations.</b> Did the supporting organization, or a donor advised fund maintained by a sponsoring organization, have excess business holdings at any time during the year?		
8			
9	<b>Sponsoring organizations maintaining donor advised funds.</b>		
a	Did the organization make any taxable distributions under section 4966?		
9a			
b	Did the organization make a distribution to a donor, donor advisor, or related person?		
9b			
10	<b>Section 501(c)(7) organizations.</b> Enter:		
a	Initiation fees and capital contributions included on Part VIII, line 12	10a	
b	Gross receipts, included on Form 990, Part VIII, line 12, for public use of club facilities	10b	
11	<b>Section 501(c)(12) organizations.</b> Enter:		
a	Gross income from members or shareholders	11a	
b	Gross income from other sources (Do not net amounts due or paid to other sources against amounts due or received from them.)	11b	
12a	<b>Section 4947(a)(1) non-exempt charitable trusts.</b> Is the organization filing Form 990 in lieu of Form 1041?	12a	
b	If "Yes," enter the amount of tax-exempt interest received or accrued during the year	12b	

**Part VI Governance, Management, and Disclosure** For each "Yes" response to lines 2 through 7b below, and for a "No" response to line 8a, 8b, or 10b below, describe the circumstances, processes, or changes in Schedule O. See instructions.

**Section A. Governing Body and Management**

		Yes	No
1a	Enter the number of voting members of the governing body		
1a			16
b	Enter the number of voting members that are independent		
1b			16
2	Did any officer, director, trustee, or key employee have a family relationship or a business relationship with any other officer, director, trustee, or key employee?		X
3	Did the organization delegate control over management duties customarily performed by or under the direct supervision of officers, directors or trustees, or key employees to a management company or other person?		X
4	Did the organization make any significant changes to its organizational documents since the prior Form 990 was filed?		X
5	Did the organization become aware during the year of a material diversion of the organization's assets?		X
6	Does the organization have members or stockholders?		X
7a	Does the organization have members, stockholders, or other persons who may elect one or more members of the governing body?		X
b	Are any decisions of the governing body subject to approval by members, stockholders, or other persons?		X
8	Did the organization contemporaneously document the meetings held or written actions undertaken during the year by the following:		
a	The governing body?	X	
b	Each committee with authority to act on behalf of the governing body?	X	
9	Is there any officer, director, trustee, or key employee listed in Part VII, Section A, who cannot be reached at the organization's mailing address? If "Yes," provide the names and addresses in Schedule O	X	

**Section B. Policies** (This Section B requests information about policies not required by the Internal Revenue Code.)

		Yes	No
10a	Does the organization have local chapters, branches, or affiliates?	X	
b	If "Yes," does the organization have written policies and procedures governing the activities of such chapters, affiliates, and branches to ensure their operations are consistent with those of the organization?	X	
11	Has the organization provided a copy of this Form 990 to all members of its governing body before filing the form?	X	
11A	Describe in Schedule O the process, if any, used by the organization to review this Form 990.		
12a	Does the organization have a written conflict of interest policy? If "No," go to line 13		X
b	Are officers, directors or trustees, and key employees required to disclose annually interests that could give rise to conflicts?		
c	Does the organization regularly and consistently monitor and enforce compliance with the policy? If "Yes," describe in Schedule O how this is done		
13	Does the organization have a written whistleblower policy?		X
14	Does the organization have a written document retention and destruction policy?	X	
15	Did the process for determining compensation of the following persons include a review and approval by independent persons, comparability data, and contemporaneous substantiation of the deliberation and decision?		
a	The organization's CEO, Executive Director, or top management official		X
b	Other officers or key employees of the organization		X
	If "Yes" to line 15a or 15b, describe the process in Schedule O. (See instructions.)		
16a	Did the organization invest in, contribute assets to, or participate in a joint venture or similar arrangement with a taxable entity during the year?		X
b	If "Yes," has the organization adopted a written policy or procedure requiring the organization to evaluate its participation in joint venture arrangements under applicable federal tax law, and taken steps to safeguard the organization's exempt status with respect to such arrangements?		

**Section C. Disclosure**

- 17 List the states with which a copy of this Form 990 is required to be filed ► **PA, MN, MI, VA**
- 18 Section 6104 requires an organization to make its Forms 1023 (or 1024 if applicable), 990, and 990-T (501(c)(3)s only) available for public inspection. Indicate how you make these available. Check all that apply.  
 Own website     Another's website     Upon request
- 19 Describe in Schedule O whether (and if so, how), the organization makes its governing documents, conflict of interest policy, and financial statements available to the public.
- 20 State the name, physical address, and telephone number of the person who possesses the books and records of the organization: ►  
**THE ORGANIZATION - 412-262-4044**  
**451 MCCORMICK ROAD, CORAOPOLIS, PA 15108**

**Part VII Compensation of Officers, Directors, Trustees, Key Employees, Highest Compensated Employees, and Independent Contractors**

**Section A. Officers, Directors, Trustees, Key Employees, and Highest Compensated Employees**

1a Complete this table for all persons required to be listed. Report compensation for the calendar year ending with or within the organization's tax year. Use Schedule J-2 if additional space is needed.

- List all of the organization's **current** officers, directors, trustees (whether individuals or organizations), regardless of amount of compensation. Enter -0- in columns (D), (E), and (F) if no compensation was paid.
- List all of the organization's **current** key employees. See instructions for definition of "key employee."
- List the organization's five **current** highest compensated employees (other than an officer, director, trustee, or key employee) who received reportable compensation (Box 5 of Form W-2 and/or Box 7 of Form 1099-MISC) of more than \$100,000 from the organization and any related organizations.
- List all of the organization's **former** officers, key employees, and highest compensated employees who received more than \$100,000 of reportable compensation from the organization and any related organizations.
- List all of the organization's **former** directors or trustees that received, in the capacity as a former director or trustee of the organization, more than \$10,000 of reportable compensation from the organization and any related organizations.

List persons in the following order: individual trustees or directors; institutional trustees; officers; key employees; highest compensated employees; and former such persons.

Check this box if the organization did not compensate any current officer, director, or trustee.

(A) Name and Title	(B) Average hours per week	(C) Position (check all that apply)						(D) Reportable compensation from the organization (W-2/1099-MISC)	(E) Reportable compensation from related organizations (W-2/1099-MISC)	(F) Estimated amount of other compensation from the organization and related organizations
		Individual trustee or director	Institutional trustee	Officer	Key employee	Highest compensated employee	Former			
DENIS S. KARNOSKY VP & TREASURER	3.00	X		X				0.	0.	0.
SCOTTY SEARLE SECRETARY	3.00	X		X				0.	0.	0.
GAYLEN J. BYKER PRESIDENT	3.00	X		X				0.	0.	0.
JOE CHANDLER, MD DIRECTOR	1.50	X						0.	0.	0.
EDWIN H. GOTT, JR. DIRECTOR	1.50	X						0.	0.	0.
JAMES HAYETT DIRECTOR	1.50	X						0.	0.	0.
JOE R. IRWIN DIRECTOR	1.50	X						0.	0.	0.
BRUCE OGLE DIRECTOR	1.50	X						0.	0.	0.
JAMES OLIVER DIRECTOR	1.50	X						0.	0.	0.
JOHN C. OLIVER DIRECTOR	1.50	X						0.	0.	0.
STEPHEN F. QUILL SR DIRECTOR	1.50	X						0.	0.	0.
GEORGE RICH DIRECTOR	1.50	X						0.	0.	0.
TERRY WILSON DIRECTOR	1.50	X						0.	0.	0.
LAWRENCE M CLARK JR DIRECTOR	1.50	X						0.	0.	0.
TRACY T LARSEN DIRECTOR	1.50	X						0.	0.	0.
D. WAYNE JACOBSON JR. IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR	3.00	X						0.	0.	0.
MICHAEL D. ZAGATA PRESIDENT AND CEO	70.00				X	X		165,000.	0.	0.

**Part VII Section A. Officers, Directors, Trustees, Key Employees, and Highest Compensated Employees** (continued)

(A) Name and title	(B) Average hours per week	(C) Position (check all that apply)						(D) Reportable compensation from the organization (W-2/1099-MISC)	(E) Reportable compensation from related organizations (W-2/1099-MISC)	(F) Estimated amount of other compensation from the organization and related organizations
		Individual trustee or director	Institutional trustee	Officer	Key employee	Highest compensated employee	Former			
<b>1b Total</b>							<b>165,000.</b>	<b>0.</b>	<b>0.</b>	

**2** Total number of individuals (including but not limited to those listed above) who received more than \$100,000 in reportable compensation from the organization **1**

	Yes	No
<b>3</b> Did the organization list any former officer, director or trustee, key employee, or highest compensated employee on line 1a? If "Yes," complete Schedule J for such individual		X
<b>4</b> For any individual listed on line 1a, is the sum of reportable compensation and other compensation from the organization and related organizations greater than \$150,000? If "Yes," complete Schedule J for such individual	X	
<b>5</b> Did any person listed on line 1a receive or accrue compensation from any unrelated organization for services rendered to the organization? If "Yes," complete Schedule J for such person		X

**Section B. Independent Contractors**

**1** Complete this table for your five highest compensated independent contractors that received more than \$100,000 of compensation from the organization. **NONE**

(A) Name and business address	(B) Description of services	(C) Compensation

**2** Total number of independent contractors (including but not limited to those listed above) who received more than \$100,000 in compensation from the organization **0**



**Part VIII Statement of Revenue**

		(A) Total revenue	(B) Related or exempt function revenue	(C) Unrelated business revenue	(D) Revenue excluded from tax under sections 512, 513, or 514	
Contributions, gifts, grants and other similar amounts	1 a Federated campaigns	1a				
	b Membership dues	1b	337,954.			
	c Fundraising events	1c				
	d Related organizations	1d				
	e Government grants (contributions)	1e				
	f All other contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts not included above	1f	1,448,753.			
	g Noncash contributions included in lines 1a-1f \$					
	<b>h Total. Add lines 1a-1f</b>		<b>1,786,707.</b>			
	Program Service Revenue	2 a _____	Business Code			
b _____						
c _____						
d _____						
e _____						
f All other program service revenue						
<b>g Total. Add lines 2a-2f</b>						
Other Revenue	3 Investment income (including dividends, interest, and other similar amounts)		115,490.		115,490.	
	4 Income from investment of tax-exempt bond proceeds					
	5 Royalties					
	6 a Gross Rents	(i) Real				
		(ii) Personal				
		b Less: rental expenses				
		c Rental income or (loss)				
	d Net rental income or (loss)					
	7 a Gross amount from sales of assets other than inventory	(i) Securities	164,500.			
		(ii) Other	9,200.			
		b Less: cost or other basis and sales expenses	217,326.	10,537.		
		c Gain or (loss)	<52,826.>	<1,337.>		
	d Net gain or (loss)		<54,163.>	<54,163.>		
	8 a Gross income from fundraising events (not including \$ _____ of contributions reported on line 1c). See Part IV, line 18	a	685,455.			
		b Less: direct expenses	b			
c Net income or (loss) from fundraising events		685,455.		685,455.		
9 a Gross income from gaming activities. See Part IV, line 19	a					
	b Less: direct expenses	b				
	c Net income or (loss) from gaming activities					
10 a Gross sales of inventory, less returns and allowances	a	41,245.				
	b Less: cost of goods sold	b	38,284.			
	c Net income or (loss) from sales of inventory		2,961.	2,961.		
Miscellaneous Revenue		Business Code				
11 a MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	900099	137,218.		137,218.		
b ADVERTISING INCOME	511120	124,085.	124,085.			
c _____						
d All other revenue						
e Total. Add lines 11a-11d		261,303.				
<b>12 Total revenue. See instructions.</b>		<b>2,797,753.</b>	<b>72,883.</b>	<b>0.</b>	<b>938,163.</b>	

**Part IX Statement of Functional Expenses**

Section 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations must complete all columns.

All other organizations must complete column (A) but are not required to complete columns (B), (C), and (D).

Do not include amounts reported on lines 6b, 7b, 8b, 9b, and 10b of Part VIII.	(A) Total expenses	(B) Program service expenses	(C) Management and general expenses	(D) Fundraising expenses
1 Grants and other assistance to governments and organizations in the U.S. See Part IV, line 21				
2 Grants and other assistance to individuals in the U.S. See Part IV, line 22				
3 Grants and other assistance to governments, organizations, and individuals outside the U.S. See Part IV, lines 15 and 16				
4 Benefits paid to or for members				
5 Compensation of current officers, directors, trustees, and key employees	165,000.	142,860.	18,735.	3,405.
6 Compensation not included above, to disqualified persons (as defined under section 4958(f)(1)) and persons described in section 4958(c)(3)(B)				
7 Other salaries and wages	1,136,095.	1,055,449.	77,546.	3,100.
8 Pension plan contributions (include section 401(k) and section 403(b) employer contributions)				
9 Other employee benefits				
10 Payroll taxes				
11 Fees for services (non-employees):				
a Management				
b Legal				
c Accounting	25,373.	23,368.	1,878.	127.
d Lobbying				
e Professional fundraising services. See Part IV, line 17				
f Investment management fees				
g Other				
12 Advertising and promotion	47,234.	43,503.	3,495.	236.
13 Office expenses	61,073.	56,249.	4,519.	305.
14 Information technology				
15 Royalties				
16 Occupancy	131,968.	121,542.	9,766.	660.
17 Travel	180,123.	165,893.	13,329.	901.
18 Payments of travel or entertainment expenses for any federal, state, or local public officials				
19 Conferences, conventions, and meetings				
20 Interest	30,387.	27,986.	2,249.	152.
21 Payments to affiliates				
22 Depreciation, depletion, and amortization	119,711.	110,253.	8,859.	599.
23 Insurance	24,297.	22,378.	1,798.	121.
24 Other expenses. Itemize expenses not covered above. (Expenses grouped together and labeled miscellaneous may not exceed 5% of total expenses shown on line 25 below.)				
a <b>CHAPTER ACTIVITIES EXPE</b>	267,079.	245,980.	19,764.	1,335.
b <b>CHAPTER EXPENSES</b>	185,667.	171,000.	13,739.	928.
c <b>PRINTING &amp; PUBLICATIONS</b>	156,401.	144,045.	11,574.	782.
d <b>SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT</b>	59,161.	54,487.	4,378.	296.
e <b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	21,249.	19,569.	1,573.	107.
f All other expenses	90,327.	83,191.	6,684.	452.
25 Total functional expenses. Add lines 1 through 24f	2,701,145.	2,487,753.	199,886.	13,506.
26 Joint costs. Check here <input type="checkbox"/> if following SOP 98-2. Complete this line only if the organization reported in column (B) joint costs from a combined educational campaign and fundraising solicitation				

**Part X Balance Sheet**

		(A) Beginning of year		(B) End of year
<b>Assets</b>	1 Cash - non-interest-bearing .....	1,666,210.	1	890,560.
	2 Savings and temporary cash investments .....		2	
	3 Pledges and grants receivable, net .....	1,419,373.	3	1,075,945.
	4 Accounts receivable, net .....	139,354.	4	139,132.
	5 Receivables from current and former officers, directors, trustees, key employees, and highest compensated employees. Complete Part II of Schedule L .....		5	
	6 Receivables from other disqualified persons (as defined under section 4958(f)(1)) and persons described in section 4958(c)(3)(B). Complete Part II of Schedule L .....		6	
	7 Notes and loans receivable, net .....		7	
	8 Inventories for sale or use .....	264,339.	8	293,000.
	9 Prepaid expenses and deferred charges .....		9	
	10a Land, buildings, and equipment: cost or other basis. Complete Part VI of Schedule D .....	10a 967,612.		
	b Less: accumulated depreciation .....	10b 319,719.	439,343.	10c 647,893.
	11 Investments - publicly traded securities .....	1,966,563.	11	3,451,671.
	12 Investments - other securities. See Part IV, line 11 .....		12	
	13 Investments - program-related. See Part IV, line 11 .....		13	
	14 Intangible assets .....		14	
	15 Other assets. See Part IV, line 11 .....	66,406.	15	77,830.
16 <b>Total assets.</b> Add lines 1 through 15 (must equal line 34) .....	5,961,588.	16	6,576,031.	
<b>Liabilities</b>	17 Accounts payable and accrued expenses .....	99,872.	17	46,465.
	18 Grants payable .....		18	
	19 Deferred revenue .....	44,921.	19	33,933.
	20 Tax-exempt bond liabilities .....		20	
	21 Escrow or custodial account liability. Complete Part IV of Schedule D .....		21	
	22 Payables to current and former officers, directors, trustees, key employees, highest compensated employees, and disqualified persons. Complete Part II of Schedule L .....		22	
	23 Secured mortgages and notes payable to unrelated third parties .....	788,460.	23	776,519.
	24 Unsecured notes and loans payable to unrelated third parties .....		24	
25 Other liabilities. Complete Part X of Schedule D .....	44,713.	25	39,245.	
26 <b>Total liabilities.</b> Add lines 17 through 25 .....	977,966.	26	896,162.	
<b>Net Assets or Fund Balances</b>	Organizations that follow SFAS 117, check here <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> and complete lines 27 through 29, and lines 33 and 34.			
	27 Unrestricted net assets .....	4,461,952.	27	5,107,512.
	28 Temporarily restricted net assets .....	521,670.	28	572,357.
	29 Permanently restricted net assets .....		29	
	Organizations that do not follow SFAS 117, check here <input type="checkbox"/> and complete lines 30 through 34.			
	30 Capital stock or trust principal, or current funds .....		30	
	31 Paid-in or capital surplus, or land, building, or equipment fund .....		31	
	32 Retained earnings, endowment, accumulated income, or other funds .....		32	
33 <b>Total net assets or fund balances</b> .....	4,983,622.	33	5,679,869.	
34 <b>Total liabilities and net assets/fund balances</b> .....	5,961,588.	34	6,576,031.	

**Part XI Financial Statements and Reporting**

1 Accounting method used to prepare the Form 990:  Cash  Accrual  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 If the organization changed its method of accounting from a prior year or checked "Other," explain in Schedule O.

2a Were the organization's financial statements compiled or reviewed by an independent accountant? .....

b Were the organization's financial statements audited by an independent accountant? .....

c If "Yes" to line 2a or 2b, does the organization have a committee that assumes responsibility for oversight of the audit, review, or compilation of its financial statements and selection of an independent accountant? .....

If the organization changed either its oversight process or selection process during the tax year, explain in Schedule O.

d If "Yes" to line 2a or 2b, check a box below to indicate whether the financial statements for the year were issued on a consolidated basis, separate basis, or both:

Separate basis  Consolidated basis  Both consolidated and separate basis

3a As a result of a federal award, was the organization required to undergo an audit or audits as set forth in the Single Audit Act and OMB Circular A-133? .....

b If "Yes," did the organization undergo the required audit or audits? If the organization did not undergo the required audit or audits, explain why in Schedule O and describe any steps taken to undergo such audits. ....

	Yes	No
2a		X
2b	X	
2c		X
3a		X
3b		

Form 990 (2009)

**SCHEDULE A**  
(Form 990 or 990-EZ)

**Public Charity Status and Public Support**

OMB No. 1545-0047

**2009**

Open to Public Inspection

Complete if the organization is a section 501(c)(3) organization or a section 4947(a)(1) nonexempt charitable trust.

▶ Attach to Form 990 or Form 990-EZ. ▶ See separate instructions.

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

Name of the organization: **RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**  
Employer identification number: **54-0846925**

**Part I Reason for Public Charity Status** (All organizations must complete this part.) See instructions.

The organization is not a private foundation because it is: (For lines 1 through 11, check only one box.)

- 1  A church, convention of churches, or association of churches described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(i).
- 2  A school described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii). (Attach Schedule E.)
- 3  A hospital or a cooperative hospital service organization described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(iii).
- 4  A medical research organization operated in conjunction with a hospital described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(iii). Enter the hospital's name, city, and state: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5  An organization operated for the benefit of a college or university owned or operated by a governmental unit described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(iv). (Complete Part II.)
- 6  A federal, state, or local government or governmental unit described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(v).
- 7  An organization that normally receives a substantial part of its support from a governmental unit or from the general public described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi). (Complete Part II.)
- 8  A community trust described in section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi). (Complete Part II.)
- 9  An organization that normally receives: (1) more than 33 1/3% of its support from contributions, membership fees, and gross receipts from activities related to its exempt functions - subject to certain exceptions, and (2) no more than 33 1/3% of its support from gross investment income and unrelated business taxable income (less section 511 tax) from businesses acquired by the organization after June 30, 1975. See section 509(a)(2). (Complete Part III.)
- 10  An organization organized and operated exclusively to test for public safety. See section 509(a)(4).
- 11  An organization organized and operated exclusively for the benefit of, to perform the functions of, or to carry out the purposes of one or more publicly supported organizations described in section 509(a)(1) or section 509(a)(2). See section 509(a)(3). Check the box that describes the type of supporting organization and complete lines 11e through 11h.  
 a  Type I      b  Type II      c  Type III - Functionally integrated      d  Type III - Other
- e  By checking this box, I certify that the organization is not controlled directly or indirectly by one or more disqualified persons other than foundation managers and other than one or more publicly supported organizations described in section 509(a)(1) or section 509(a)(2).
- f If the organization received a written determination from the IRS that it is a Type I, Type II, or Type III supporting organization, check this box
- g Since August 17, 2006, has the organization accepted any gift or contribution from any of the following persons?
 

	Yes	No
11g(i)		
11g(ii)		
11g(iii)		

  - (i) A person who directly or indirectly controls, either alone or together with persons described in (ii) and (iii) below, the governing body of the supported organization?
  - (ii) A family member of a person described in (i) above?
  - (iii) A 35% controlled entity of a person described in (i) or (ii) above?
- h Provide the following information about the supported organization(s).

(i) Name of supported organization	(ii) EIN	(iii) Type of organization (described on lines 1-9 above or IRC section (see instructions))	(iv) Is the organization in col. (i) listed in your governing document?		(v) Did you notify the organization in col. (i) of your support?		(vi) Is the organization in col. (i) organized in the U.S.?		(vii) Amount of support
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
<b>Total</b>									

**Part II Support Schedule for Organizations Described in Sections 170(b)(1)(A)(iv) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi)**  
 (Complete only if you checked the box on line 5, 7, or 8 of Part I.)

**Section A. Public Support**

Calendar year (or fiscal year beginning in) ▶	(a) 2005	(b) 2006	(c) 2007	(d) 2008	(e) 2009	(f) Total
1 Gifts, grants, contributions, and membership fees received. (Do not include any "unusual grants.") .....						
2 Tax revenues levied for the organization's benefit and either paid to or expended on its behalf .....						
3 The value of services or facilities furnished by a governmental unit to the organization without charge .....						
4 Total. Add lines 1 through 3 .....						
5 The portion of total contributions by each person (other than a governmental unit or publicly supported organization) included on line 1 that exceeds 2% of the amount shown on line 11, column (f) .....						
6 Public support. Subtract line 5 from line 4.						

**Section B. Total Support**

Calendar year (or fiscal year beginning in) ▶	(a) 2005	(b) 2006	(c) 2007	(d) 2008	(e) 2009	(f) Total
7 Amounts from line 4 .....						
8 Gross income from interest, dividends, payments received on securities loans, rents, royalties and income from similar sources .....						
9 Net income from unrelated business activities, whether or not the business is regularly carried on .....						
10 Other income. Do not include gain or loss from the sale of capital assets (Explain in Part IV.) .....						
11 Total support. Add lines 7 through 10 .....						
12 Gross receipts from related activities, etc. (see instructions) .....					12	
13 First five years. If the Form 990 is for the organization's first, second, third, fourth, or fifth tax year as a section 501(c)(3) organization, check this box and stop here .....						<input type="checkbox"/>

**Section C. Computation of Public Support Percentage**

14 Public support percentage for 2009 (line 6, column (f) divided by line 11, column (f)) .....	14	%
15 Public support percentage from 2008 Schedule A, Part II, line 14 .....	15	%
16a 33 1/3% support test - 2009. If the organization did not check the box on line 13, and line 14 is 33 1/3% or more, check this box and stop here. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization .....		<input type="checkbox"/>
b 33 1/3% support test - 2008. If the organization did not check a box on line 13 or 16a, and line 15 is 33 1/3% or more, check this box and stop here. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization .....		<input type="checkbox"/>
17a 10% -facts-and-circumstances test - 2009. If the organization did not check a box on line 13, 16a, or 16b, and line 14 is 10% or more, and if the organization meets the "facts-and-circumstances" test, check this box and stop here. Explain in Part IV how the organization meets the "facts-and-circumstances" test. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization .....		<input type="checkbox"/>
b 10% -facts-and-circumstances test - 2008. If the organization did not check a box on line 13, 16a, 16b, or 17a, and line 15 is 10% or more, and if the organization meets the "facts-and-circumstances" test, check this box and stop here. Explain in Part IV how the organization meets the "facts-and-circumstances" test. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization .....		<input type="checkbox"/>
18 Private foundation. If the organization did not check a box on line 13, 16a, 16b, 17a, or 17b, check this box and see instructions .....		<input type="checkbox"/>

**Part III Support Schedule for Organizations Described in Section 509(a)(2)** (Complete only if you checked the box on line 9 of Part I.)

**Section A. Public Support**

Calendar year (or fiscal year beginning in)▶	(a) 2005	(b) 2006	(c) 2007	(d) 2008	(e) 2009	(f) Total
1 Gifts, grants, contributions, and membership fees received. (Do not include any "unusual grants.")	1887429.	2011600.	1953430.	3894151.	1809715.	11556325.
2 Gross receipts from admissions, merchandise sold or services performed, or facilities furnished in any activity that is related to the organization's tax-exempt purpose	571,038.	880,448.	849,571.	764,803.	724,118.	3789978.
3 Gross receipts from activities that are not an unrelated trade or business under section 513						
4 Tax revenues levied for the organization's benefit and either paid to or expended on its behalf						
5 The value of services or facilities furnished by a governmental unit to the organization without charge						
6 Total. Add lines 1 through 5	2458467.	2892048.	2803001.	4658954.	2533833.	15346303.
7a Amounts included on lines 1, 2, and 3 received from disqualified persons						0.
b Amounts included on lines 2 and 3 received from other than disqualified persons that exceed the greater of \$5,000 or 1% of the amount on line 13 for the year						0.
c Add lines 7a and 7b						0.
8 Public support (Subtract line 7c from line 6)						15346303.

**Section B. Total Support**

Calendar year (or fiscal year beginning in)▶	(a) 2005	(b) 2006	(c) 2007	(d) 2008	(e) 2009	(f) Total
9 Amounts from line 8	2458467.	2892048.	2803001.	4658954.	2533833.	15346303.
10a Gross income from interest, dividends, payments received on securities loans, rents, royalties and income from similar sources	65,983.	135,815.	95,520.	90,175.	115,490.	502,983.
b Unrelated business taxable income (less section 511 taxes) from businesses acquired after June 30, 1975						
c Add lines 10a and 10b	65,983.	135,815.	95,520.	90,175.	115,490.	502,983.
11 Net income from unrelated business activities not included in line 10b, whether or not the business is regularly carried on						
12 Other income. Do not include gain or loss from the sale of capital assets (Explain in Part IV)	79,437.	225,597.	183,200.	179,439.	261,303.	928,976.
13 Total support (Add lines 9, 10c, 11, and 12)	2603887.	3253460.	3081721.	4928568.	2910626.	16778262.

14 First five years. If the Form 990 is for the organization's first, second, third, fourth, or fifth tax year as a section 501(c)(3) organization, check this box and stop here

**Section C. Computation of Public Support Percentage**

15 Public support percentage for 2009 (line 8, column (f) divided by line 13, column (f))	15	91.47 %
16 Public support percentage from 2008 Schedule A, Part III, line 15	16	93.29 %

**Section D. Computation of Investment Income Percentage**

17 Investment income percentage for 2009 (line 10c, column (f) divided by line 13, column (f))	17	3.00 %
18 Investment income percentage from 2008 Schedule A, Part III, line 17	18	2.66 %

19a **33 1/3% support tests - 2009.** If the organization did not check the box on line 14, and line 15 is more than 33 1/3%, and line 17 is not more than 33 1/3%, check this box and stop here. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization

b **33 1/3% support tests - 2008.** If the organization did not check a box on line 14 or line 19a, and line 16 is more than 33 1/3%, and line 18 is not more than 33 1/3%, check this box and stop here. The organization qualifies as a publicly supported organization

20 **Private foundation.** If the organization did not check a box on line 14, 19a, or 19b, check this box and see instructions

**Schedule D**  
(Form 990)

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

**Supplemental Financial Statements**

▶ Complete if the organization answered "Yes," to Form 990,  
Part IV, line 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, or 12.

▶ Attach to Form 990. ▶ See separate instructions.

OMB No 1545-0047

**2009**

Open to Public  
Inspection

Name of the organization

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

Employer identification number

**54-0846925**

**Part I Organizations Maintaining Donor Advised Funds or Other Similar Funds or Accounts.** Complete if the organization answered "Yes" to Form 990, Part IV, line 6.

	(a) Donor advised funds	(b) Funds and other accounts
1 Total number at end of year		
2 Aggregate contributions to (during year)		
3 Aggregate grants from (during year)		
4 Aggregate value at end of year		
5 Did the organization inform all donors and donor advisors in writing that the assets held in donor advised funds are the organization's property, subject to the organization's exclusive legal control?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6 Did the organization inform all grantees, donors, and donor advisors in writing that grant funds can be used only for charitable purposes and not for the benefit of the donor or donor advisor, or for any other purpose conferring impermissible private benefit?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Part II Conservation Easements.** Complete if the organization answered "Yes" to Form 990, Part IV, line 7.

1 Purpose(s) of conservation easements held by the organization (check all that apply).

- Preservation of land for public use (e.g., recreation or pleasure)  Preservation of an historically important land area  
 Protection of natural habitat  Preservation of a certified historic structure  
 Preservation of open space

2 Complete lines 2a through 2d if the organization held a qualified conservation contribution in the form of a conservation easement on the last day of the tax year.

	Held at the End of the Tax Year
a Total number of conservation easements	2a
b Total acreage restricted by conservation easements	2b
c Number of conservation easements on a certified historic structure included in (a)	2c
d Number of conservation easements included in (c) acquired after 8/17/06	2d

3 Number of conservation easements modified, transferred, released, extinguished, or terminated by the organization during the tax year ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

4 Number of states where property subject to conservation easement is located ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

5 Does the organization have a written policy regarding the periodic monitoring, inspection, handling of violations, and enforcement of the conservation easements it holds?  Yes  No

6 Staff and volunteer hours devoted to monitoring, inspecting, and enforcing conservation easements during the year ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

7 Amount of expenses incurred in monitoring, inspecting, and enforcing conservation easements during the year ▶ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

8 Does each conservation easement reported on line 2(d) above satisfy the requirements of section 170(h)(4)(B)(i) and section 170(h)(4)(B)(ii)?  Yes  No

9 In Part XIV, describe how the organization reports conservation easements in its revenue and expense statement, and balance sheet, and include, if applicable, the text of the footnote to the organization's financial statements that describes the organization's accounting for conservation easements.

**Part III Organizations Maintaining Collections of Art, Historical Treasures, or Other Similar Assets.**

Complete if the organization answered "Yes" to Form 990, Part IV, line 8.

1a If the organization elected, as permitted under SFAS 116, not to report in its revenue statement and balance sheet works of art, historical treasures, or other similar assets held for public exhibition, education, or research in furtherance of public service, provide, in Part XIV, the text of the footnote to its financial statements that describes these items.

b If the organization elected, as permitted under SFAS 116, to report in its revenue statement and balance sheet works of art, historical treasures, or other similar assets held for public exhibition, education, or research in furtherance of public service, provide the following amounts relating to these items:

(i) Revenues included in Form 990, Part VIII, line 1 ▶ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) Assets included in Form 990, Part X ▶ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

2 If the organization received or held works of art, historical treasures, or other similar assets for financial gain, provide the following amounts required to be reported under SFAS 116 relating to these items:

a Revenues included in Form 990, Part VIII, line 1 ▶ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

b Assets included in Form 990, Part X ▶ \$ \_\_\_\_\_



**Part III Organizations Maintaining Collections of Art, Historical Treasures, or Other Similar Assets** (continued)

3 Using the organization's acquisition, accession, and other records, check any of the following that are a significant use of its collection items (check all that apply):

- a  Public exhibition
- b  Scholarly research
- c  Preservation for future generations
- d  Loan or exchange programs
- e  Other \_\_\_\_\_

4 Provide a description of the organization's collections and explain how they further the organization's exempt purpose in Part XIV.

5 During the year, did the organization solicit or receive donations of art, historical treasures, or other similar assets to be sold to raise funds rather than to be maintained as part of the organization's collection?  Yes  No

**Part IV Escrow and Custodial Arrangements.** Complete if organization answered "Yes" to Form 990, Part IV, line 9, or reported an amount on Form 990, Part X, line 21.

1a Is the organization an agent, trustee, custodian or other intermediary for contributions or other assets not included on Form 990, Part X?  Yes  No

b If "Yes," explain the arrangement in Part XIV and complete the following table:

	Amount
c Beginning balance	1c
d Additions during the year	1d
e Distributions during the year	1e
f Ending balance	1f

2a Did the organization include an amount on Form 990, Part X, line 21?  Yes  No

b If "Yes," explain the arrangement in Part XIV.

**Part V Endowment Funds.** Complete if the organization answered "Yes" to Form 990, Part IV, line 10.

	(a) Current year	(b) Prior year	(c) Two years back	(d) Three years back	(e) Four years back
1a Beginning of year balance	3,443,317.	3,245,585.			
b Contributions	19,660.	1,093,746.			
c Net investment earnings, gains, and losses	660,724.	<888,155.>			
d Grants or scholarships					
e Other expenditures for facilities and programs		7,859.			
f Administrative expenses	8,179.				
g End of year balance	4,115,522.	3,443,317.			

2 Provide the estimated percentage of the year end balance held as:

- a Board designated or quasi-endowment  %
- b Permanent endowment  %
- c Term endowment  %

3a Are there endowment funds not in the possession of the organization that are held and administered for the organization by:

	Yes	No
(i) unrelated organizations		X
(ii) related organizations		X
b If "Yes" to 3a(i), are the related organizations listed as required on Schedule R?	3b	

4 Describe in Part XIV the intended uses of the organization's endowment funds.

**Part VI Investments - Land, Buildings, and Equipment.** See Form 990, Part X, line 10.

Description of investment	(a) Cost or other basis (investment)	(b) Cost or other basis (other)	(c) Accumulated depreciation	(d) Book value
1a Land	193,652.			193,652.
b Buildings				
c Leasehold improvements	11,809.		9,472.	2,337.
d Equipment	163,343.		95,620.	67,723.
e Other	598,808.		214,627.	384,181.
<b>Total.</b> Add lines 1a through 1e. (Column (d) must equal Form 990, Part X, column (B), line 10(c).)				647,893.

Part VII Investments - Other Securities. See Form 990, Part X, line 12.

Table with 3 columns: (a) Description of security or category, (b) Book value, (c) Method of valuation: Cost or end-of-year market value. Rows include Financial derivatives, Closely-held equity interests, and Other.

Part VIII Investments - Program Related. See Form 990, Part X, line 13.

Table with 3 columns: (a) Description of investment type, (b) Book value, (c) Method of valuation: Cost or end-of-year market value.

Part IX Other Assets. See Form 990, Part X, line 15.

Table with 2 columns: (a) Description, (b) Book value.

Part X Other Liabilities. See Form 990, Part X, line 25.

Table with 2 columns: (a) Description of liability, (b) Amount. Rows include Federal income taxes, PAYABLE - RETIREMENT FUND, ACCRUED EXPENSES, and Total.

2. FIN 48 Footnote. In Part XIV, provide the text of the footnote to the organization's financial statements that reports the organization's liability for uncertain tax positions under FIN 48.

**Part XI Reconciliation of Change in Net Assets from Form 990 to Audited Financial Statements**

1	Total revenue (Form 990, Part VIII, column (A), line 12)	1	2,797,753.
2	Total expenses (Form 990, Part IX, column (A), line 25)	2	2,701,145.
3	Excess or (deficit) for the year. Subtract line 2 from line 1	3	96,608.
4	Net unrealized gains (losses) on investments	4	599,639.
5	Donated services and use of facilities	5	
6	Investment expenses	6	
7	Prior period adjustments	7	
8	Other (Describe in Part XIV.)	8	
9	Total adjustments (net). Add lines 4 through 8	9	599,639.
10	Excess or (deficit) for the year per audited financial statements. Combine lines 3 and 9	10	696,247.

**Part XII Reconciliation of Revenue per Audited Financial Statements With Revenue per Return**

1	Total revenue, gains, and other support per audited financial statements	1	3,458,684.
2	Amounts included on line 1 but not on Form 990, Part VIII, line 12:		
a	Net unrealized gains on investments	2a	599,639.
b	Donated services and use of facilities	2b	23,008.
c	Recoveries of prior year grants	2c	
d	Other (Describe in Part XIV.)	2d	38,284.
e	Add lines 2a through 2d	2e	660,931.
3	Subtract line 2e from line 1	3	2,797,753.
4	Amounts included on Form 990, Part VIII, line 12, but not on line 1:		
a	Investment expenses not included on Form 990, Part VIII, line 7b	4a	
b	Other (Describe in Part XIV.)	4b	
c	Add lines 4a and 4b	4c	0.
5	Total revenue. Add lines 3 and 4c. (This must equal Form 990, Part I, line 12.)	5	2,797,753.

**Part XIII Reconciliation of Expenses per Audited Financial Statements With Expenses per Return**

1	Total expenses and losses per audited financial statements	1	2,762,437.
2	Amounts included on line 1 but not on Form 990, Part IX, line 25:		
a	Donated services and use of facilities	2a	23,008.
b	Prior year adjustments	2b	
c	Other losses	2c	
d	Other (Describe in Part XIV.)	2d	38,284.
e	Add lines 2a through 2d	2e	61,292.
3	Subtract line 2e from line 1	3	2,701,145.
4	Amounts included on Form 990, Part IX, line 25, but not on line 1:		
a	Investment expenses not included on Form 990, Part VIII, line 7b	4a	
b	Other (Describe in Part XIV.)	4b	
c	Add lines 4a and 4b	4c	0.
5	Total expenses. Add lines 3 and 4c. (This must equal Form 990, Part I, line 18.)	5	2,701,145.

**Part XIV Supplemental Information**

Complete this part to provide the descriptions required for Part II, lines 3, 5, and 9; Part III, lines 1a and 4; Part IV, lines 1b and 2b; Part V, line 4; Part X, line 2; Part XI, line 8; Part XII, lines 2d and 4b; and Part XIII, lines 2d and 4b. Also complete this part to provide any additional information.

**Part XII, Line 2d - Other Adjustments:**

COST OF GOODS SOLD: 38284.

**Part XIII, Line 2d - Other Adjustments:**

COST OF GOODS SOLD: 38284.

**SCHEDULE G**  
**(Form 990 or 990-EZ)**

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

**Supplemental Information Regarding  
Fundraising or Gaming Activities**

▶ Complete if the organization answered "Yes" to Form 990, Part IV, lines 17, 18, or 19,  
or if the organization entered more than \$15,000 on Form 990-EZ, line 6a.  
▶ Attach to Form 990 or Form 990-EZ. ▶ See separate instructions.

OMB No 1545-0047

**2009**

**Open To Public  
Inspection**

Name of the organization

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

Employer identification number

**54-0846925**

**Part I Fundraising Activities.** Complete if the organization answered "Yes" to Form 990, Part IV, line 17. Form 990-EZ filers are not required to complete this part.

1 Indicate whether the organization raised funds through any of the following activities. Check all that apply.

- a  Mail solicitations
- b  Internet and email solicitations
- c  Phone solicitations
- d  In-person solicitations
- e  Solicitation of non-government grants
- f  Solicitation of government grants
- g  Special fundraising events

2 a Did the organization have a written or oral agreement with any individual (including officers, directors, trustees or key employees listed in Form 990, Part VII) or entity in connection with professional fundraising services?  Yes  No

b If "Yes," list the ten highest paid individuals or entities (fundraisers) pursuant to agreements under which the fundraiser is to be compensated at least \$5,000 by the organization.

(i) Name of individual or entity (fundraiser)	(ii) Activity	(iii) Did fundraiser have custody or control of contributions?		(iv) Gross receipts from activity	(v) Amount paid to (or retained by) fundraiser listed in col. (i)	(vi) Amount paid to (or retained by) organization
		Yes	No			
<b>Total</b>						

3 List all states in which the organization is registered or licensed to solicit funds or has been notified it is exempt from registration or licensing.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Part II Fundraising Events.** Complete if the organization answered "Yes" to Form 990, Part IV, line 18, or reported more than \$15,000 on Form 990-EZ, line 6a. List events with gross receipts greater than \$5,000.

		(a) Event #1	(b) Event #2	(c) Other events	(d) Total events (add col. (a) through col. (c))
		ANNUAL SPORTSMAN BALL FUNDRAISING (event type)	(event type)	None (total number)	
Revenue	1	Gross receipts	682,873.	2,582.	685,455.
	2	Less: Charitable contributions			
	3	Gross income (line 1 minus line 2)	682,873.	2,582.	685,455.
Direct Expenses	4	Cash prizes			
	5	Noncash prizes			
	6	Rent/facility costs			
	7	Food and beverages			
	8	Entertainment			
	9	Other direct expenses			
	10	Direct expense summary. Add lines 4 through 9 in column (d)			
	11	Net income summary. Combine line 3, column (d), and line 10			685,455.

**Part III Gaming.** Complete if the organization answered "Yes" to Form 990, Part IV, line 19, or reported more than \$15,000 on Form 990-EZ, line 6a.

		(a) Bingo	(b) Pull tabs/instant bingo/progressive bingo	(c) Other gaming	(d) Total gaming (add col. (a) through col. (c))
Revenue	1	Gross revenue			
	2	Cash prizes			
Direct Expenses	3	Noncash prizes			
	4	Rent/facility costs			
	5	Other direct expenses			
	6	Volunteer labor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes _____ % <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes _____ % <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes _____ % <input type="checkbox"/> No
	7	Direct expense summary. Add lines 2 through 5 in column (d)			
	8	Net gaming income summary. Combine line 1, column (d), and line 7			

	Yes	No
9 Enter the state(s) in which the organization operates gaming activities: _____		
a Is the organization licensed to operate gaming activities in each of these states? _____	9a	
b If "No," explain: _____		
10a Were any of the organization's gaming licenses revoked, suspended or terminated during the tax year? _____	10a	
b If "Yes," explain: _____		
11 Does the organization operate gaming activities with nonmembers? _____	11	
12 Is the organization a grantor, beneficiary or trustee of a trust or a member of a partnership or other entity formed to administer charitable gaming? _____	12	

**13** Indicate the percentage of gaming activity operated in:

a The organization's facility	13a	%
b An outside facility	13b	%

**14** Enter the name and address of the person who prepares the organization's gaming/special events books and records:

Name ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

Address ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

**15a** Does the organization have a contract with a third party from whom the organization receives gaming revenue? .....

15a

b If "Yes," enter the amount of gaming revenue received by the organization ▶ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ and the amount of gaming revenue retained by the third party ▶ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

c If "Yes," enter name and address of the third party:

Name ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

Address ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

**16** Gaming manager information:

Name ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

Gaming manager compensation ▶ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Description of services provided ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

- Director/officer       Employee       Independent contractor

**17** Mandatory distributions:

a Is the organization required under state law to make charitable distributions from the gaming proceeds to retain the state gaming license? .....

17a

b Enter the amount of distributions required under state law to be distributed to other exempt organizations or spent in the organization's own exempt activities during the tax year ▶ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHEDULE J  
(Form 990)**

**Compensation Information**

OMB No. 1545-0047

**2009**

Open to Public Inspection

For certain Officers, Directors, Trustees, Key Employees, and Highest Compensated Employees

▶ Complete if the organization answered "Yes" to Form 990, Part IV, line 23.

▶ Attach to Form 990. ▶ See separate instructions.

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

Name of the organization

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

Employer identification number

**54-0846925**

**Part I Questions Regarding Compensation**

1a Check the appropriate box(es) if the organization provided any of the following to or for a person listed in Form 990, Part VII, Section A, line 1a. Complete Part III to provide any relevant information regarding these items.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> First-class or charter travel             | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing allowance or residence for personal use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel for companions                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Payments for business use of personal residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tax indemnification and gross-up payments | <input type="checkbox"/> Health or social club dues or initiation fees   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discretionary spending account            | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal services (e.g., maid, chauffeur, chef) |

b If any of the boxes on line 1a are checked, did the organization follow a written policy regarding payment or reimbursement or provision of all of the expenses described above? If "No," complete Part III to explain

2 Did the organization require substantiation prior to reimbursing or allowing expenses incurred by all officers, directors, trustees, and the CEO/Executive Director, regarding the items checked in line 1a?

3 Indicate which, if any, of the following the organization uses to establish the compensation of the organization's CEO/Executive Director. Check all that apply.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compensation committee              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written employment contract                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independent compensation consultant | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compensation survey or study                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Form 990 of other organizations     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approval by the board or compensation committee |

4 During the year, did any person listed in Form 990, Part VII, Section A, line 1a, with respect to the filing organization or a related organization:

- a Receive a severance payment or change-of-control payment?
- b Participate in, or receive payment from, a supplemental nonqualified retirement plan?
- c Participate in, or receive payment from, an equity-based compensation arrangement?

If "Yes" to any of lines 4a-c, list the persons and provide the applicable amounts for each item in Part III.

Only section 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations must complete lines 5-9.

5 For persons listed in Form 990, Part VII, Section A, line 1a, did the organization pay or accrue any compensation contingent on the revenues of:

- a The organization?
- b Any related organization?

If "Yes" to line 5a or 5b, describe in Part III.

6 For persons listed in Form 990, Part VII, Section A, line 1a, did the organization pay or accrue any compensation contingent on the net earnings of:

- a The organization?
- b Any related organization?

If "Yes" to line 6a or 6b, describe in Part III.

7 For persons listed in Form 990, Part VII, Section A, line 1a, did the organization provide any non-fixed payments not described in lines 5 and 6? If "Yes," describe in Part III

8 Were any amounts reported in Form 990, Part VII, paid or accrued pursuant to a contract that was subject to the initial contract exception described in Regs. section 53.4958-4(a)(3)? If "Yes," describe in Part III

9 If "Yes" to line 8, did the organization also follow the rebuttable presumption procedure described in Regulations section 53.4958-6(c)?

	Yes	No
1b		
2	X	
4a		X
4b		X
4c		X
5a		X
5b		X
6a		X
6b		X
7		X
8		X
9		

LHA For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the Instructions for Form 990.

Schedule J (Form 990) 2009

**Part II Officers, Directors, Trustees, Key Employees, and Highest Compensated Employees.** Use Schedule J-1 if additional space is needed.

For each individual whose compensation must be reported in Schedule J, report compensation from the organization on row (i) and from related organizations, described in the instructions, on row (ii). Do not list any individuals that are not listed on Form 990, Part VII.

Note. The sum of columns (B)(i)-(iii) must equal the applicable column (D) or column (E) amounts on Form 990, Part VII, line 1a.

(A) Name	(B) Breakdown of W-2 and/or 1099-MISC compensation			(C) Retirement and other deferred compensation	(D) Nontaxable benefits	(E) Total of columns (B)(i)-(D)	(F) Compensation reported in prior Form 990 or Form 990-EZ
	(i) Base compensation	(ii) Bonus & incentive compensation	(iii) Other reportable compensation				
MICHAEL D. ZAGATA	(i) 165,000.	(ii) 0.	(iii) 0.	0.	0.	165,000.	0.
	(ii) 0.	(iii) 0.		0.	0.	0.	0.
	(i)						
	(ii)						
	(i)						
	(ii)						
	(i)						
	(ii)						
	(i)						
	(ii)						
	(i)						
	(ii)						
	(i)						
	(ii)						
	(i)						
	(ii)						
	(i)						
	(ii)						
	(i)						
	(ii)						
	(i)						
	(ii)						
	(i)						
	(ii)						
	(i)						
	(ii)						
	(i)						
	(ii)						



**SCHEDULE O**

(Form 990)

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

**Supplemental Information to Form 990**

Complete to provide information for responses to specific questions on  
Form 990 or to provide any additional information.  
▶ Attach to Form 990.

OMB No. 1545-0047

**2009**

Open to Public  
Inspection

Name of the organization

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

Employer identification number

**54-0846925**

**Form 990, Part III, Line 4b, Program Service Accomplishments:**

**LINK) AND ANNUAL BIOLOGIST'S REPORTS (2008 ATTACHED AND 2007 ALSO  
AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE), RESTORING UPLAND FORESTS' FUTURE (RUFF) CASE  
STATEMENT BOOKLET (ATTACHED) PROVIDES A SYNOPSIS OF RGS' PROGRAMS; AND  
FINALLY OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS (LOGO PAGE FROM WEBSITE ATTACHED)  
PROVIDE FREE OR REDUCED-COST MERCHANDISE THAT ASSISTS CHAPTERS IN  
RAISING REVENUE.**

**Form 990, Part III, Line 4c, Program Service Accomplishments:**

**BY CONSOL ENERGY, IN RETURN FOR WHICH WE WILL RECEIVE HALF OF THE SALE  
PROCEEDS AND PAY 15% OF THE TOTAL SALE PROCEEDS TO THE FORESTRY  
CONSULTANT.**

**Form 990, Part III, Line 4d, Other Program Services:**

**EXTENSION EDUCATIONAL GRANTS TO COLLEGES TO SUPPORT PRIVATE LAND OWNER  
WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT EDUCATION AND RESEARCH**

**DISTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH GRANTS TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO PROVIDE  
RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF LONG TERM HABITAT MANAGEMENT**

**Expenses \$ 18907. including grants of \$ 0. Revenue \$ 0.**

**Form 990, Part VI, Section B, line 11: PDF COPIES ARE SENT TO EACH  
DIRECTOR FOR REVIEW.**

**Form 990, Part VI, Section C, Line 19: COPIES OF BYLAWS, ARTICLES OF  
INCORPORATION AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS ARE MAINTAINED AT OFFICES**

**SCHEDULE O**

(Form 990)

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

**Supplemental Information to Form 990**

Complete to provide information for responses to specific questions on  
Form 990 or to provide any additional information.  
▶ Attach to Form 990.

OMB No 1545-0047

**2009**

Open to Public  
Inspection

Name of the organization

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

Employer identification number

**54-0846925**

**FOR INSPECTION AND MAILED TO REQUESTERS.**

**Form 990, Part VII Contact Addresses for Officers, Directors, Etc:**

**DENIS S. KARNOSKY - N6571 COUNTY DD, BURLINGTON, WI 53105**

**SCOTTY SEARLE - 209 N. GREEN BAY ROAD LAKE FOREST IL 60045,**

**JOE CHANDLER, MD - 4100 LAKE OTIS PARKWAY, SUITE 216, ANCHORAGE, AK 99508**

**EDWIN H. GOTT, JR. - 2853 STATE RTE 711, LIGONIER, PA 15658**

**JAMES HAYETT - 139 COTTONWOOD AVE, HARTLAND, WI 53029-2014**

**JOE R. IRWIN - 83 RUTHFRED DRIVE ,PITTSBURGH PA 15241**

**BRUCE OGLE - 18808 ANCHOR ROAD, GRAND RAPIDS, MN 55744**

**JAMES OLIVER - 6327 CAMINITO DEL CERVATO SAN DIEGO CA 92111**

**JOHN C. OLIVER - BRAYS ISLAND, 18 SCOTTS NECK PL, SHELDON, SC 29941-3059**

**STEPHEN F. QUILL SR - 405 GEORGE HILL ROAD, LANCASTER, MA 01523**

**GEORGE RICH - 904 S BROADWAY, BALTIMORE, MD 21231-3410**

**TERRY WILSON - 1067 SILVER ST, HINESBURGH, VT 05461**

LHA For Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the Instructions for Form 990.  
932211  
02-03-10

Schedule O (Form 990) 2009

**SCHEDULE O**

(Form 990)

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

**Supplemental Information to Form 990**

Complete to provide information for responses to specific questions on  
Form 990 or to provide any additional information.  
▶ Attach to Form 990.

OMB No 1545-0047

**2009**

Open to Public  
Inspection

Name of the organization

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

Employer identification number

**54-0846925**

**MICHAEL D. ZAGATA - 451 MCCORMICK ROAD, CORAOPOLIS, PA 15108**

**GAYLEN J. BYKER - 3201 BURTON STREET, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49546**

**LAWRENCE M CLARK JR - 99 JANE STREET - APT. 7F, NEW YORK, NY 10014**

**TRACY T LARSEN - 10479 BRASKA AVENUE, MIDDLEVILLE, MI 49333**

**D. WAYNE JACOBSON JR. - 2301 SOUTH HIGHWAY 169, GRAND RAPIDS MN 55744**

**Form 990 - Part 1 - Line 1**

**Organizations Mission Statement (continued)**

**AMERICAN WOODCOCK AND RELATED WILDLIFE TO SUSTAIN OUR SPORT HUNTING  
TRADITION AND OUTDOOR HERITAGE.**

**ESTABLISHED IN 1961, 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 AND WE WILL  
FULFILL THAT MISSION BY:**

**HELPING ASSURE THAT THE TRADITIONS OF HUNTING THAT WERE GIVEN TO US ARE  
PASSED TO THOSE WHO SUCCEED US.**

**PROMOTING THE UNWRITTEN "ETHICAL CODE OF BEHAVIOR" THAT IS**

**SCHEDULE O**

(Form 990)

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

**Supplemental Information to Form 990**

Complete to provide information for responses to specific questions on  
Form 990 or to provide any additional information.  
▶ Attach to Form 990.

OMB No 1545-0047

**2009**

Open to Public  
Inspection

Name of the organization

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

Employer identification number

**54-0846925**

**CHARACTERIZED BY RESPECT FOR THE RESOURCE, EXPECTATIONS WITH REGARD TO  
THE HUNTING EXPERIENCE AND AN UNWAVERING, COMMITMENT TO  
INFORMING SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN OF THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE  
SPORT SO AS TO ENABLE OUR MEMBERS TO FULLY APPRECIATE ITS SENSE OF  
VALUE PERSONAL SATISFACTION AND THE NEED TO PERPETUATE IT FOR, FUTURE  
GENERATIONS.**

**ENHANCING THROUGH ECOLOGICALLY SOUND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES  
THE ENVIRONMENT FOR RUFFED GROUSE AMERICAN WOODCOCK, AND OTHER, FOREST  
WILDLIFE THAT UTILIZE OR REQUIRE THICK, YOUNG FORESTS.**

**CONDUCTING AND/OR SPONSORING RESEARCH THAT WILL LEAD TO A BETTER  
UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIOLOGY AND ECOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THESE  
SPECIES.**

**SPONSORING LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS ON PRIVATE AND PUBLIC LANDS THAT  
WILL MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT FOR THESE SPECIES.**

**EDUCATING THE PUBLIC AND LEGISLATIVE BODIES ABOUT:  
ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION ASSOCIATED WITH THE RECREATIONAL PURSUIT OF THESE  
BIRDS.**

**NEED TO SCIENTIFICALLY MANAGE FOREST LANDS TO ENSURE THAT THEY  
UNDERSTAND THAT NATURE IS DYNAMIC AND THAT THE PLANTS THAT PROVIDE  
FOOD, COVER, SHELTER FROM PREDATORS, AND A PLACE TO REAR THEIR YOUNG  
WILL, UNLESS THEY ARE ACTIVELY MANAGED, BE REPLACED BY PLANTS THAT DO**

**SCHEDULE O**  
**(Form 990)**

Department of the Treasury  
Internal Revenue Service

**Supplemental Information to Form 990**

Complete to provide information for responses to specific questions on  
Form 990 or to provide any additional information.  
▶ Attach to Form 990.

OMB No. 1545-0047

**2009**

Open to Public  
Inspection

Name of the organization

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

Employer identification number

**54-0846925**

**NOT MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS.**

**WAYS TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LANDOWNERS TO MANAGE FOR THESE SPECIES.**

**WAYS TO ENCOURAGE AND PROVIDE PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE PLACES WHERE RUFFED  
GROUSE, WOODCOCK, AND OTHER RELATED WILDLIFE LIVE SO THAT THEY CAN BE  
ENJOYED.**

**FORM 990 - PAGE 1 - ITEM B - AMENDED RETURN**

**FORM 990 - PAGE 7 - PART VII COLUMN (C) WAS AMENDED DUE TO THE FOLLOWING:**

**DENIS S. KARNOSKY, SCOTTY SEARLE AND GAYLEN J. BYKER WERE NOT CLASSIFIED  
AS "INDIVIDUAL TRUSTEE OR DIRECTOR" AS A POSITION UNDER THE 990 - PAGE  
7 - PART VII COLUMN C. ALSO MICHAEL D. ZAGATA WAS INCORRECTLY  
CLASSIFIED AS "INDIVIDUAL TRUSTEE OR DIRECTOR" INSTEAD OF "KEY  
EMPLOYEE" UNDER THE 990 - PAGE 7 - PART VII COLUMN C.**

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY WISCONSIN  
MANAGEMENT AREA PROJECTS  
1985 TO 2009**

**RGS Wisconsin Projects – Total is over 139,362 acres.**

Proj.#	Acres	Proj.#	Acres	Proj.#	Acres	Proj.#	Acres
1	300	12	1,200	23	80	34	2,260
2	6,000	13	2,100	24	4,681	35	100
3	900	14	1,000	25	640	36	800
4	3,000	15	1,675	26	1,240	37	120
5	2,824	16	2,052	27	7,145	38	6,000
6	360	17	800	28	2,640	39	100
7	3,184	18	600	29	4,729	40	120
8	1,740	19	1,612	30	1,400	41	120
9	1,300	20	505	31	1,000	42	2,500
10	1,000	21	830	32	7,112	43	18,200
11	984	22	5,800	33	100	44	100

Proj.#	Acres	Proj.#	Acres	Proj.#	Acres	Proj.#	Acres
45	200	56	400	67	200	78	200
46	2,400	57	1,200	68	200	79	NA
47	400	58	1,200	69	5,000	80	NA
48	800	59	280	70	500	81	NA
49	100	60	200	71	100	82	NA
50	500	61	500	72	2,000	83	NA
51	100	62	2,200	73	10	84	NA
52	1,700	63	2,000	74	4	85	NA
53	1,000	64	40	75	2,000	86	22
54	8,200	65	25	76	1,600	87	20
55	40	66	1,500	77	1,470	88	98

NA = Not Available

The Eyes of a Predator  
will be **Your Advantage.**



STEINER



STEINER PREDATOR C5

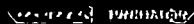
100 HF5H

10x42 Predator C5

12x42 Predator C5



STEINER



STEINER PREDATOR C5

### New Steiner Predator® C5 10x42 and 12x42

Eyes sensitive to the color of game, even in low light, is the privilege of one of the world's most skilled hunters. After years of trying to match a predator's natural ability to hunt in darkness, we have developed lens coatings that maximize light transmission from game animals in the brownish range and hold back light from foliage and surroundings. The result is astounding contrast with highest light transmission and is featured on the new Steiner Predator C5.

*Nothing escapes these eyes.*

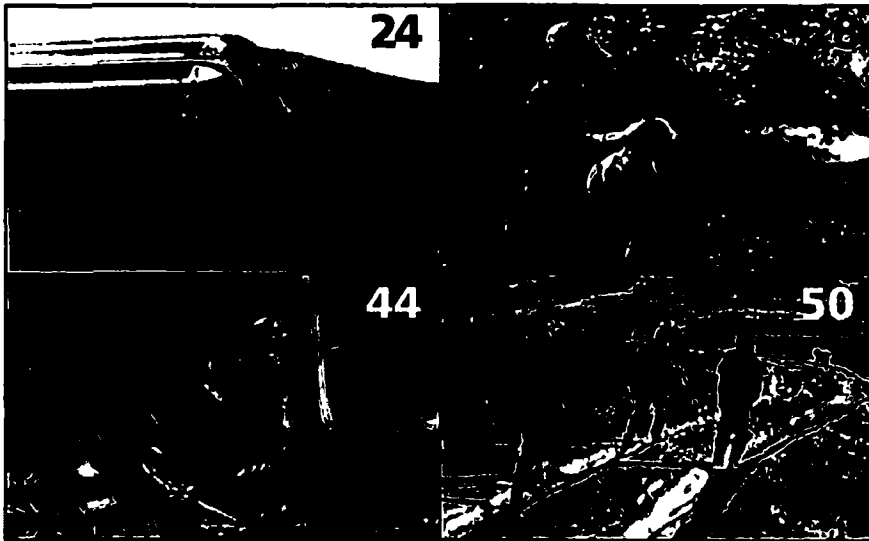


STEINER  
GERMANY

[www.steiner-binoculars.com](http://www.steiner-binoculars.com)



# ruffedGROUSE SOCIETY



## FEATURES

- 18 One More**  
A meeting of like-minds in pursuit of woodcock  
– by *Gerald N. Allen*
- 24 The AYA 4/53**  
Light grouse gun examined  
– by *Nick Sisley*
- 28 Hunting with Kids**  
Why birdog owners may be better prepared than most  
– by *Josh Manahan*
- 32 Five Great Reads**  
While away winter nights with these books  
– by *Nancy Anisfield*
- 42 Conservation Policy: Working for Wildlife in Washington**  
A vital component to fulfilling RGS' mission  
– by *Dan Dessecker*
- 44 The Magic Wand of a Left-Hander**  
On a man's skill in the art of grouse hunting  
– by *Frank J. Vivone, Jr.*
- 48 Winter Ruffed Grouse**  
Tips for locating winter birds  
– by *Doug Stamm*
- 50 Winter's Wonders**  
A photo essay on hunting in the bitter months  
– by *Nancy Anisfield*
- 62 RGS at Corps of Grouse and Woodcock Project**  
A habitat project with legs  
– by *Jeff Krause and Mark Banker*

RGS VOL. 21, Issue 4 Winter 2009

## DEPARTMENTS

- 6 Editor's Log**  
Nature is Beauty, and Beauty Nature  
By *Anna Stubna*
- 8 Letters to the Editor**
- 12 Executive Director's Report**  
RGS Takes Lead on Need for Early Successional Forests  
By *Mike Zagata*
- 14 Purely Dogs**  
A Movable Feast  
By *Lisa Price*
- 22 RGS Canada**  
Attending to the Details:  
Fredericton Chapter Steams Ahead  
By *Jeff Helsdon*
- 26 Junior RGS**  
Grouse Food Identification:  
Finding good places to hunt
- 33 Seasons of Grouse**  
The Wilds of an Eastern Winter
- 38 Home Covers Calling**
- 54 RGS Staff Changes**
- 56 Wild Flavors**  
Savoring the Entire Experience  
By *Anna Stubna*
- 58 News Updates**
- 60 Hits or Misses**  
Lance's Cover  
By *Art Wheaton*
- 64 Classified Ads**
- 68 Ruffly Speaking**  
Thuggish Thickets  
By *Paul Carson*

About Our Cover— This issue's cover, *Snow Blown*, was created by John A. Ruthven of Cincinnati, Ohio. Ruthven began a wildlife art career after serving in World War II and attending the Cincinnati Art Academy. After a successful commercial art career, he began his own company, Wildlife Internationale, Inc., to publish and distribute prints of his work.

In addition to being the first wildlife artist recipient of the Medal of Arts award from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., Ruthven has received many awards and recognitions honoring his accomplishments over the duration of his career. He is internationally recognized for his realistic and intricate art, and has gained a reputation for being a dedicated conservationist—both of which have earned him the distinction of being referred to as a modern-day Audubon.

*Snow Blown* is a watercolor, created in 2007 for the Gilbert R. Symons RGS chapter banquet. To find out more about Ruthven or to purchase his prints visit [www.ruthven.com](http://www.ruthven.com)



# Some Natural Resources Power Our World, Others Require Our Energies to Survive.

A leading producer of coal and natural gas, CONSOL Energy also maintains a corporate policy of developing or donating surplus property for wildlife enhancement, recreational use and conservation.

CONSOL Energy is also exploring innovative ways to improve food and cover to benefit a variety of wildlife throughout its operating areas.

By partnering with leading wildlife and conservation groups, such as the Ruffed Grouse Society, CONSOL Energy dedicates time and resources to environmental stewardship, sustainable forestry programs and related initiatives.

COAL

NATURAL GAS

*Responsible coal-mining benefits the land and all those who make it their home.*

 **CONSOL ENERGY**  
America's On Switch.

**Using Our Energies to Give  
Wildlife a Boost.**



# EDITOR'S LOG

## Nature is Beauty, and Beauty Nature

by Anna Stubna

Winter is a solitary season. When the snow lies thick upon the ground it has a muffling effect on nearby environs, and a walk in the gloaming becomes a reflective exercise. Viewed from the street, homes lay silent underneath a gray sky, their windows glowing with the warmth and life holed up within. The bitter air outside holds a subtle scent of anticipation and promise to me. At such times the thick silence has a life of its own, and reminds me of a slow and steady heartbeat, resonating with life.

I continue on with careful gait, wary of ice hidden under the snow and head for the nearest patch of woods. In the half light the trees take on a furtive air, their woody secrets rising nearer the surface, lying just beneath damp bark. On these excursions certain lines from various poems come unbidden to mind – especially those of that connoisseur of simplicity, Robert Frost.

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep...*

The words capture the very essence of the course of my thoughts. But just like Frost, all too soon the obligations of life become too pressing to ignore. I continue on my way.

Nature has a depth that only the most extreme simplicity can begin to capture, though many have tried to describe it with complicated phraseology. These efforts, to my mind, fall short – as if the very weight of cumbersome words drives the spirit they seek further away. Perhaps that is why only the simplest lines of poetry resonate deeply with me.

My breath puffs out in a warm cloud. Though winter is indeed solitary, I find it to be a rather comforting time. The woods turn into themselves in a deep sleep for spring, and it is only natural that mankind take a similar course.

In keeping with the season, it seems right that we conclude this year with simplicity on our part – to focus on the core of our organization – our volunteers – and reconnect with the passion for conservation that serves as our motivator. This renewed commitment will help to prevent the hibernation that nature seems to encourage in us, myself included. Avoiding stagnation at a time when preparations for the upcoming spring banquet season are on the horizon is vital to our success next spring. Here at headquarters we must continue our membership drive efforts, every additional member truly adds to our ability to fulfill our mission.

This was indeed a difficult year, and we're not the only ones to feel the effects. It is a troubled time – the future doesn't seem as certain as in the past. At a time when many face the difficulties of losing jobs, losing business and meeting an increased cost of life's necessities, it's encouraging that your efforts on behalf of RGS' mission have continued to grow. With the close of this year, we are only a year away from our 50th anniversary – a landmark that testifies to an enduring commitment by our volunteers to changing the face of America's landscape.

One must conclude that RGS – much like the woods I stop by on a snowy evening – will weather these times and continue with a steady heartbeat until spring. 🌿

### EDITORIAL RETRACTION:

Please note in the Fall 2009 Vol. 21, Issue 3 of RGS the **SportDOG 1825 Training Collar** was listed incorrectly on page 61. The correct price is **\$299.95**. We apologize for any inconvenience.

# ruffed GROUSE SOCIETY

### MEMBERSHIP RATES:

- Junior membership (16 and under) ..... \$10
- Timberdoodle (Web access only) ..... \$15
- Regular membership ..... \$25
- Conservation membership ..... \$50
- Sustaining membership ..... \$100
- Sponsor membership ..... \$250
- Centurion (life) membership ..... \$1,000

### Officers and Staff

#### OFFICERS

- Gaylen J. Byker ..... Chairman of the Board
- Denis S. Karnosky ..... Vice President & Treasurer
- Scotty Searle ..... Secretary

#### DIRECTORS

- |                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Joe (Leon H.) Chandler, M.D. | Bruce Ogle       |
| Larry Clark                  | James H. Olver   |
| Edwin H. Gott, Jr.           | John C. Oliver   |
| Jim Hayett                   | Stephen F. Quill |
| Joe R. Irwin                 | George Rich      |
| D. Wayne Jacobson, Jr.       | Terald J. Wilson |
| Tracy Larsen                 |                  |

#### DIRECTORS EMERITI

- S. Prosser Mellon
- Sally B. Searle
- David V. Uihlein

#### HEADQUARTERS STAFF

- Dr. Michael D. Zagata  
President/CEO
- Ronald P. Burkert  
Information Systems and Webmaster
- Anna Stubna  
Editor & Special Projects
- Margie Vollmer  
Controller
- Tracy M. Greene  
Director of Banquet Operations
- Julie Caugherty-Krueger  
Director of Membership and Marketing
- Rudy Mamula  
Accounts Payable
- Kim Swisher  
Accounts Receivable
- Leatha M. Veitock  
Information Systems Assistant & Mailroom
- Shirley Rice  
Membership Services
- Alison Kelley  
Administrative Assistant
- Wallace L. Cheuvront  
Staff Assistant – Shipping & Receiving
- Dick Nelson  
Publicist

#### CONSERVATION POLICY

- Dan R. Dessecker ..... Director

#### BIOLOGISTS

- Mark E. Banker ..... Senior Biologist
- Gary Zimmer ..... Senior Biologist

## REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Mark D. Fouts . . . Director of Regional Operations  
& AK MO, MN, OR, WA  
Bruce Wojcik . . . MI & northwestern IN  
Dave "Swede" Johnson . . . WI, far western UP of MI,  
Twin Cities MN, IA, & IL  
Dave Hansroth . . . NJ eastern PA, MD portion of VA  
Dan Holliman . . . . . NY, northern PA  
Lisa M Rossi . . . IN, OH, western PA, northern WV  
Don Mallicoat . . . . . GA, KY, LA, NC,  
TN, VA & southern WV

## FIELD EDITORS

11 "Bumper" Bauer  
Paul Carson  
Jeff Helsdon  
Art Wheaton

## FIELD PHOTOGRAPHERS

Nancy Anisfield  
Timothy Flanagan

## NATIONAL OFFICE

Ruffed Grouse Society  
451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044 • Toll Free (888) 564-6747  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)  
E-MAIL [rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org)

## RGS CANADA

John Lockerbie  
RGS Canadian Coordinator

To report RGS-Canada chapter news contact Jeff  
Helsdon, Canadian Field Editor, [jhelsdon@bellnet.ca](mailto:jhelsdon@bellnet.ca),  
(519) 842-8468

## MAGAZINE DESIGN

Ed Ramaley, Art Director - Marcomnordic Printing

## ADVERTISING

Scott Cherek  
Cherek Group Inc. (307) 635-8899  
E-mail [cherekgroup@briesnan.net](mailto:cherekgroup@briesnan.net)

The Ruffed Grouse Society is the one international non-profit 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. It was incorporated as the Ruffed Grouse Society of America on October 24, 1961 in Monterey, Virginia. National headquarters is located in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. Donations and gifts may be tax deductible.

RGS is a quarterly publication of the Ruffed Grouse Society and is published seasonally in the spring, summer, fall and winter. Positions or views expressed by advertisements and articles which appear in the magazine may not reflect those held by the Ruffed Grouse Society.

**EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS:** Letters, article and photo submissions are welcomed. No responsibility is assumed for unsolicited materials. Please address emails to

[editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org).

**UNWANTED MAIL ALERT:** Occasionally we make our member listing available to select organizations whose services or products may interest you. If you prefer not to share your name and address, you can simply remove your information from our mailing lists by contacting our membership department at [juliec@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:juliec@ruffedgrousesociety.org). Also contact our membership department if you receive multiple magazines to your household and wish to consolidate your memberships.

## CHOICE HOTELS INTERNATIONAL

Special rate identification number 00802089

© Copyright 2009 Ruffed Grouse Society. All Rights Reserved.



# The Ruffed Grouse Society 2009-2010 National Raffle

## Winchester Model 21 Baby Frame 28-Gauge Shotgun

This one of a kind gun features 28" barrels choked IC/M with two heads, a straight English stock crafted from AAA fancy feathered notch walnut to a checkered butt, and a 14 1/2" LOP.

The DAI is 2 3/8", DAC is 1 1/2", pitch is 5° and the cast is neutral.

The beavertail forend has an ebony insert in the tip. It has a single selective trigger and the RGS logo is engraved in gold on the bottom of the receiver.



Winner to be drawn on  
**June 30, 2010**  
at RGS headquarters in  
Coraopolis, Pennsylvania.

\*Winner responsible for applicable taxes.  
To purchase raffle tickets call  
**1-888-564-6747.**

Donation for each ticket is \$100.00.  
Up to 1,500 tickets to be sold.

Approximate retail value: 28,000.





# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Share your thoughts, opinions and questions with us. Send emails to [editor@ruffedgrouse.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrouse.org). Letters should be mailed to: Ann, Editor, Ruffed Grouse Society, 451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108. Submissions should not exceed 150 words, and may be edited for content and length. Name and address must be included.

## Two with One Blow...

It was October 18, 1982 and there was a crisp, clean bite in the air. The sun was just barely up. I was hunting what I call the four corners cover, and decided to come in from the south along an old lane, instead of from the creek as I usually do. (I'd flushed a bird near the corn field earlier in the week, and I hadn't seen anything until I got to the silt area.)

That morning I was about halfway through the silt area when two woodcock took off in front of me. One went a little off center to the left and the other went slightly to my right. My Remington Model 31 came up smoothly. The left bird fell when I pulled the trigger on the right bird – down they both came.

I was thrilled. I couldn't believe my luck – two birds down in a flat leaf cover that made it relatively easy to find them. I was between bird dogs at the time, but I marked where they fell and five minutes later had them both in hand.

What a delight to bag a true double on such a legendary American upland game bird.

Fred Moffatt  
Joliet, Illinois

## Double Take

For every grouse hunter I believe the ultimate objective is a true double, or shooting two birds in the air at the same time. I've been lucky to experience this twice in all my days chasing ruffed grouse.

The first time was in the 1970's; I was hunting with my daughter Carrie. She had come along to watch our springer spaniel, Brandy, flush grouse in the woods. At that time she didn't have any experience with guns and was just an observer.

We were hunting a covert I call the "four o'clock trail" – named for the time of day when the hunting is the best. It was really a snowmobile trail about a mile north of our cabin. That day it was late afternoon and Carrie was following about 10 to 15 yards behind me.

Suddenly, two birds broke out of cover on the right side of the trail. One flew in front of me and went left across the path. I got off an instinctive, quick shot as it disappeared into the foliage. The other grouse headed straight down the trail – about head high. It was moving up and down as it put some distance between us. I fired a shot well over top of the bird and it dropped. Brandy was looking up at me from her steady position – giving me a look of "you've got to be kidding me!" – if there is such a dog look.

All the shooting happened in a matter of seconds. The next thing I heard was my daughter crying out, "Oh, Dad!" and I turned around. A small aspen tree was falling down almost on top of her. She ducked out of the way, off the trail and into the woods.

"That's really odd," I thought to myself. Then I realized what had happened. I had shot the tree with my first load, and the full impact of the shot had cut into the center of a 3-4 inch aspen. It did a slow-motion bend and collapsed.

Fortunately Carrie wasn't hurt, but I felt not a little trepidation about telling her mother about it when we returned to the cabin. I never even saw that tree as I swung to the first bird. When Brandy appeared from that side of the trail with a bird in mouth, I breathed

a sigh of relief – not all the shot had hit the tree.

Grouse numbers will be at peak numbers in the next couple of years here in the lake states. Best of luck to all who want to feel the magic of a double.

Loyde Childs  
Marshall, Wisconsin

## On the Need for Active Forest Management

*Editor's Note: Every once in while there is an article that draws widespread response from readers, and most recently it was "The Other Silent Spring" by Steven Backs, which appeared in our summer 2009 magazine. Its message – the need to create young-forest habitat – resonated with many of our readers.*

Ryan Trapani, an education forester with the Catskill Forest Association recently requested permission to reprint "The Other Silent Spring" in his organization's newsletter. Upon granting his request, we also forwarded him "Placing Wildlife at Risk by Ignoring Ecological Principles," an article intended to support the call to action raised by "The Other Silent Spring".

Reprints of both articles are available through the RGS headquarters office.

I just finished reading Dr. Michael Zagata's article. It has a powerful message that needs to be broadcast widely. I like and appreciate northern hardwood forests, but the lack of diversity in age, size and species in our forests in the Catskill region and New York State are real issues. For an example, areas with good low-bush blueberry picking are becoming hard to find, if not rare. And who doesn't like blueberries?

I think the main problem is that most people are not aware of the role that humans have historically played in our forests, mostly through fire. Also problematic is that the role model in New York State for land management has been the *Forest Preserve* model. This model supports the perception that by doing nothing, private landowners are protecting their forests.

Personally, I don't often subscribe to a top-down approach, but in our state the lead environmental organization has a responsibility to actively manage their lands so that this understanding can trickle down and result in increased public recognition of the necessity for forest management.

I often take people on walks in the woods and try to explain the historical role of forest management through the trees species present in their forest. This personal approach works well, and I wish it were done more often. Hopefully forest management organizations like the Catskill Forest Association and wildlife management organizations like RGS can work together to convince the public and our decision makers of this growing problem.

Ryan Trapani  
Education Forester  
Catskill Forest Association  
Arkville, New York

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR continued on page 10



IT'S OUT THERE. GO GET IT.



THE PERFECT SHOT DOES EXIST. THERE'S NO WAY OF KNOWING WHEN IT WILL APPEAR. BUT WHEN IT DOES, BE SURE YOU'RE READY. SUCCESS OUT THERE BEGINS RIGHT NOW. OUR WING-SHOK™ LOADS ARE FAST, AND FEATURE COPPER-PLATED LEAD AND EXCELLENT PATTERNS. THEY GIVE YOU THE ADVANTAGE OVER EVEN THE ELUSIVE RUFFED GROUSE. WITH WING-SHOK, WILD FLUSHES ARE FOLLOWED BY A BIRD IN HAND—NOT JUST AN EMPTY GUN AND A DISAPPOINTED LOOK FROM YOUR FAVORITE BIRD DOG.




PROUD SPONSOR  
OF RUFFED GROUSE  
SOCIETY HABITAT  
PROJECTS

FEDERAL  
PREMIUM

FEDERALPREMIUM

©2008 Federal Premium




**Strideaway**  
The online publication dedicated to the great American sport of pointing dog Field Trials!  
[www.strideaway.com](http://www.strideaway.com)



**RGS RUFF Capital Campaign**  
Over \$2 million dollars pledged or received. Help us reach our goal of \$5 million dollars.  
**1-888-564-6747**

**Looking to Complete Your Collection?**



Back issues of RGS are now available. At a cost of \$5.00 per issue, plus an additional \$2.00 for shipping, you can catch up on issues you may have missed over the last five years. No guarantee all issues are available, stock will be sold on a first request, first served basis. Write to [editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org) to place your order.

### A Noteworthy Legacy

The last issue of RGS included an article entitled *The Fellowship*, a story I wrote to commemorate a good friend of mine, Dr. Alred Geis, PhD. It highlighted the exceptional wing shooting ability and sportsmanship of the late Doc Geis. During his long career as a wildlife biologist for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, he was highly involved in woodcock research and management and was instrumental in creating the annual woodcock wing collection survey that continues today.

As is so typical of serious woodcock hunters, Doc was a superfan who cared deeply for the welfare of this amazing little game bird that thrills and charms hunters every fall. Quite fittingly, his concern for the welfare of timberdoodles continues through means of a \$20,000 gift from his estate that is earmarked for woodcock management and research. His family and friends chose the Ruffed Grouse Society as the recipient of the funds.

My friend's legacy of woodcock fascination continues through his son Dean, who facilitated the grant and follows his father's footsteps through long familiar coverts every fall.

Timothy C. Flanagan  
Bedford, Pennsylvania  
[www.natureexposure.com](http://www.natureexposure.com)


*Editor's Note: RGS is currently working with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, along with the Geis family and friends to plan a project for woodcock on state lands in Western Maryland. The project will be named for Dr. Geis.*

**STIFF DOG?**


Is your hunting buddy:

- sore or stiff in the morning?
- getting older?
- reluctant to hunt all day?
- a weekend warrior?
- having difficulty jumping?
- arthritic?

If you answered "yes" to any of these, try **Hunt Dog Hunt™** Performance Formula with joint strength nutrients and antioxidants to help your dog hunt longer and stronger or simply to keep your older dog active.



People take care of their dogs and expect performance and high quality care. It's time to give our dogs the same support for all their hard work! ZoomDog Performance is the answer. The ZoomDog products have been tested and proven to help dogs love them. It's not just for the dog, it's for the dog's life. Get it right like they need it.




**Tail Feathers Finale**

It's not too late to take part in our 2009 membership drive, *Tail Feathers!*

For every new member you recruit you will receive one credit. The top national recruiter will win a special edition Tail Feather Super Recruiter grouse display from headquarters. The chapter with the most credits will get their chapter name engraved on a plaque to be displayed at headquarters and presented by their Regional Director at the 2010 chapter banquet.

Contact our membership department at 1-888-564-6747 to find out more!





We've been waiting all year for this.

For the cool weather to come.

For the leaves to fall from the Aspens.

For the flurry of wings and the rush that follows.

The gear is packed. The dog is pacing by the back door.

Eight million acres of public land and one of the best hunting states  
in the country are just waiting on us.

Our favorite season is now open in Pure Michigan.

**PURE MICHIGAN®**  
Your trip begins at [michigan.org](http://michigan.org)



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Mike Zagata  
Executive Director/CEO

## RGS Takes the Lead on the Need for Early Successional Forests *Moving with Confidence into the New Year*

By the time you read this another grouse and woodcock season will have come and, for the most part, gone

Those of us fortunate enough to have spent a few days afield with a good hunting buddy and a faithful canine companion or two will have recharged our batteries and had new experiences to be shared during the quiet time that follows a hunt. We will talk not about the kills, but about the opportunities afforded by good dog work and quality habitat. That is what makes our sport special, and that is how it should remain – special

This year has been difficult for many of our members and for all conservation groups, including RGS. However, it has also been a year of opportunity and we've been focusing on taking advantage of those opportunities. RGS now has five tree-harvesting machines at work creating grouse and woodcock habitat – and let's not forget all the other wildlife, including songbirds, that benefit when young forest habitat is created.

RGS has initiated a push to educate folks about the importance of early successional, or young forest, habitat to all the species that rely upon it for survival. To accomplish that, two articles have been made available on the RGS website, and reprints of each are available. One is entitled *The Other Silent Spring* and the second is *Placing Wildlife at Risk by Ignoring Ecological Principles*. Please share them with your friends, they were written to help people understand how nature works and what happens when we intervene without understanding the consequences.

RGS has also been working with the Wildlife Management Institute to include a session on early successional forests at the 2010 North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.

Minnesota passed legislation in 2009 that mirrors that enacted decades ago by Missouri, and provides revenue from their sales tax to fund wildlife-related projects. RGS and its members in Minnesota were involved in supporting the development and passage of that legislation, and we are looking forward to making good things happen on the ground with the funds generated.

If you happen to have traveled in the vicinity of a Cabela's store this summer, we hope you saw one of RGS' billboards. Thanks to Federal Cartridge Co., RGS placed five billboards in high-traffic areas throughout our regions in an effort to promote our mission. In addition, there was an ad in the August issue of *Field & Stream* promoting membership in RGS, as well as ads in many other popular upland hunting magazines.

At the June 2009 Board meeting, your Board put up the funds for a major membership campaign. That campaign, in concert with the "Super Recruiter" membership program already underway, is intended to build momentum in anticipation of our 50th Anniversary in 2011. By participating in the recruitment program, you can jump on the wagon and help us grow!

The economic slowdown, as you might expect, adversely impacted our banquet revenue in spite of the herculean effort expended by our volunteers. However, RGS did not experience as deep an impact as felt by some other wildlife conservation groups – thanks to our volunteers, sponsors and banquet attendees. In fact, some chapters were able to increase their net revenue, even when attendance was down.

The Board has been evaluating the overall health of the banquet program and how it might be improved upon in a manner that increases the overall revenue – beyond what it takes to operate – and thus create funds that can be allocated for chapters to fund statewide projects. As many of you are aware, RGS has been seeking ways to provide money for local projects, but simply has not had the funds to allocate for that purpose. With your continued help and support, that is going to change. The Board will deliberate on just how to make that change at the October 2009 Board meeting and, if adopted, the changes will be in effect for the spring 2010 banquet season.

We are listening, and with your continued support, our voice on behalf of the birds we champion will become increasingly louder – and more effective.

Thank you,

MIKE





# *The Best There Is, just less of it.*

Browning Feather models feature a lightweight, high-strength alloy receiver with an integrated steel breech face that gives you all the durability expected from a Browning, without the extra weight. There is nothing finer than spending your days roaming the woods with good dogs and great friends. Days like these are even better when you are carrying an exquisite Browning Feather over and under.

*Citori 625 Feather*  
(available in  
12, 20, 28 and .410)

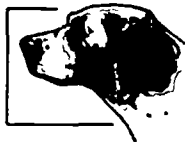
*Cynergy Feather*  
(available in  
12, 20, 28 and .410)



**BROWNING**

The Best There Is

[browning.com](http://browning.com)



# PURELY DOGS

*Editor's Note: This issue's Purely Dogs column is by guest columnist Lisa Price, who resides in Barnesville, Pennsylvania with three German shorthairs, Josey Wales, Lozen and Prairie. A former newspaper reporter, Lisa has been a full-time freelance writer for about 15 years. Her first word was "bow-wow." Lisa's book, "One Woman's Haven", was published this fall and is a series of dog stories that chronicle one woman's life.*

## A Movable Feast

by Lisa Price

Even at a distance, there was no mistaking the gleam in Lozen's eyes as she spotted the stuff of German shorthair dreams. Ah, a half dozen picnic tables covered in a thrilling array of hotdogs, macaroni salad, chips, hamburgers and various other picnic items, all of it guarded by a dozen or so girl scouts, none of them paying close attention.

When you stop at an interstate rest stop with a couple of friendly dogs, people sometimes want to pet them. I'd run into the scouts and their leaders while I was walking my youngest dog, Lozen, then eight months old. I had her on a flexi-lead and let it out as her wagging tail disappeared into the mob of scouts who had leapt from their benches to pet the puppy.

Too late, I saw Lozen's head emerge on the other side of the group, her eyes fixed on the unguarded feast. In mere seconds she gulped down four purple pickled eggs and inhaled two hotdogs, neatly and deftly, sans buns. Half her muzzle was buried in a vat of macaroni salad by the time I got my hands on her collar. Well, I thought, at least we were on the way back from – and not to – South Dakota, if Lozen was going to have a stomach upset.

Hours later, I bolted upright in the camper's bed. What was that? Nearby, Lozen stretched contentedly in peaceful slumber. Then I heard it, a sound as if someone deflated a raft, seconds before another onslaught of pickled egg-fueled canine gaseous emissions smothered any good air left in the camper.

Soon I was driving down the entrance ramp and back onto the expressway east, windows rolled down, lesson learned. Keeping your dog from appropriating picnic lunches is a no-brainer. But what else can we do to keep our dogs' guts healthy when they travel?

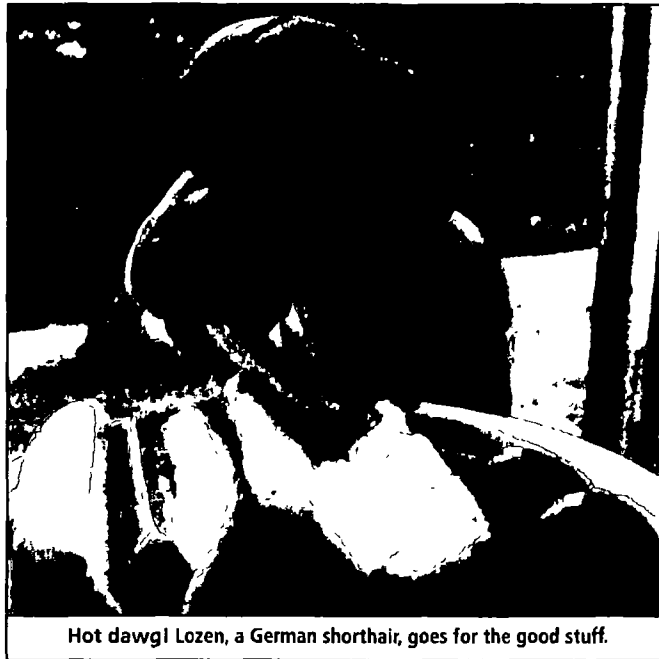
### Breaks

I'd left Pennsylvania bound for South Dakota at 10 pm, planning to drive through the night, missing traffic and making time. Even towing a camper, my Chevy truck goes about four hours on a tank of gas. Usually, bathroom breaks for me and the dogs coincided with gas stops.

I'd been wrong about that.

"I understand that a good many veterinarians and others in the know recommend hourly stops," said Bob West, Director of B.E. Marketing, Sporting Dog Programs, Purina Nestle. "Being practical, I often make the first stop at an hour or less, assuming they've had a good airing before we start."

"After that quick stop early in the trip, we usually hit around two hours between stops," he added. "I believe the concern is kidney function, along with circulation, and I assume boredom fits in there somewhere."



Hot dawg! Lozen, a German shorthair, goes for the good stuff.

### Snacks

Do you ever wonder if dogs somehow wrote the text for the side of dog biscuit boxes, the part that reads, "For maximum benefit, dogs should be fed eight biscuits a day"?

At home, Lozen and my other shorthair, Josey Wales, have perfected the soulful look, enhanced by slight drooling. "Oh," the look says, "if I can't have a bite of those French fries, Cheeze-Its, pretzels, cheese slices, etc., I shall faint."

It's okay to offer a snack during a break when we're on the road, as long as it's something that's normally included in the dog's diet. Now's not the time to give into those soulful looks, and potentially cause a bout of diarrhea which could put the skids on your hunting trip.

### Meal Time

Most sporting dog owners feed once, or twice a day; my dogs get their meal once, in the evening. What should you do when you're traveling?

"Hopefully your dog trailer or vehicle provides a pretty smooth ride for your dogs, but I'd be a little concerned about a full gut bouncing around, and the lack of ability for normal motion," West said. "I recommend you time the feeding with one of your longer stops, follow that with a good lengthy airing before traveling on, and time another stop in around an hour."

### Water

Dogs will slurp gleefully from a water-filled depression in a cow pasture, and charge into a pond on a hot day. We have to be on our guard against these things, because those behaviors can be extremely dangerous, even fatal.

"Dogs can pick up a lot of bugs and problems from the water they drink, and even die from it," West said. "You may have spilled antifreeze in the puddles around farms, which can wipe out a dog's kidneys in a hurry."

"When normal green pond algae deteriorates, taking on a blue color, it's often an indication of a type of bacteria being present that can wreak havoc with the digestive tract and even cause death," he warned. "A few years back well over 100 dogs died during the first few weeks of sharptail season in South Dakota, and the bacterial infection resulting from ingesting this blue algae was determined to be one of the causes."

"I recommend you carry all the water you think you'll need, while you're traveling and when you head out to go hunting," West added. "And while

PURELY DOGS continued on page 16



GEAR THE WAY YOU'D DESIGN IT™

Lance Tracy and "Ripley"  
SportDOG Brand Director



The SportHunter™ 1825 Remote Trainer

DESIGNED BY FOLKS AS  
BIRDY AS YOU.

SPORTDOG.COM

you're hunting be conscious of monitoring your dog for any signs of heat stress, such as body animation, tail action, facial expression, level of panting, respiration rate and body temperature."

My dog Prairie had always been reluctant to drink from a water bottle in the field, until I learned this tip from retriever trainer Tom Dokken of Minnesota.

"Simply dab some peanut butter on the tip of the water bottle," Dokken said. "Do this a few times and he'll always come after the bottle when he sees it."

"From there it's a simple transition to fill the bottle and get him to drink from it," he added. "With this accomplished, you don't always have to rely on having a water bowl to get your dog to drink."

## An Ounce of Prevention

Late in 2009 Purina launched a product called FortiFlora, a nutritional supplement for dogs, available through your veterinarian. FortiFlora contains guaranteed amounts of live active cultures needed to promote intestinal health and balance. It comes in a powdered form about the size of an

instant coffee packet. You just sprinkle it over the dog's food.

Although you're in the front seat, singing along with CDs and shedding worries like a lab sheds its winter coat as you head to your hunting destination, your dog may be feeling the stress of travel due the disruption of its normal routine. Even if all things remain as normal as possible – you've carried water from home and the same dog food – your dog can unpleasantly surprise you with a bout of diarrhea.

FortiFlora contains the probiotic *Enterococcus Faecium*, which restores normal intestinal health and balance. It works by increasing the number of beneficial bacteria, which promote a positive balance of microflora in the dog's gut.

Can't you just give your dog yogurt? That's old school now. Although yogurt contains active live cultures of good bacteria, it's been scientifically proven that a number of them are unable to survive passage through the dog's gastrointestinal tract and thus unable to provide beneficial effects.

Each packet of FortiFlora is guaranteed to contain 100,000,000 live micro-organisms. Purina has tested the product extensively and guarantees that the microorganisms in each packet will be alive when they are fed to the dog, and also alive when they arrive in the dog's intestinal tract.

Although the researchers at Purina aren't comfortable with guaranteeing a quick fix, field trial enthusiasts and sled dog drivers who have field tested the product said they've seen it work overnight. Another benefit not listed on the label is the palatability of FortiFlora. When you have a dog that's tired, seemingly not interested in its food, or distracted, keyed up by the excitement of the travel, add FortiFlora and he'll be licking the dish clean.

## At the End of the Day

After a day of hunting, your number one priority in dog care is rehydration. The best time to feed the dog is within an hour or two, post exercise, according to Brian Zanghi, Ph.D., a research nutritionist for Nestle Purina.

"Hydrate first, then feed within two hours post exercise and if possible, at least 12 hours before working the dog again," Zanghi said. "Research has proven that dogs with an empty colon have two times the endurance of dogs which have been fed four hours before exercise."

Before you hit the sack, take your dog out for a last stretch and potty break. Make sure water is readily available to him if he wakes and feels thirsty during the night. You should also have a water bottle at the ready on your nightstand.

It takes time for fluids to process in a dog's body (and in ours). Waiting until morning to drink may not allow us, and our dogs, enough time to gain the greatest benefits from the water and keep our bodies at a constant level of hydration. 🐾

**STAR LITE**  
**NO Dogs Left Behind**

**STARCRAFT**

**THE HEART OF THE MATTER:**  
German shorthair Josey Wales displays marked enthusiasm for a philosophy every dog and owner hold dear.

## GREAT NEW BOOKS FROM SPORTING CLASSICS



### GAMEFIELD CLASSICS

Michael McIntosh and William Headrick collaborated in this unique collection of stories and photos covering the most coveted firearms in the world. The big 9x12-inch book features beautiful, full-color photographs and insightful text on 35 different shotguns and 25 rifles.

Trade edition, hardcover with dust jacket: \$45  
Deluxe edition, leather-bound with bookplate signed by McIntosh and Headrick: \$90



### BRUSHES WITH NATURE

The first book devoted to Ron Van Gelder, one of the nation's best wildlife artists. This 11x12-inch book features 125 full-color paintings and many spectacular black-and-white drawings.

Trade edition, hardcover with dust jacket: \$60  
Deluxe edition, limited to 400 leather-bound copies and includes original signed giclee: \$125



### LEGEND'S LEGACY

In *Legend's Legacy*, author Mike Gaddis explores the enchanting realm of outdoor mentorship. Not only in kind and gentle remembrances, but in intuitive vignettes, present and future.

Trade edition, hardcover with dust jacket, \$30.  
Deluxe edition, leather-bound and limited to 525 signed and numbered copies, \$60.



### LOST CLASSICS OF JACK O'CONNOR

Forty great hunting adventures – never published before in any book – are featured in this exciting 376-page anthology by the legendary sporting author. Dozens of unique photos and black-and-white drawings.

Trade edition, hardcover with dust jacket: \$35

(800) 849-1004 or [www.sportingclassics.net](http://www.sportingclassics.net)

## Russell Moccasin...Proud RGS Corporate Sponsor

Russell Moccasin Company is proud to be a corporate sponsor of RGS. Russell has been making fine custom fitted hunting boots by hand from the finest leathers available for more than 110 years. Legions of satisfied customers can attest to Russell's quality, fit and comfort.

The Signature South 40 Birdshooter, far right, is the finest upland bird hunting boot made...waterproofed leather, triple vamp construction for all day comfort and support and light as a feather. Judy's Boot, (below, center) is a more lady-like boot made with buttery soft heirloom French Veal leather.. lightweight with exceptional water resistance. A significant portion of the proceeds from both boots goes to RGS to help support vital grouse habitat.

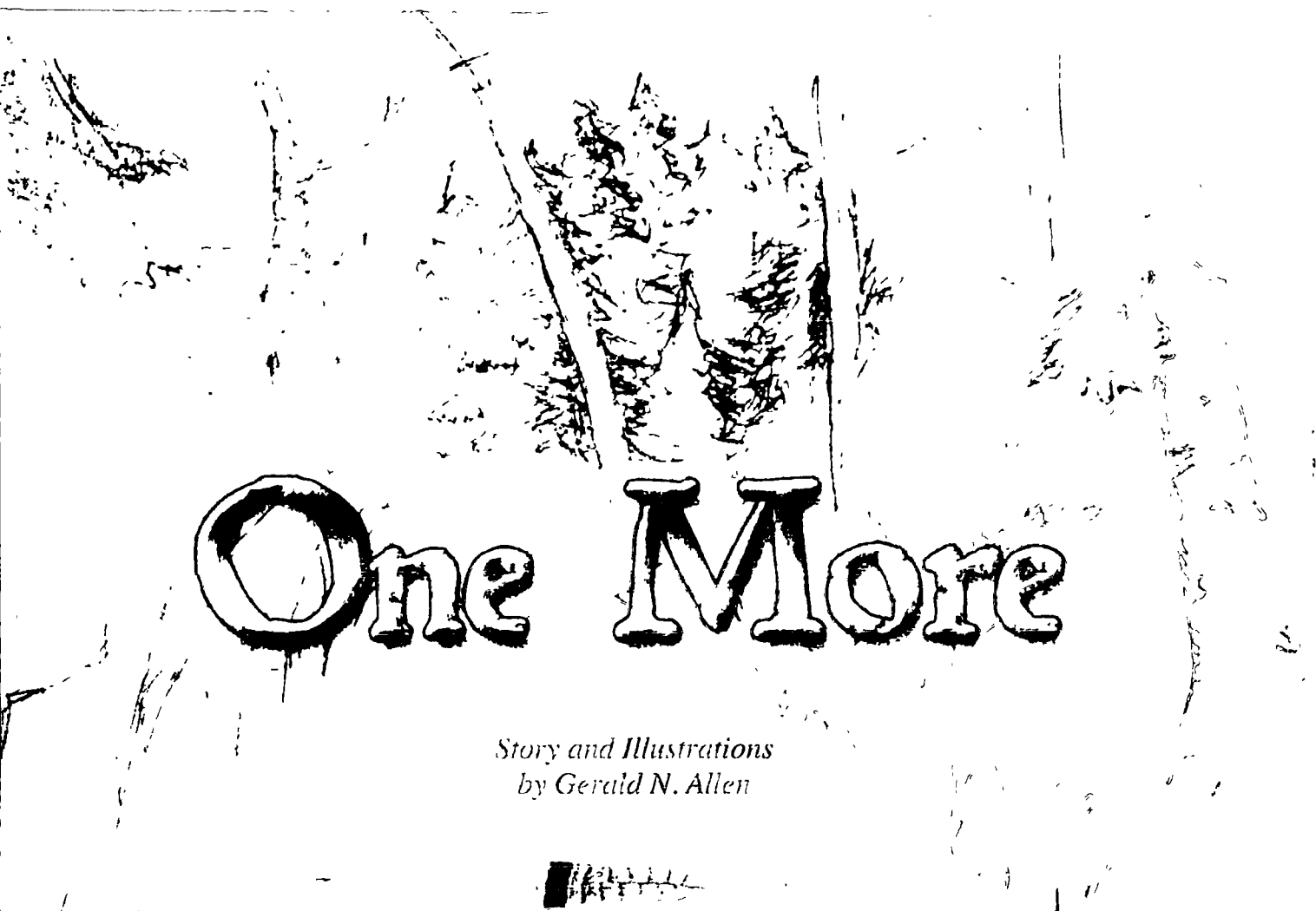
For ordering instructions and measuring form see the Russell Moccasin website, [www.russellmoccasin.com](http://www.russellmoccasin.com), click on Order Form and Fitting Instructions



285 S. W. Franklin • PO Box 309 • Berlin, WI 54923  
920-361-2252 • Fax: 920-361-3274  
[www.russellmoccasin.com](http://www.russellmoccasin.com)



Russell offers two of its most popular models...the Signature South 40 Birdshooter and the lady's Judy's Boot in special RGS-brand versions



# One More

Story and Illustrations  
by Gerald N. Allen

From the coarse gravel logging road I backed my pickup onto the silent gray twin tracks of the old tote road. Alders arched inward from either side of the narrow track like soldier's swords at a military wedding. With the truck shut off, not a man-made sound could be heard. Across the logging road tall fir, maple, and birches fought for space, rebounding from the scars of an old clearcut, some already reaching fifty feet tall. The gray overcast sky muted the early fall colors.

Nearly thirty years earlier, as a young man in my twenties, I'd worked logging for a paper company in those woods. Every day for months I'd traveled that road up into the mountains to cut big old hardwoods, flat hemlocks, and tall pines. The land didn't look much different than my memory recalled, but my life had changed in so many ways.

Chara, my young German shepherd, sat patiently on the seat next to me. My watch said only nine o'clock, but we'd already had a day's worth of fun.

Not long after sunrise, we waded into a thick alder patch that I hadn't hunted in twenty-five years. Rain the evening before had drenched everything and, being the first weekend of the season, all the leaves still clung to the trees.

My clothes soaked through in no time, sticking to my skin and feeling miserably cold. But tramping through the thick raspberries and underbrush soon heated me enough so that the only thing annoying me were thorns ripping at my legs.

We hunted down the hill into alders, away from the old overgrown fields, but not moving a bird. Small islands of fence-post-sized poplars provided moments of easier walking, but mostly we fought our way through tangled cover. Then we worked east, along the edge where the alders met mossy softwood swamps that swallowed all sound. In little clearings, which we generally worked around, thick wet grass towered nearly as tall as my head. Twice we found large piles of lichen covered rocks accumulated decades earlier by farmers trying to eke a living from the land.

At times the ground under my feet became wet enough to warrant detours, with mud sucking at my boots. Trudging back up the slope, I contemplated my own sanity. I knew not one other person that I was certain would enjoy being in that wet, cold, alder thicket with me.

And then we bumped a woodcock and the little guy tweet-ered away. I didn't have a chance for even an attempted shot. Then Chara pointed one. For the next twenty minutes it seemed like there were hundreds of them.

I never saw one fall after the shot. The thick foliage blocked my vision enough so when that when Chara produced a dead bird I was always surprised. Of course, more often I felt certain that I must have connected on one of those easy going-straight-away-from-me shots, but Chara would search and then look at



**We hunted down the hill into alders, away from the old overgrown fields, but not moving a bird. Small islands of fence-post-sized poplars provided moments of easier walking, but mostly we fought our way through tangled cover.**

me as if to say, "No way, boss". For a short while we chased a lone grouse in circles, it flushing wildly ahead of us again and again, crisscrossing a tiny stream that came down from the highway where we started. When we had our limit of three woodcock, we slogged our way back up the hill to the highway.

Wet and cold, but quite happy, I wanted to find a quiet place to sip coffee from my thermos, munch on homemade cookies, and savor the morning. So we drove down the road to search out a logging road I remembered from two decades earlier.

Chara beat me to the rear of the truck and, as I lowered the tailgate, she put her paws up on it, searching for the dead woodcock she knew were there. Fumbling through my things I found the thermos and poured a steaming cup. Sitting on the tailgate, I split the first cookie in two; Chara certainly deserved the bigger half. The alders along the narrow road behind the truck looked like they might hold promise for the next day.

The sound of a vehicle coming up the gravel road chewed away the silence. The feeling of solitude dissolved and I wondered how much traffic would come by. As a pickup truck passed, I stood to watch.

The driver waved, and I returned the gesture. He slowed and stopped. My heart sank, there goes the peace and quiet.

On the back of the truck sat a small camper, the kind you don't see much anymore. The vehicle had Massachusetts' plates. The guy climbed out, an older gentleman, and not too tall. I ambled his way.

"Is that a German wirehair?" he asked.

"Yeah," I answered.

"Nice looking dog," he said. The man's legs seemed stiff. "I had to put my Brittany down a few months ago."

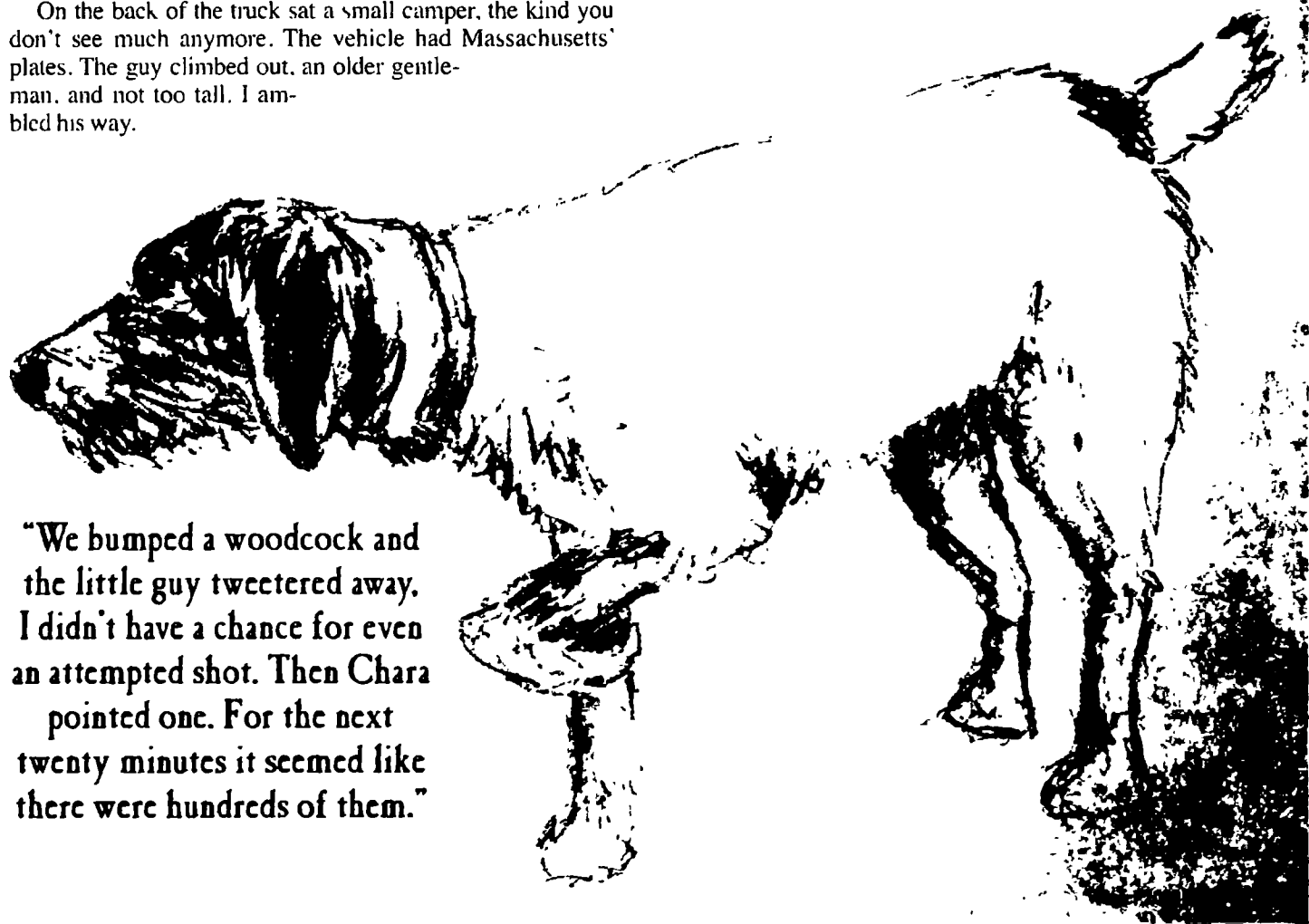
He'd hunted over the same dog for 14 years, the last year of the dog's life only using him for short easy hunts. "Great dog," he said several times, "nothing fancy, but sure could find birds. Went everywhere with him." He said that for a long time he'd sworn that Brittany would be his last dog, but now he missed the company. And bird hunting certainly wasn't the same, he added. He hadn't found a bird in the two days he'd been up there. Maybe he would get another dog.

I offered coffee and cookies, but he declined both. We talked about bird dogs, grouse, and woodcock. His wife died less than a year earlier, leaving an even bigger hole in his life. He'd driven 200 miles to hunt alone, to remember times that had been, and grasp at memories.

As we talked, both of us watched a fat little bird waddle out of the woods and onto the gravel logging road about a hundred feet beyond us. Finally I said, "Does that look like a woodcock

*ONE MORE continued on next page*

**"We bumped a woodcock and the little guy tweetered away. I didn't have a chance for even an attempted shot. Then Chara pointed one. For the next twenty minutes it seemed like there were hundreds of them."**



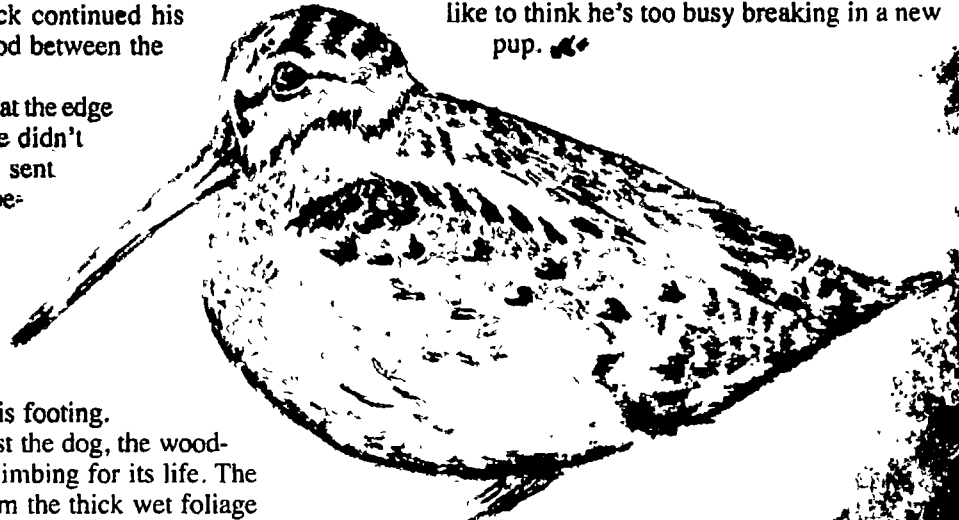
from page 19

small funny bird actually stopped in the mid-  
 "He answered. "I've never seen one cross a  
 "Neither have I," I said. "Get your gun. He's yours."  
 from behind the seat of his truck he produced a pretty  
 side. As I watched him hobble down the road,  
 that there weren't too many miles of bird  
 in him. The woodcock continued his  
 few alders that stood between the  
 woods.  
 into the weedy ditch at the edge  
 he yelled back that he didn't  
 the bird had gone. I sent  
 down his way and followed be-  
 She picked up the scent and  
 few feet into the trees  
 up on point.  
 The gentleman care-  
 climbed through  
 ditch and stepped  
 the alders, a little unsure of his footing.  
 Chara stood, a statue. One step past the dog, the wood-  
 leapt up through the trees, climbing for its life. The  
 shot. Water fell like tears from the thick wet foliage

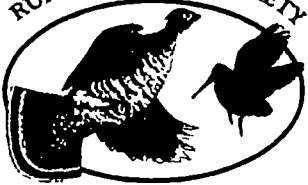
overhead.

I wish I could say Chara found the bird and brought it  
 to hand, but the woodcock flew safely away. Slowly, we  
 made our way up the slight hill back to the trucks, talking  
 of guns we've owned and shots we'd missed.

Before the man left, I gave him my card. He thanked  
 me for letting him shoot over my dog, and promised  
 to be in touch. Of course he never has been. I  
 like to think he's too busy breaking in a new  
 pup. ☘



RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



## EMBROIDERED APPAREL

Bob Allen  
 Vented Mesh-Back  
 Shooting Shirt

\$41.00

RGS-142K



1.800.550.2698 • [www.SHOPRGS.com](http://www.SHOPRGS.com)

## 2011 RGS

### Artist of the Year Search



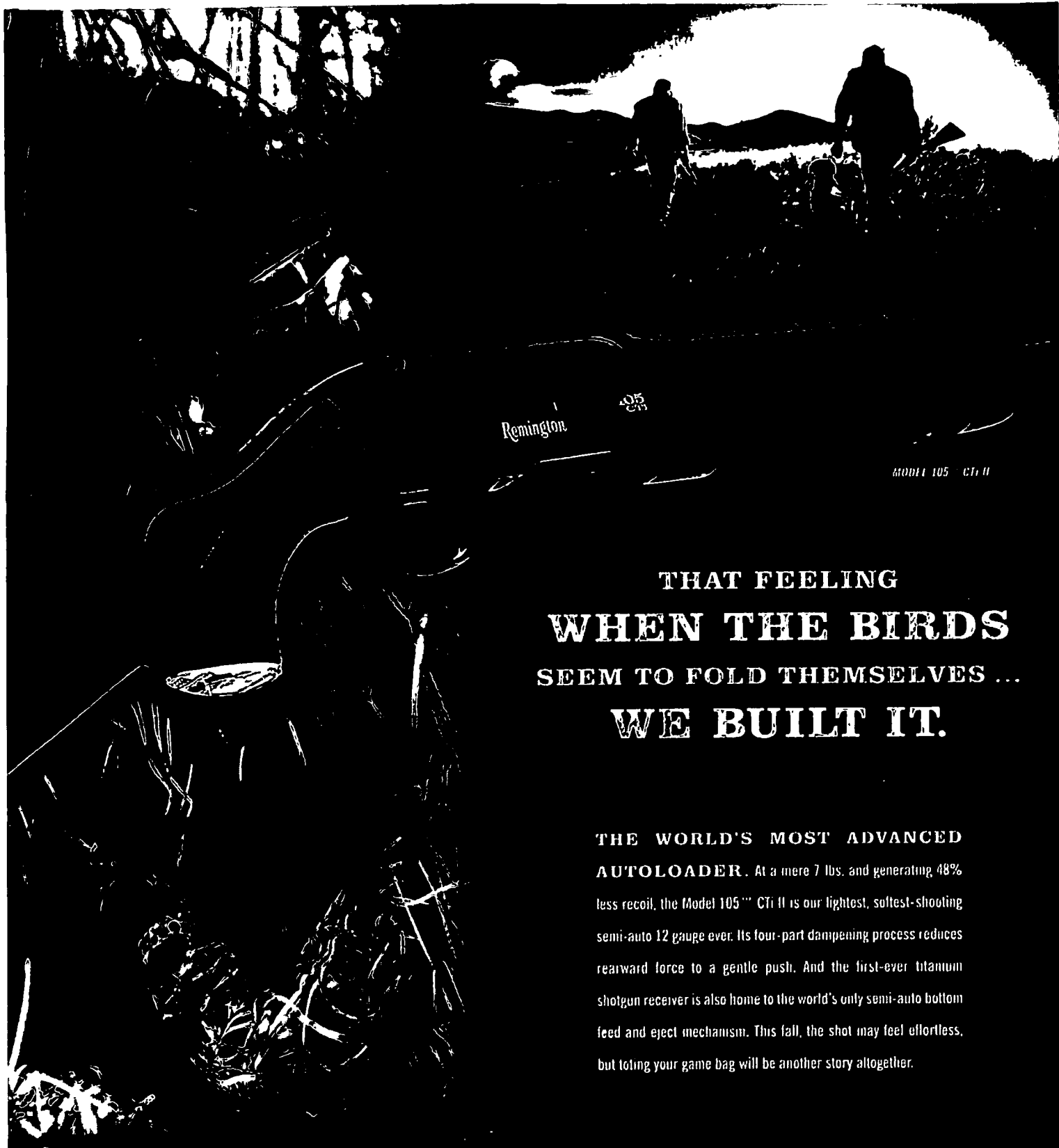
Are you a nature artist looking for  
 some great exposure?

We are currently seeking artists  
 interested in applying for our annual  
 Artist of the Year award

The winning original painting will be  
 featured on the cover of both our  
 magazine and banquet program

Limited edition prints will be auctioned  
 off at every banquet in 2011. For details  
 contact RGS Headquarters toll free, at  
 (888) 564-6747.





Remington

105  
CTi II

MODEL 105 CTi II

**THAT FEELING  
WHEN THE BIRDS  
SEEM TO FOLD THEMSELVES ...  
WE BUILT IT.**

**THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED  
AUTOLOADER.** At a mere 7 lbs. and generating 48%  
less recoil, the Model 105™ CTi II is our lightest, softest-shooting  
semi-auto 12 gauge ever. Its four-part dampening process reduces  
rearward force to a gentle push. And the first-ever titanium  
shotgun receiver is also home to the world's only semi-auto bottom  
feed and eject mechanism. This fall, the shot may feel effortless,  
but toting your game bag will be another story altogether.

**REMINGTON®  
WINGMASTER HD™**

The Drop-Dead Better™ heavy-density  
payload and the ultimate ammo to feed  
our new autoloading masterpiece. They're  
packed with the roundest, truest flying denser-than-lead pellets  
we've ever produced. And the results are truly devastating.



Remington

*Remington*

C O U N T R Y

[www.REMINGTON.com/105CTi II](http://www.REMINGTON.com/105CTiII)



# RGS CANADA

## Attending to the Details: Fredericton Chapter Steams Ahead

by Jeff Helsdon

**H**ard work paid off for the Ruffed Grouse Society of Canada's Fredericton chapter during its 2009 banquet and chapter shoot. Fredericton, New Brunswick is the provincial capital and has been the site of an RGS dinner for the past 17 years. With the current economic situation, committee members knew they would have a struggle but were determined to have a successful dinner.

That determination paid off.

"We had to fight hard for attendance," said John Lockerbie, RGS Canada's regional representative for the Maritimes. "We were down 30 to 40 people from other years but our profits were better. They spent more money."

The end result was an attendance of 230, as compared to the usual 260 to 270. Selling those tickets meant committee members were on the phone every evening from 6:30 to 9 pm making calls.

"We put posters up in various places around the city," Lockerbie said. "Every year we call everyone that has ever attended our dinners. That's the way to get them out. We do a mailing, followed by a voice mail for those who have voice mail, followed by one-on-one calls."

He also credited the fact that the chapter wasn't hit as hard by the economic downturn because Fredericton is a government and university town.

Where the Fredericton chapter did end up losing was in the number of corporate tables that were sold. Lockerbie did blame that shortfall on the economy. He also said corporate support is something the chapter needs to work on building.

"If our chapter has a weakness, it's with the corporate community because most of our committee are just regular citizens that work for someone else or are government employees," he said. "We don't run with the big boys."

To address that problem, the chapter has recruited a corporate banker and a financial advisor as their newest committee members. There are also plans for a few other changes for next year. One of the challenges facing this year's dinner was three other major fundraisers being held within six days of the RGS function. The Atlantic Salmon Federation annual fundraiser is a huge event that Lockerbie said "fills the room with millionaires". People come from Montreal and Boston to attend. It was held three days after the RGS dinner. Ducks Unlimited dinner was held a few days earlier.

A decision was made to move next year's RGS dinner to the last Saturday in February to try and stay away from the competition. The RGS dinner is different from some of the other functions in that it is a family event, with 50 to 60 percent of those attending being couples. The committee also wants to maintain its reputation of serving a good meal.

The Fredericton committee held its third annual sporting clays shoot on May 23 at the Fredericton Trap and Skect Club. The facility is the finest of its kind in eastern Canada.

Participation in this year's event was the best ever, with 84 shooters. That was a good increase from 62 last year and 30 the first year. Prizes were awarded for top male & female shooters, top junior, and top score shooter with a side-by-side. The chapter also sold tickets on a gun, which generated a profit of more than \$600.

On the habitat front, chapter members have plans to take advantage of a government program that assists conservation organizations in purchasing land. The program gives a tax receipt for full market value to landowners who donate or sell their property at less than full market value to conservation groups. If land is purchased, "it will be used as an area to teach private landowners how to manage timber for habitat" Lockerbie said. 🍄



Eye on the Sky: Attendees of the sporting clays shoot watch with interest as one participant takes his best shot.



The Fredericton RGS chapter of Canada held their 3rd annual Sporting Clays shoot in late May. Joe Chamberlain of Fredericton, New Brunswick (r), the top junior shooter of the event, is pictured along with John Lockerbie.



The shoot in Fredericton had 84 attendees, representing a significant increase over last year's numbers. The top female shooter was Jessica Duncan of Harvey, New Brunswick.

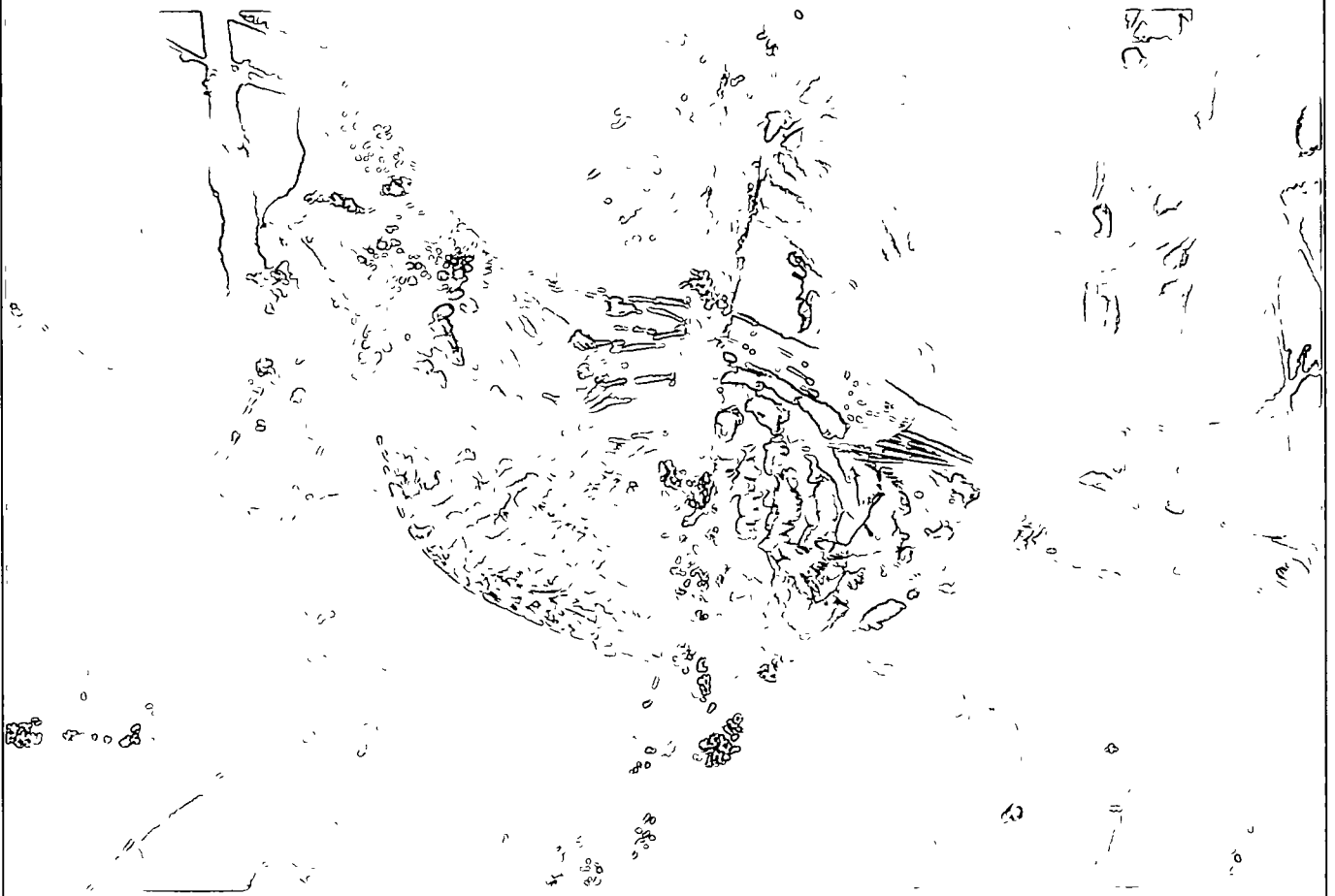
Photos by Bev Bacon

### Your Help Needed

RGS Canada is working on expanding its presence in Canada. If you would like more information or to start a chapter near you, contact John Lockerbie at (519) 945-9453 or Jeff Helsdon at (519) 842-8468.

# *Sustainable Forestry,*

To Us, It's Only Natural



All Plum Creek lands have been certified to the standards of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative™. This certification confirms our longstanding commitment to practicing sustainable forestry, which incorporates the perpetual growing and harvesting of trees with the protection of wildlife, plants, soil and water quality. It also confirms the diligence of our foresters who work every day to meet this commitment.



## PlumCreek

*Growing Value from Exceptional Resources*

SUSTAINABLE  
FORESTRY  
INITIATIVE



# The AYA 4/53

By Nick Sisley

Most of the shotguns made in Spain did not have a great reputation until some time in the 1960s – when a few of the top Spanish side-by-sides were discovered by outdoor writers Jack O'Connor of Outdoor Life and freelance writer Colonel Charles Askins. One of the outstanding Spanish makers they discovered was AYA, an acronym for Aguirre and Aranzabal. (The "y" in Spanish is similar to "and" in English.) Since then many excellent Spanish double gun makers have emerged or were already in production, like Arizabalaga, Grulla, Arietta, Ugartechea, and Garbi. All of these makers are in and around Eibar in the Basque country of northern Spain, and they all concentrate on making side-by-sides in the finest English tradition.

AYA has been making shotguns since 1917, and they make a wide variety of double gun models, many of them bespoke side-by-sides, some of those are matched two-gun or two-barrel sets. The AYA model 4/53, which is on display at all the RGS banquets this fall, comes in 20- and 28-gauge, the 20-gauge has 28" barrels and the 28-gauge has 27" barrels. The test gun I've been shooting is the 28 bore, and it wears 29" barrels.

Maybe the phrase "simple elegance" best describes the 4/53. The gun is designed around the classic Anson and Deeley boxlock action, both of whom worked for Westley Richards in England long ago. Their patent on this action dates back to 1875, so this one has the double underlocking bolt system. The barrels pivot upon a hinge pin which is replaceable with wear. Reportedly, this is an easy receiver to service.

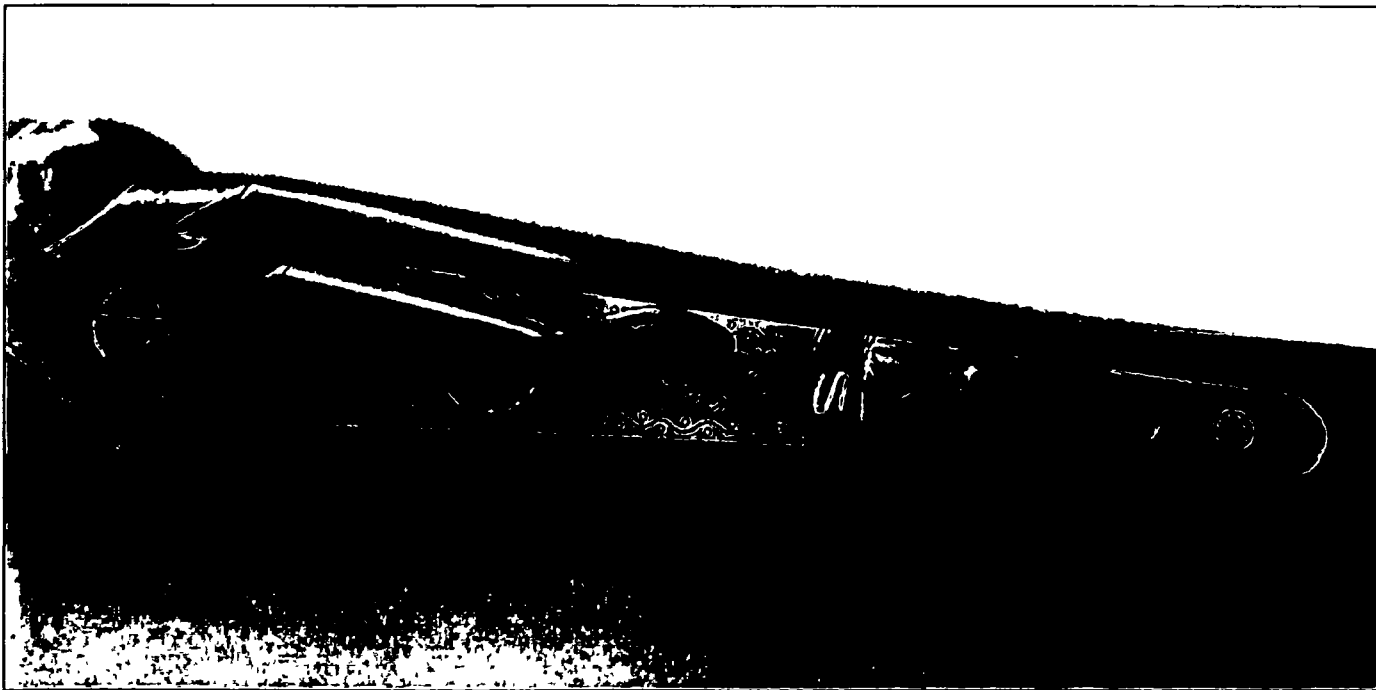
Elegant without being fancy, the 4/53 incorporates a bit of hand engraving on the action – and there is a choice of case hardened receiver (like the AYA gun available through RGS) or the old silver finish, which is actually the receiver style I prefer, although I am testing the case hardened AYA. This is true bone charcoal case hardening, not chemically produced case coloring.

I've been shooting this test AYA a lot, banging away mostly at low seven, low six and low five skeet targets – as I think those clay birds best simulate escaping grouse. There has not been one hiccup in the gun's performance, although the back trigger is a bit squishy. The trigger can no doubt be easily remedied by a gunsmith. This little

28 has ejectors, and it tosses spent empties with real authority.

I say "little 28" because the gun is so light. I assume this one is built on a true 28-gauge frame because it only weighs 5 pounds 11.5 ounces. While standard AYA model 4/53s come with 28" barrels this test gun has the 29", as already mentioned. For added cost you can have an AYA 4/53 in any barrel length you want, within reason, of course. Also, in addition to the 28 gauge this model can also be had in 12-, 16-, 20-gauges or 410. Even the 12-gauge 4/53 only weighs 6 pounds 10 ounces.

Adding to the simple elegance of this grouse-gun-to-be is the straight hand stock and double trigger system. Further, the gun wears a beautiful piece of finely contoured walnut. Traditionalists will love the wood's hand-rubbed oil finish. Stock dimensions are 15" x 1½" x 2¾" with ¼" of cast. There's no recoil pad or butt plate, just a classic hand checkered butt with no checkering at the top or around the edges. Wearing a T-shirt and cashmere sweater while shooting the test gun, it did have a tendency to slip from the shoulder a bit upon firing. This would not happen when shooting with



The safety has a raised, checkered hump, facilitating easy push off in a quick-shooting situation

a proper vest, coat or shirt with a not-so-slippery texture. There's a gold initial oval at the stock's base. The checkering on the fore-end and the straight grip is hand-done – very nicely done, too – and at 24 lines to the inch.

These are chopper lump barrels – i.e. not built with the monobloc system – the barrel and lump (chamber area) are all one piece. There are disc set firing pins, and a single selective trigger is available as an option. The gun wears a splinter fore-end, but a bigger fore-end is available – again at an extra cost. Barrel lengths other than 28" are an add-on option, as would be walnut upgrades, semi-pistol grip, full pistol grip, perhaps others.

The safety is automatic, which means as you eject the empty just after knocking your grouse down – the safety comes on automatically. In clay bird shooting practice you will have to remember to push the safety off prior to each shot. This can be good practice for grouse and woodcock shooting situations.

The bottom plate (bottom of the receiver) is split – and this part is in blue – not case hardened. There is hand engraving on this bottom plate, plus engraving on the receiver sides, the trigger guard, opening lever, top tang – with a touch of engraving even on the fences and the back of the barrels. The safety switch has a pronounced hump that's finely checkered, of-



The 4/53's fences are nicely contoured

fering a very positive feel to that safety. Receiver lock up is very positive, pull the barrels up into the receiver and hear a satisfying "click" as the locking takes place.

AYA offers numerous additional side-by-side models. The No. 4 Deluxe is the same as the 4/53 save for additional hand engraving and a wood upgrade. The No. 2 is a classic sidelock, and some say this one is the most famous model in the AYA line. Tens of thousands have been sold since its introduction in the 1950s. The Holland &

Holland locking system and trigger system are used. This model is extensively engraved in English scroll, plus the No 2 is also available with a "rounded" receiver. There are a number of additional models in the AYA line, and be sure to attend one of the RGS banquets if you'd like to get your hands on the 4/53. ♦♦

Nick Sisley can be contacted at [nicksisley@hotmail.com](mailto:nicksisley@hotmail.com)

Interested in joining the ranks of elite grouse hunters?

Become a member of the

# RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY DOUBLES CLUB



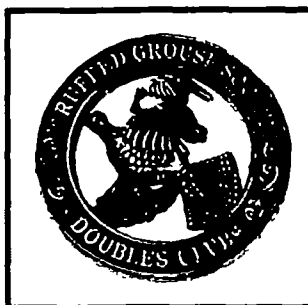
If you have shot a double on grouse or woodcock, we would like to invite you to become a member of this unique club.

To qualify you must be a current RGS member.

Upon acceptance, you will receive an official certificate commemorating your achievement and an exclusive honorary pin.

The RGS doubles pin is 1" in diameter and will have a pewter finish. Each pin illustrates your double type - either two grouse, two woodcock or one of each.

*Mixed double pin pictured is slightly larger than actual size.*



## What is a double?

RGS defines a double as the occurrence of two grouse, two woodcock, or a grouse and woodcock (a mixed double) that are in flight at the same time and are successfully harvested by one hunter.

*Please note: the birds must be in flight at the same time when harvested to qualify as a true double.*

To apply for membership in the Doubles Club contact RGS Membership Services

today at 1-888-564-6747.

You may also apply by sending an e-mail to: [membership@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:membership@ruffedgrousesociety.org).

[www.RUFFEDGROUSE SOCIETY.ORG](http://www.RUFFEDGROUSE SOCIETY.ORG)



# JUNIOR RGS GROUSE FOOD IDENTIFICATION: FINDING GOOD PLACES TO HUNT

Learning to identify plants by their leaves, buds, flowers and fruit might sound like an unpleasant homework assignment, but it can be both fun and useful. Fun – because it helps you become aware of what is around you in the woods and useful – because knowing more about plants can improve your ruffed grouse hunting success.

Young grouse eat a variety of foods, including plants and insects. By the time hunting season rolls around and the first frost has blanketed the fields, the insects are gone and the grouse diet shifts to plants alone. In late fall and winter they eat mainly buds, leaves, and fruit. During fall there may be an exception – as beaked hazel – which is a shrub, flowers in the fall. Grouse will eat these flowers, or *catkins*.

Why do you need to know what grouse eat in the fall and winter? Well, if you know what they eat and where to find that food you can improve your chances of finding grouse. If you are fortunate enough to bag a grouse, then you can learn what that bird was feeding on by removing the pouch, called a *crop*, at the base of its neck. Opening the crop will reveal exactly what the bird recently ate. That's when being able to identify a plant by its buds, leaves and fruit becomes important. Once you have identified the contents of the crop, the next step is to think about where those plants occur – as it's very likely other grouse will be feeding on them, too. The more you know about the plants that grouse eat, the easier it will be to locate the birds, which is the first step in having a successful grouse hunt.

Match each of the plants with their name below. (Answers at the bottom of the page )

<p>James H. Miller © USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database</p>	<p>Bunchberry Dogwood <i>Cornus canadensis</i></p>	<p>Jeff McMillan © USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database</p>
<p>Jeff McMillan © USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database</p>	<p>Siberian Crab Apple <i>Malus baccata</i></p>	<p>D. E. Herman et al. © USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database</p>
<p>Mary Clay Stensvold © USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database</p>	<p>Gray Alder <i>Alnus incana</i></p>	<p>Joe F. Duff © USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database</p>
	<p>Mapleleaf Viburnum <i>Viburnum acerifolium</i></p>	
	<p>Partridgeberry <i>Mitchella repens</i></p>	
	<p>Eastern Poison Ivy <i>Toxicodendron radicans</i></p>	

**Answers:**

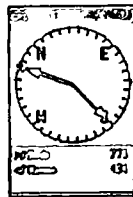
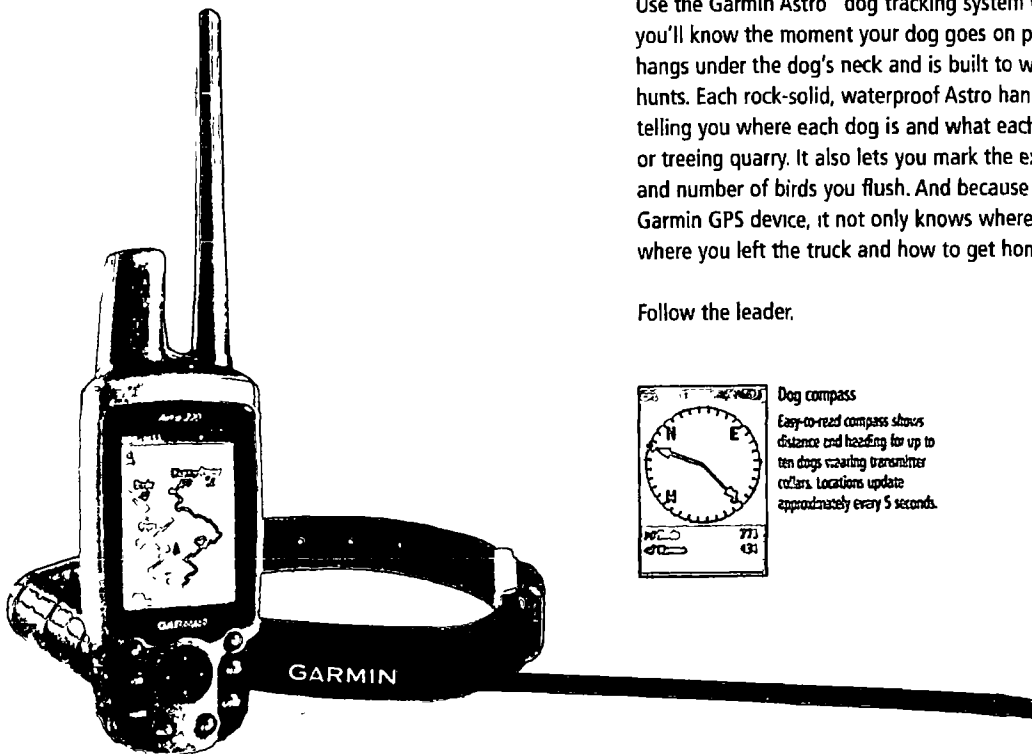
- 1. Eastern Poison Ivy
- 2. Mapleleaf Viburnum
- 3. Bunchberry Dogwood
- 4. Partridgeberry
- 5. Siberian Crab Apple
- 6. Gray Alder



## Get to the point.

Use the Garmin Astro™ dog tracking system with the new DC 30 collar and you'll know the moment your dog goes on point. This new, more rugged design hangs under the dog's neck and is built to withstand the most challenging hunts. Each rock-solid, waterproof Astro handheld can track up to ten dogs telling you where each dog is and what each is doing: running, sitting, on point or treeing quarry. It also lets you mark the exact location, time of day, elevation and number of birds you flush. And because the Astro handheld is also a Garmin GPS device, it not only knows where your dogs are, it remembers where you left the truck and how to get home.

Follow the leader.



**Dog compass**  
Easy-to-read compass shows distance and heading for up to ten dogs wearing transmitter collars. Locations update approximately every 5 seconds.

# Hunting with Kids

Bird dog owners may be better prepared than most.

by Josh Manahan

Increasing the number of youth hunters is essential to long-term efforts to promote wildlife habitat conservation. U.S. Fish and Wildlife statistics indicate that hunter numbers decreased by 10 percent between 1996 and 2006. Fishing numbers declined 15 percent during the same period. This is a serious concern for state wildlife agencies that rely on revenue from license fees to manage wildlife and its habitats. Some of the various causes for this precipitous decline include urbanization, habitat fragmentation and a growing perception that hunting requires too much time and money for many families to pursue.

The solution to the problem of dwindling hunter numbers is largely agreed upon: take a child hunting. Those who hunt the uplands with dogs learn skills in the field and on the training grounds that make them well suited to introduce kids to hunting. To help a dog reach its hunting potential, any owner or trainer must grasp some well-documented fundamentals about how dogs learn. I learned these lessons while training my young Gordon setter. A little later they came in handy when introducing my 8-year-old nephew, Aidan, to the upland coverts of Maine.

## Start Teaching a Young Dog as Soon as Possible, but without too Much Pressure

Like a puppy, a child's brain soaks up information like a sponge. However, if that information is presented in a way that is stressful instead of fun, it could sour the whole learning experience.

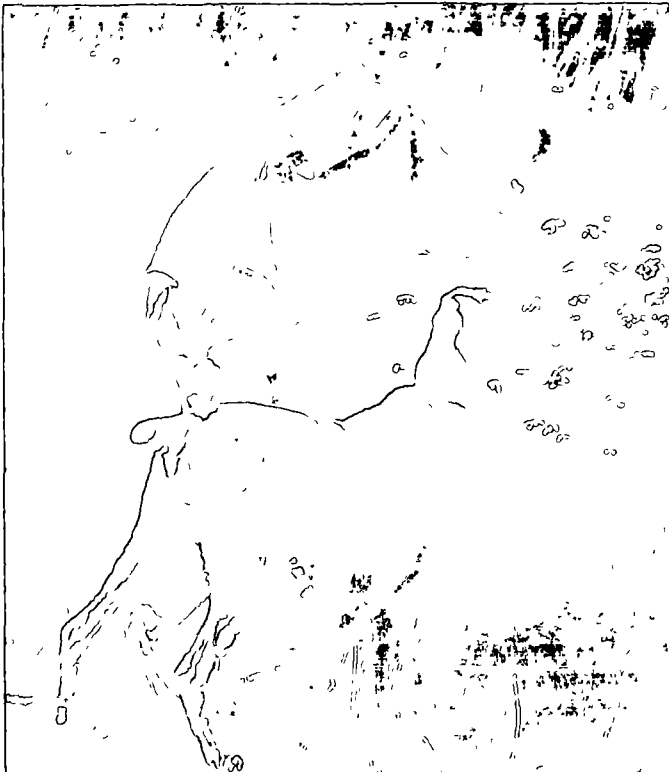
Most professionals agree that any training of a young dog should be fun. The point is to teach the dog how to learn, inspire a passion for exploration and gamebirds, and establish yourself as a pack leader worthy of respect and trust. As Rick Smith and Sharron Potter expressed so eloquently in a recent Pointing Dog Journal article on leadership, trust and respect are earned by being consistent, fair and patient, not dictatorial. Good leaders inspire confidence and respect, not fear. In the early stages of training, pointing and fetching are only games to spark the hunting instinct, not must-obey commands to be enforced. Too much pressure applied to a young dog often results in bad habits: timidity, gun shyness, or a tendency to blink on birds.

In most cases a child will be able to meaningfully and enthusiastically participate in hunting at a younger age if the primary goal of his or her early experiences is having fun – finding and killing



When you start teaching a young dog, it's important to make sure you're doing it in a way that's fun and not stressful. The goal is to teach the dog how to learn, inspire a passion for exploration and gamebirds, and establish yourself as a pack leader worthy of respect and trust. As Rick Smith and Sharron Potter expressed so eloquently in a recent Pointing Dog Journal article on leadership, trust and respect are earned by being consistent, fair and patient, not dictatorial. Good leaders inspire confidence and respect, not fear. In the early stages of training, pointing and fetching are only games to spark the hunting instinct, not must-obey commands to be enforced. Too much pressure applied to a young dog often results in bad habits: timidity, gun shyness, or a tendency to blink on birds.





Both youth and puppies have a natural enthusiasm, and by keeping introductory sessions light and fun, you can foster this eagerness.

game should be secondary. I took my 8-year-old nephew on a local hunt this winter that forced me to adapt to his needs and adjust the way I usually hunt. The place we hunted requires a ¾ mile walk down a dirt road through some pretty mature, not-so-birdy forest. In order to reach the seventy or so acres of primo habitat: abandoned fields growing up with aspen, beech, birch, fir and the occasional apple tree. I have hunted this area many times and usually make haste to the most promising cover and hunt a familiar pattern. My nephew Aidan had his own ideas. There was a minor ice storm a few days earlier that left all the trees sheathed in a sparkling, magical coating of ice that Aidan found fascinating. We stopped every couple hundred yards to investigate some particularly striking sapling specimen. We eventually got to the birds, but it took much longer than I'd planned. I felt it was important to show some interest in something he thinks is really cool (the ice-covered trees), just as he was showing interest in something I think is really cool (hunting ruffed grouse with a dog). If I had dragged him down the road at my pace I would have risked losing my enthusiastic, willing partner, as well as some of his respect. I may have seen a couple more birds, but at what cost?

Giving a youth a gun to carry on early hunting excursions can be too much pressure on the child, and the chaperone. In Maine, a child can't legally hunt with firearms until the age of 10. My nephew is not old enough or large enough to handle a gun, but he is ready to participate in the adventure of a hunt. There is so much to learn about the sport apart from shooting, that it can be beneficial to take kids into the field before they are able to carry a gun.

On a three day trip to the Maine North Woods with his father, grandfather, and uncle, Aidan carried a stick decorated with shotgun shells and grouse feathers as a gun. This provided an opportunity for Aidan to practice one of the most important commandments of gun safety: "always keep the muzzle in the safe direction." We all treated his fake gun as if it were real and followed the requisite safety precautions. When it comes time for him to carry a gun, Aidan will have seen proper gun handling mentored by adults in hunting situations, and he will have even prac-

ticed it some himself with his imitation 20-gauge Purdey stick. The way I was shooting, I might as well have been carrying the same model stick!

### Always End on a Positive Note

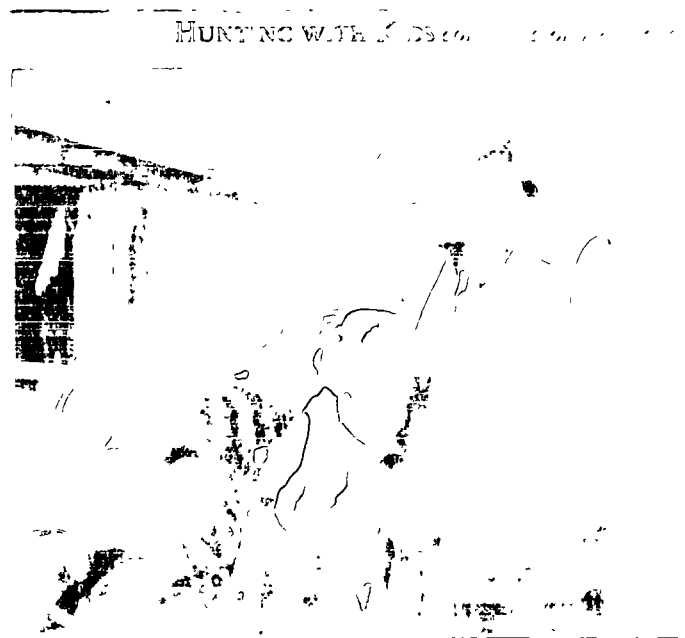
Ending a training session on a positive note is key to shaping a young dog that is confident, enthusiastic, and willing to learn. If a dog associates training with failure, he will understandably approach future training skeptically and tentatively, attitudes that take lots of work to turn around. If you're training a dog to be steady to game and he keeps breaking, it might be better to ask him to do something he does well (like heeling) before calling it a day and re-evaluating your methods.

I don't know about where you hunt, but the puckerbrush quagmires I frequent could suck the optimism out of Richard Simmons. It is thick cover where it is often difficult to see the bird, never mind get a shot off. Some days I find a lot of birds (usually when I'm alone), and some days I don't (usually when I have friends or family along). Because hunting isn't a sure thing, it's important to find other measures of success beyond finding and killing birds to ensure that hunting trips with your young friend "always end on a positive note."

### Set your Hunting Partner up for Success

In dog training, it's relatively simple to set the dog up to succeed by controlling the environment. You can ensure dogs find birds by planting them; you can ensure they stop at the first sign of a bird by using a checkcord; you can ensure the bird flies straight into the netting it in a launcher; you can ensure the bird drops when you want by killing it before you launch it.

It is difficult to control the environment in the field with children, but ensuring success remains important. If the birds aren't cooperating, find other ways for the child to succeed. When the time between points got a bit long on our Northwoods trip, Aidan and I entertained ourselves by learning to identify aspen, birch, beech, fir, spruce, hemlock and pine - all trees important to the ruffed grouse in the area we were hunting. We looked for grouse droppings and woodcock white-wash. We tried to memorize the ten commandments of gun safety, some of the most relevant fish and game laws (like bag limits, hunter orange requirements, and how far you must be from a road or



At the end of a hunt your young hunting partners shouldn't be exhausted. Keep refreshments handy for a sweet treat along the way.

dwelling to shoot), and practiced leading the hunting party back to the truck by GPS. It took a certain amount of letting go on my part, but I frequently put Aidan in charge (with lots of support) of the dog whistle, the Garmin Astro I use to find Cider (my dog) on point, the flush counter, flushing birds, and keeping track of the road.

When we found birds, we surveyed the habitat and speculated why they were there. Kids are the best speculators. When we finally shot some grouse and woodcock, it was up to Aidan to determine the sex and age (RGS has some literature on this that makes a great gift for a child, or a forgetful adult like myself). When it came time to clean the birds, Aidan jumped in with both hands and it didn't take me long to hope I might be able to pass this task off entirely in the near future. This broad focus on all aspects of hunting helped Aidan to fully immerse himself in the experience, even though he wasn't carrying a gun. It forced me to articulate, and pause to appreciate, some of the most important things I know and love about hunting. Aidan is so thoroughly hooked on the sport he asked if we could stop and hunt on the way home even though we couldn't bring guns (hunting on Sunday is illegal in Maine). We worked the dog, found a few woodcock, and took advantage of the opportunity to take some pictures.

### Keep Training Session Short and Learn to Read Body Language

A young dog's attention span is short. Most professional trainer's recommend training sessions be limited to 15 minutes. This is a field where it is perfectly acceptable to quit while you're ahead. A dog's body language will often provide clues to how it's feeling before it acts. On the whoa post, a dog might swallow to indicate acceptance of his situation. On birds, a young dog will often betray his intention

to break point by tensing the muscles in his rear legs, at which point it may be better to release him before he makes a mistake. My dog flags his tail a bit when he's not sure where the bird is. When I see this, I make it a point not to whoa him, which gives him an opportunity to relocate on a more solid point.


Being as tuned in to your young partner's body language can help avoid copious amounts of whining and the occasional meltdown. If they look tired, hungry, thirsty, hot or cold, or overly apprehensive, take a break before they have to ask. I find the additional rest and snack breaks do Cider and some good as well.

Once you've ignited a passion for wild birds in a young dog or a child, the hardest part of your job as a teacher is done, and the satisfaction of working as a real team begins. Just how far my nephew and my dog had come in a few days of hunting became clear on the afternoon of our last hunting day. We were hunting along the edge of an old logging road when Cider got birdy in a dense patch of young fir trees bordering the road. The GPS tracking collar I had on him told me he was pointing, creeping, and pointing again, indicating that he was most likely on the trail of a running grouse instead of a typically tight holding woodcock.

Relocating on point is a new development for Cider, something he has yet to master. It's a skill I would like in a gundog because grouse run more than I ever knew before I began hunting with dogs. Cider was out of sight about twenty yards off the road. He was pointing for about ten seconds, then moving parallel to the road for about five seconds, then pointing again. This pattern made it clear what direction the bird was heading. The cover was so thick, I felt pretty sure the bird wouldn't flush until it found an opening. My brother and Aidan scooted ahead about 70 yards where the fir stand transitioned to aspen and birch. I stayed in the road, abreast of the dog. When Cider and I got about 10 yards from my brother and Aidan, the trapped grouse exploded straight up out of the young fir trees and proceeded to rocket across the road. I had a clear look at the gray

phase grouse flying overhead. That large bird, with nothing but blue sky behind it, was too great a temptation for me to wait on so I fired the first barrel, then the second, then watched in disbelief as the grouse beat strongly away.

Although this story didn't end exactly the way I would have liked, there was a lot to feel good about. My young dog showed that he can maintain contact with a running grouse and not flush it, something that is difficult, if not impossible to train. Aidan learned that grouse, unlike most woodcock, will move on the ground when pressured, and often flush at the first available opening. I rediscovered something that I'd already learned a dozen times before; I stunk at, and can't resist, easy-looking overhead shots.

I'm continually amazed at how excellent breeding makes me look like I have some idea what I'm doing with my dog, and my nephew. They are both enthusiastic, well-mannered, cuddly, bird-hunting fanatics I'm proud to call partners. Anyone who has hunted for any length of time recognizes the importance of experience to success. This season offered me an opportunity to shortcut my nephew's learning curve and help instill in him a passion for upland birds, dogs, family, and the special covets that bring them all together. So don't be afraid, take a kid hunting! You're probably more qualified than you think, and you'll be doing all who love the outdoors a favor that only hunters can provide. 

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**



**LOGOED  
MERCHANDISE**

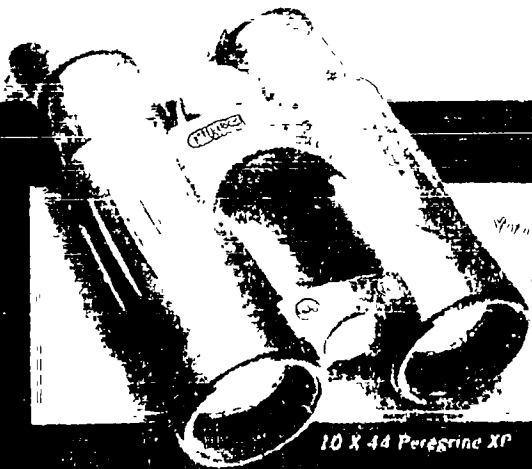
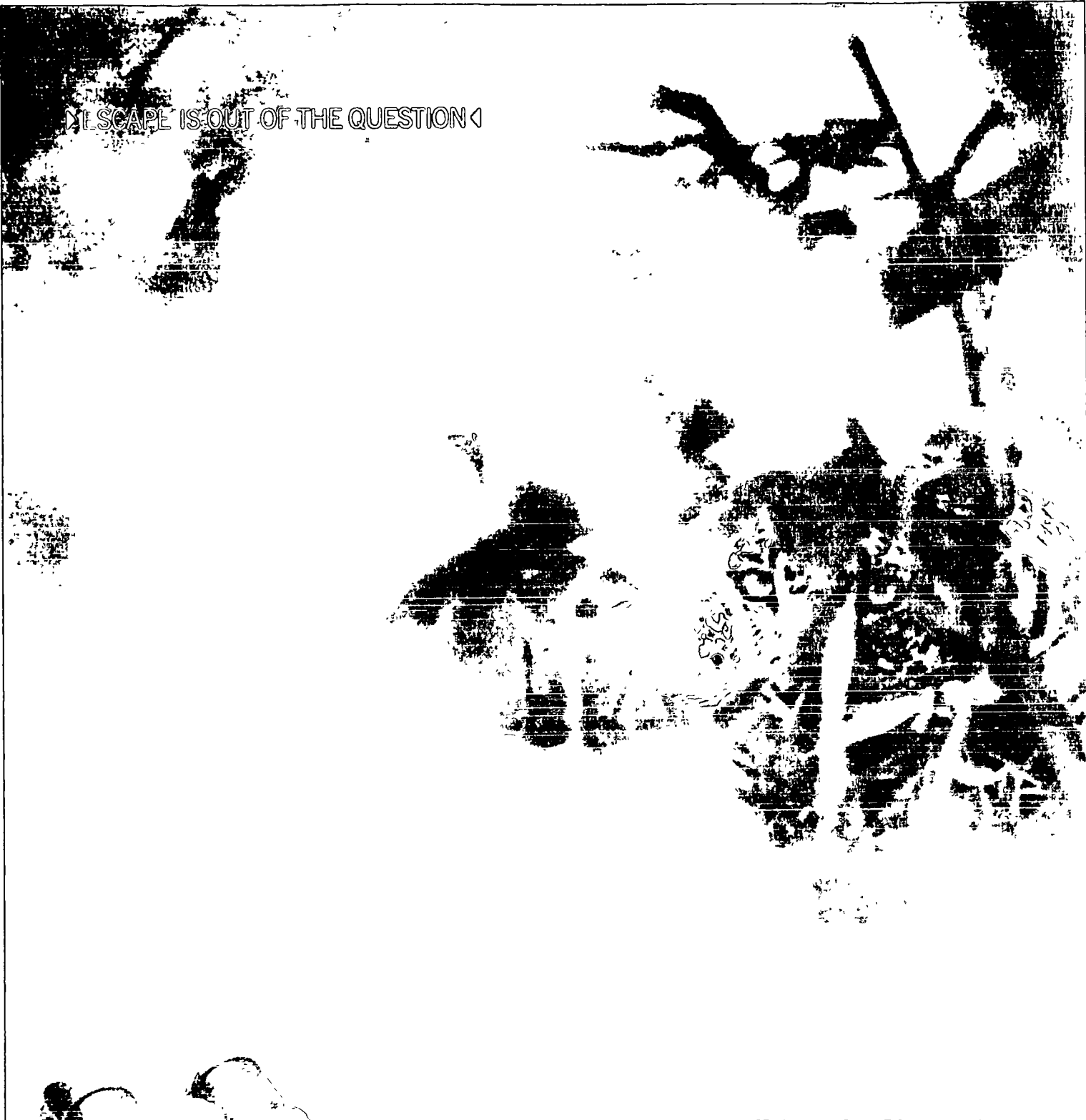
Boyt Signature  
Series Case with  
Accessory Pocket  
**\$101.00**  
RGS-GC21WC



Features RGS Logo Foil Embossed on  
Leather Patch on the Reverse Side

**1.800.550.2698 • www.SHOPRGS.COM**

XL SCAPE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION <



10 X 44 Peregrine XP

For more information, visit our website at [www.steiner-binoculars.com](http://www.steiner-binoculars.com). Steiner binoculars are made in Germany and are known for their exceptional quality and performance. They are a great choice for anyone who loves to explore the outdoors and see the world through a different lens.

**STEINER**   
GERMANY

[www.steiner-binoculars.com](http://www.steiner-binoculars.com)



# About the Print of the Year

Featured on the cover is *Autumn Delight* by Georgette Kanach of Gray, Maine. *Autumn Delight* is the 2009 Print of the Year. The original printing will be auctioned off at the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota in October, 2009. Limited edition prints will be featured at all RGS 2009 banquets. Sponsors participating in the reward program may also elect to receive a print of *Autumn Delight*.

Georgette Kanach, a nature artist and Master Maine guide, has a lifelong love of nature. Her range of art includes paintings, relief carving, airbrushing and jewelry making. One of her specialties is working with natural mediums, and her hand carved and wood-burned countertops and mantelpieces are showcased in many homes across the country.

When she isn't working on her art, Georgette spends time on her other passion - hunting. "I do what I love and love what I do, and that is grouse hunting with my Brittanys, Alex and Diamond, and nature art," Georgette says. To see more of her artwork, visit [www.maineart.com](http://www.maineart.com).

## 2009 Sponsor Rewards Program

**As a 2009 RGS Banquet Sponsor, you may choose one of the following two reward options:**

### **Option 1**

A 2009 unframed print of the year *Autumn Delight*, by Georgette Kanach, or an unframed print from prior years (while supplies last.) Photos of these prints are available on the RGS website, [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

### **Option 2:**

As a sponsor you may elect to participate in a National Drawing to be held at the end of the 2009 fall banquet season. Seven tickets will be drawn, with the first ticket number winning the first prize from the list on the right and so forth. The sponsors who elect this option will be assigned a ticket number for the drawing from RGS National Headquarters.

### **All banquet sponsors will receive:**

- One year annual RGS sponsor membership
- Website access to interactive members areas
- Embroidered jacket patch and window decal
- Name listed in sponsor report on our website
- 15% discount for Choice Hotels International
- Subscription to RGS magazine
- Distinctive RGS sponsor lapel pin
- Participation in 2009 sponsor reward program (raffle ticket or print)

### **BANQUET SPONSOR OPTION 2 PRIZE LIST:**

AYA #2 sidelock with detachable lock, 20-gauge, 28" barrels, double trigger, side-by-side shotgun.

Connecticut Shotgun's RBL-28 round action, boxlock, 28-gauge, 26" barrels, single trigger, 3X wood grade side-by-side shotgun.

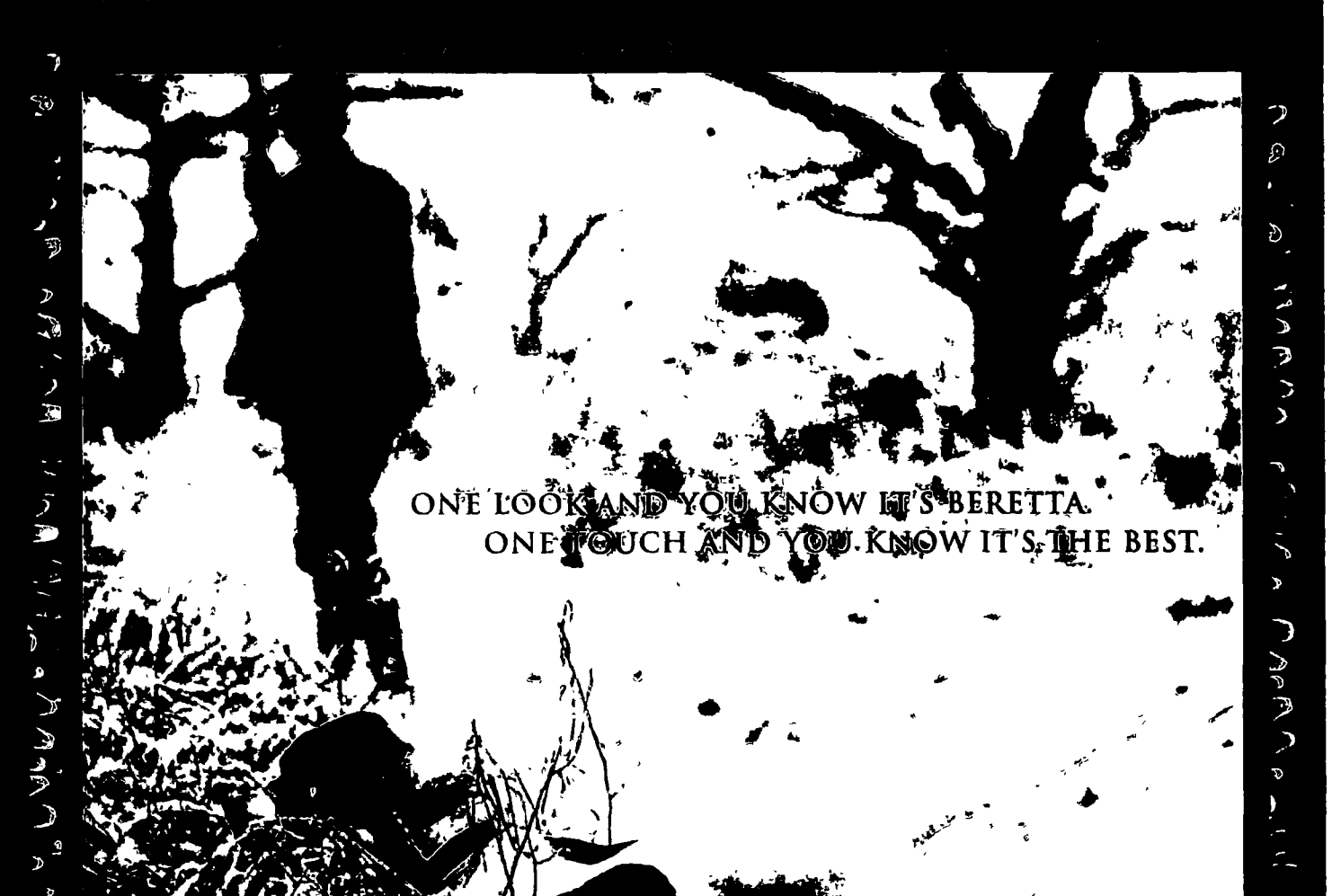
Caesar Guerini Magnus 20-gauge over-and-under shotgun

Smith & Wesson Elite Gold 20-gauge side-by-side shotgun

SKB limited Edition RGS #7 over-and-under shotgun, your choice of 20- or 28-gauge, 26" or 28" barrels

Choice of any pair of Steiner binoculars, \$1,600 or less

Cabela's \$1,000 gift certificate



ONE LOOK AND YOU KNOW IT'S BERETTA.  
ONE TOUCH AND YOU KNOW IT'S THE BEST.

THE UPLAND SPORTSMAN COLLECTION  
687 SILVER PIGEON V, \$3,675 - MEN'S UPLAND CORDURA® JACKET, \$195



#### BERETTA PRESENTS THE SILVER PIGEON V

500 years of Italian craftsmanship yield flawless reliability and refinement in Beretta's Silver Pigeon V. Imitated but never equaled, the Silver Pigeon series is the world's finest collection of over-and-under shotguns, unrivaled in fit and feel. As one of its most distinctive members, the durable Silver Pigeon V includes 12- and 20-gauge models as well as 28-gauge and .410-bore shotguns. Each offers appropriate weight and a properly scaled frame for exceptional balance, instinctive pointability, and handling. Available in pistol and English grip versions, with color-cased frames and gold-filled game bird inlays, it's truly a masterwork. See it, and an extensive selection of upland clothing and accessories, at your Beretta dealer.

SHOP 24 HOURS A DAY AT [WWW.SHOPBERETTA.COM](http://WWW.SHOPBERETTA.COM)

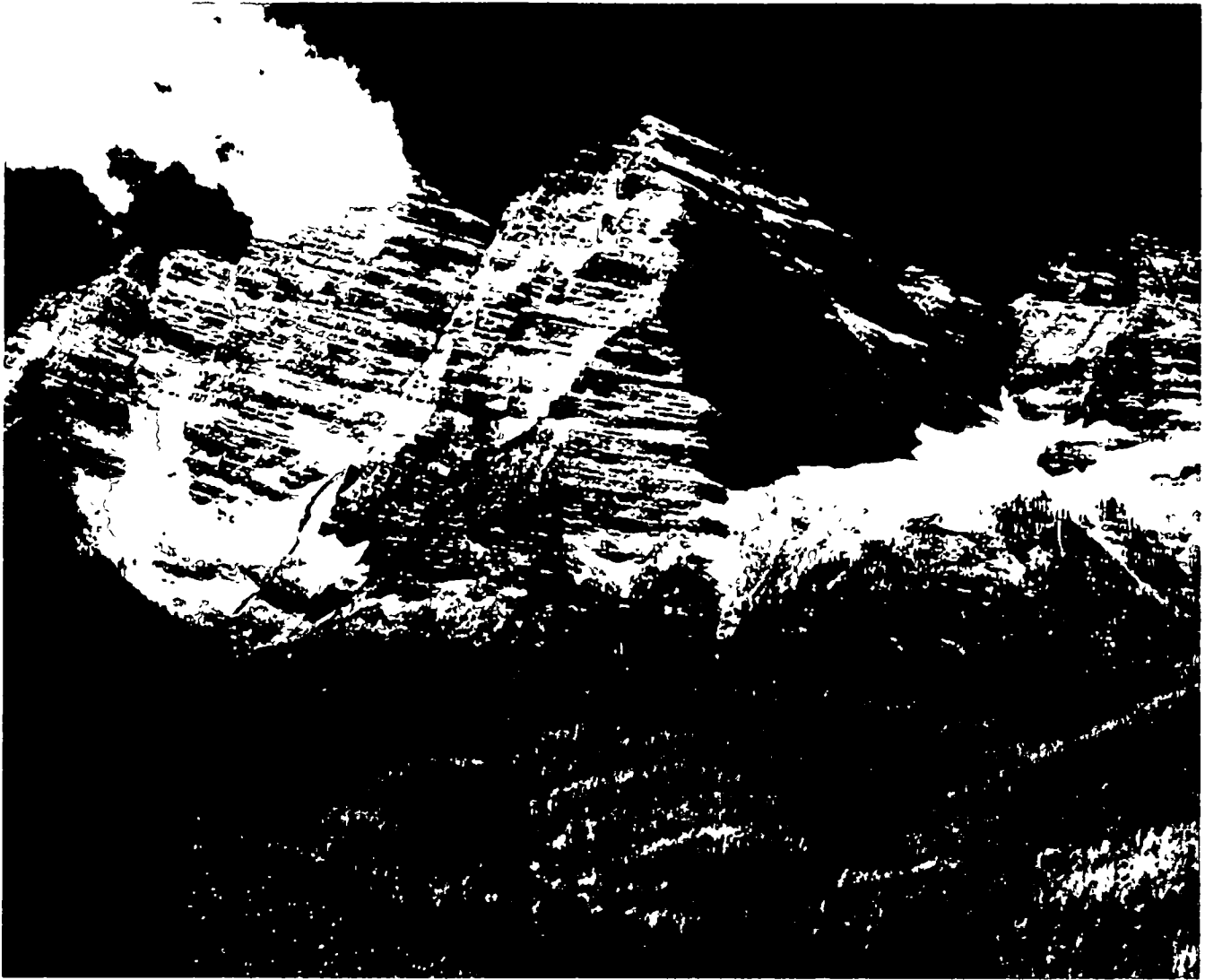
FOR A FREE GUN LOCK, CATALOG OR INFORMATION ON BERETTA FIREARMS,  
SPORT CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES, OR TO LOCATE A DEALER NEAR YOU,  
VISIT [WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM](http://WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM) OR CALL 800.BERETTA



# BERETTA

500 YEARS. ONE PASSION.





## **At Boise Inc., we've made sustainability a win-win proposition.**

Boise Inc. takes a balanced approach to successfully managing the environment and our bottom line. Our line of premium recycled papers, sold under the ASPEN® brand, range from 30 to 100% postconsumer recycled fiber. The ASPEN line is available in multi-use and technology office papers as well as envelope, printing, and imaging grades. It's just part of our focus on combining superior marketplace performance with responsible corporate citizenship. And it's proof of our worldwide commitment to preserving natural resources and improving technology for a greener tomorrow.

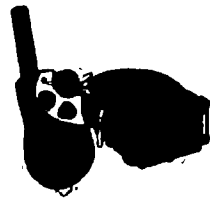
ASPEN is a trademark of Boise Paper Holdings, L.L.C., or its affiliates.  
BOISE is a trademark of Boise Cascade, L.L.C., or its affiliates

**BOISE®**

FIELD-TESTED  
FIELD-PROVEN



Cabela's | Upland Coat



Field Trainer



Wingahooter Boots

TRUST OUR GEAR



Your next step could trigger the first flush of the day. At Cabela's, we live for these moments. And the gear we use must live up to our expectations. We back all the products we sell with a 100-percent satisfaction guarantee to make sure they live up to yours.

TOP-OF-THE-LINE BRANDS  
at bottom-line prices

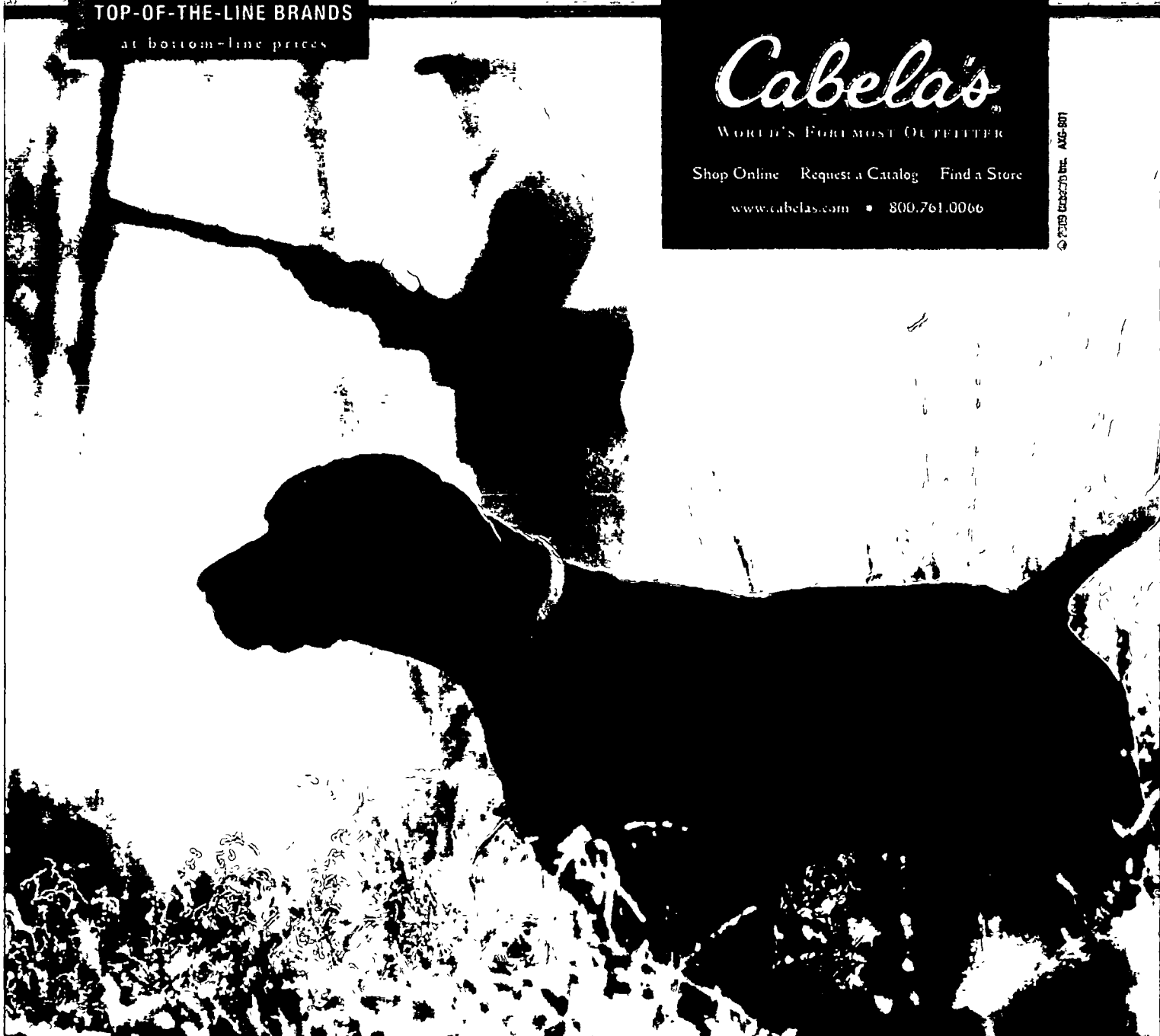
*Cabela's*

WORLD'S FOREMOST OUTFITTER

Shop Online Request a Catalog Find a Store

[www.cabelas.com](http://www.cabelas.com) • 800.761.0066

© 2010 CABELA'S INC. AME-801



*Want birds?*



Hunt with an **Ugly Dog**  
and support the **Ruffed Grouse Society.**

Please join us in keeping the covers thriving and the birds flying.

**UglyDog**  **Hunting**

The Ugly Dog Hunting Company has serious gear for you, your dog, and the hunt.

- rugged, hunt-tested field gear
- men's and women's upland clothing and boots
- dog kennels, gear, vests, and training equipment

Shop online at [www.uglydoghunting.com](http://www.uglydoghunting.com) or call toll-free for a catalog: 877-982-7054.





The *Ruffed Grouse Conservation Plan* is just that, a plan. But there is much to be learned from it, all of which is supported by science or other empirical evidence. No less than 13 states, including every state in the Northeast, save Maine, list the ruffed grouse as a species of "greatest conservation need." The aesthetic appearance of a great canopy of old-growth forest may lead us into thinking – erroneously – it is a haven for all forest wildlife. The opposite, in fact, is true. A mosaic of forest age classes, from very young to old, is needed to provide a healthy environment for all forest wildlife. That mosaic is the result of either natural disturbance, which is unpredictable in terms of timing and acres impacted, or the complete harvest of small patches, usually 20 acres or less, of forest.

In the Lake States, where grouse populations are relatively healthy, grouse exhibit a 10-year cycle. In the states of Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin, at the cycle's last high, about 120,000 hunters (per state) went afield each season, harvesting approximately one bird per hunter per day. During a subsequent cyclic low, however, the harvest drops from about one million to 300,000 birds, the result of significantly reduced hunting pressure as well as the presence of fewer birds. In none of 15 regions covered by the report does it suggest that hunting pressure burdens bird populations, even negligibly.

Researchers also found that "natural disturbances," such as fire, blowdown, ice and flooding, all of which contributed to the well-being of grouse populations at the time of the earliest North American settlers and before, are today generally viewed as problematical, or even as "natural disasters."

This underscores the desperate need for professional forest management, especially since the ruffed grouse and most other young-forest creatures, unlike, for instance, the ringneck pheasant, are difficult, if not impossible, to raise in captivity. Hence, the complete harvest of small patches of forest on a rotational basis, as advocated by RGS, may be the wisest course of management. This practice creates conditions for grouse to feed and escape predators in the young forests and nest in adjacent older forests.

*RGS does not now, nor ever has, advocated, nor supported – as is sometimes charged – the unfettered, simultaneous clear-cutting of thousands of contiguous acres of forestland. The fact is that cuttings recommended by RGS biologists rarely exceed 20-acre plots, which constitute but a tiny percentage of the overall forest and will ensure creation of a mosaic of timber age classes to serve species with varied needs.*

Specific management recommendations are provided for each region covered by the plan. What the plan does not say is precisely where such management ought to take place, or given the current state of legislation and public opinion, by whom it should be implemented. Since a considerable percentage would take place on public land, RGS staff spends both significant time and money conferring with federal and state agencies as to the best and wisest courses of action in this regard. In the private sector, too, RGS offers advice to landowners, both to ensure potentially optimal land management programs and to make them aware of financial assistance programs.

Sound forest management on both public and private lands is essential. It will continue to remain so, fundamental to the security of North American fish and wildlife, both of which depend on man's ability to reason and then act reasonably on their collective behalf. There are abundant national, state and even local venues to which private landowners can turn for objective, scientifically based advice on how to manage land wisely and fruitfully. The table (inside) provides examples of many that can be utilized either individually or in concert for the long-term benefit both of properties themselves and wildlife living there.

(REFER TO TABLE FOR MORE INFORMATION)

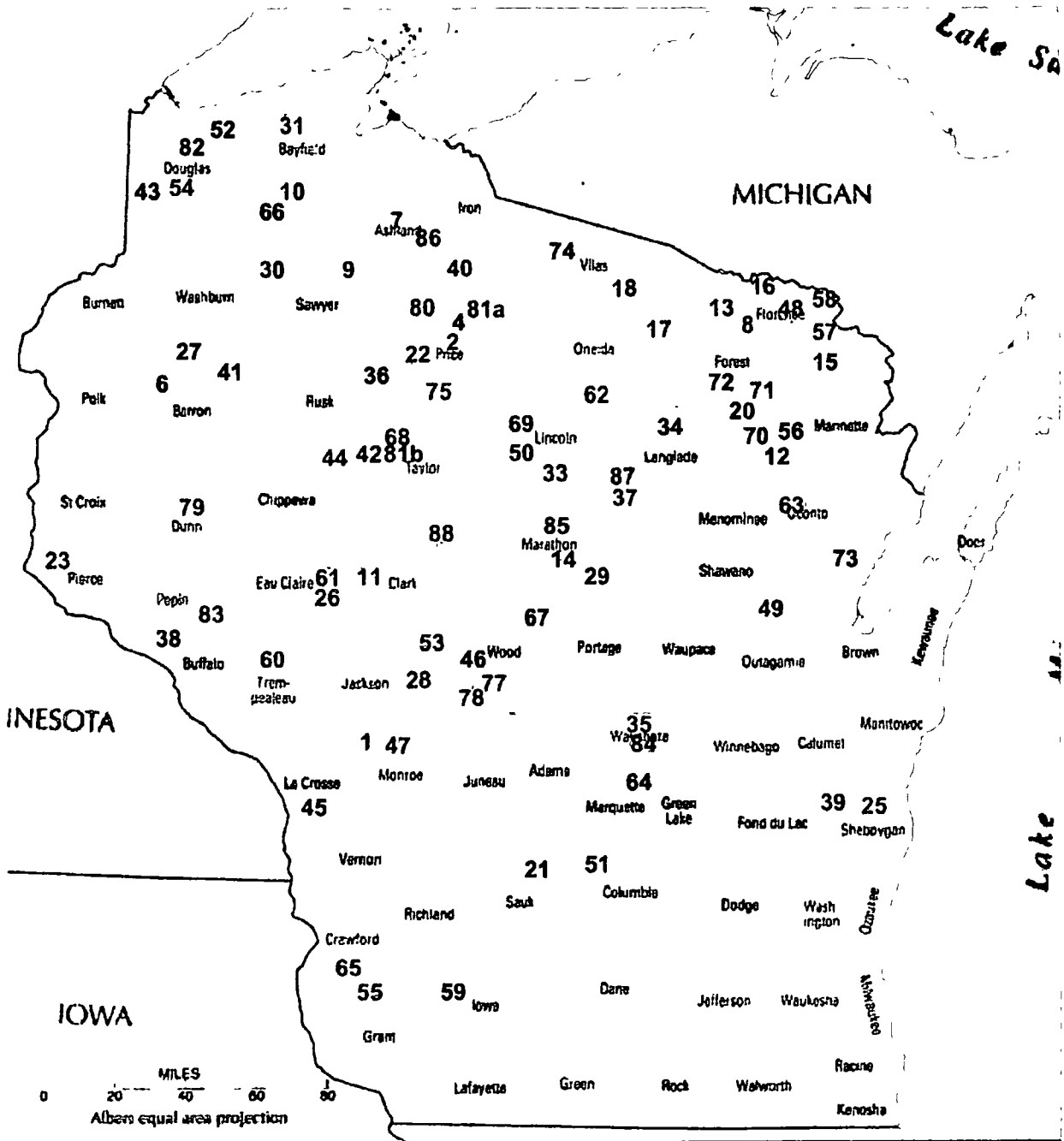
The *Ruffed Grouse Conservation Plan*,  
in its entirety, may be viewed at:  
<http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org>

**CORPORATE SPONSORS**

We wish to thank our Corporate Sponsors who make outstanding contributions to RGS in cash and merchandise!  
Your support of them is also appreciated Use these links whenever you can!

 <p>AYA Fine Guns</p>	 <p>Bass ProShops</p>	 <p>Beretta</p>
 <p>Boyd Harness Co</p>	 <p>Browning</p>	 <p>Cabela's</p>
 <p>Consol energy</p>	 <p>Federal Cartridge</p>	 <p>Filson</p>
 <p>Caesar Guerini</p>	 <p>L.L. Bean</p>	 <p>Louisiana-Pacific</p>
 <p>MeadWestvaco</p>	 <p>NewPage</p>	 <p>Orvis</p>
 <p>Purina</p>	 <p>Remington</p>	 <p>Russell Moccasin</p>
 <p>SKB Shotguns</p>	 <p>Smith &amp; Wesson</p>	 <p>SportDOG</p>
 <p>Steiner</p>	 <p>Stihl U.S.A.</p>	 <p>Ugly Dog Hunting</p>

# RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY WISCONSIN MANAGEMENT AREA PROJECTS 1985 TO 2009



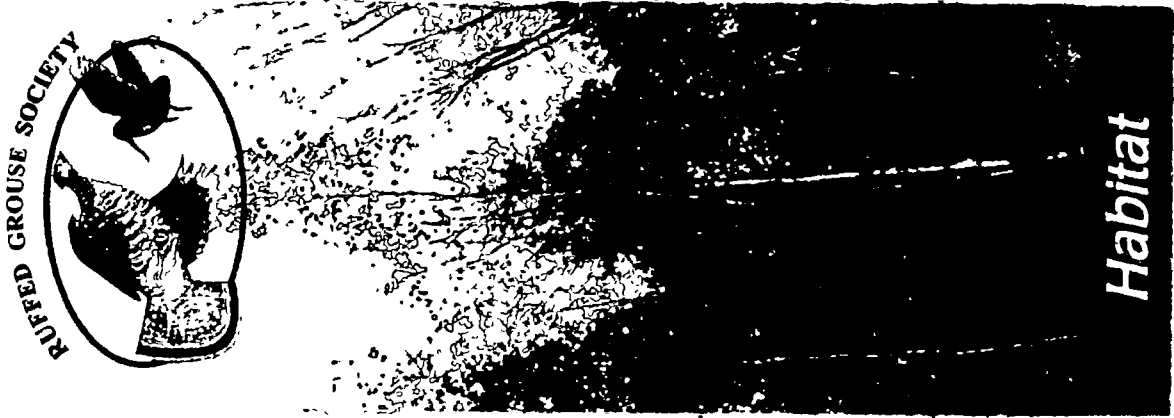
**See Page 2 for Project legend**

Map adapted from The National Atlas of the United States, US Department of Interior, US Geological Survey [nationalatlas.gov](http://nationalatlas.gov) PDF. Additional project details can be found at [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org) Conservation > Our Projects.

# Treasured trilogy of the uplands



*Wildlife*



*Habitat*



*Hunting*

## Dear Upland Hunters;

The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS), pure and simple, is an organization comprised of folks who hunt ruffed grouse and American woodcock.

RGS is dedicated to promoting conditions suitable for grouse, woodcock and related wildlife to sustain our sport-hunting tradition and outdoor heritage. A major objective of RGS is to help members and non-members alike better understand the relationship between the number of grouse and woodcock and the quality of the birds' habitat. This is a key to increasing the number of concerned individuals active in reversing trends in public policy that preclude proper management of public lands for wildlife.

Such a reversal will not happen overnight. And to be successful in the long-term, we need your support and the support of the millions of sportsmen and women who benefit from the pursuit of the "king of game birds" and the mysterious "timberdoodle."

Going forward, RGS will be synonymous with three things. First and foremost, it is and will be an organization for those who hunt ruffed grouse and woodcock. Second, it is an organization committed to ensuring that the conditions needed by grouse, woodcock and other wildlife, including a high percentage of the neo-tropical songbirds, are maintained on public lands and, where desired by the landowner, on private lands as well. Lastly, RGS will work for those things that help its members enjoy each other and the related early forest wildlife that shares habitat with ruffed grouse and woodcock.

As sportsmen and women, take a moment to stop and think about what has happened, and what is happening, to your old coverts. In many cases, taller trees have shaded out the plants needed to provide food and cover for many types of wildlife. That is happening on millions of acres as often well-intentioned but ill-informed citizens have fostered policies that discourage timber harvest on both public and private lands.

Without active forest management, the openings in the forest canopy needed to allow light (essential to plants that provide food and cover for wildlife) to reach the forest floor continue to be lost. RGS is a voice of reason for proper forest stewardship that benefits hunted and non-hunted species alike.

This brochure offers an encapsulated view of the Ruffed Grouse Society, and we hope that once you've enjoyed a trip through the following pages you'll choose to join RGS in its vital mission.

Sincerely,



Mike Zagata  
Executive Director, Ruffed Grouse Society

## Hunters In the thick of It

As the 19th century gave way to the 20th, every other day seemed to bring a startling new discovery or invention. Progress was definitely on the march. There were, of course, exceptions. Among them was the state of our nation's precious wildlife resources, which were suffering the consequences of overuse, neglect or even campaigns of determined extermination. The future just didn't seem as bright in some quarters as it did in others.

But as far as the plight of wildlife was concerned, there were those who cared. And many of them were hunters — who were most familiar with wildlife species and wildlife's difficulties.

The tide began to turn. A growing number of researchers took on the task of discovering what had to be done to reverse the oftentimes shocking declines of wildlife populations. And supporting their efforts with money, time and encouragement were hunters.

As the emerging disciplines of wildlife conservation and wildlife habitat conservation began to draw increasing numbers of activists, hunters remained in the forefront, promoting ecologically justifiable bag limits, research and an excise tax on firearms and ammunition to be used to support scientifically sound management and restoration. They insisted on the prudent use of America's wildlife.

It was hunters who in the early 1960s lent their support to a fledgling organization called the Ruffed Grouse Society of North America, later to be known as the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS). Since its creation, the Ruffed Grouse Society has relied deeply on the support of the men and women who count among their most precious days the ones spent hunting the autumn uplands for ruffed grouse and American woodcock.



# Ruffed Grouse Society – live!

Aldo Leopold, father of modern wildlife management, once wrote: *Everyone knows that the autumn landscape in the north woods is the land, plus a red maple, plus a ruffed grouse. In terms of conventional physics, the grouse represents only a millionth of either the mass or the energy of an acre. Yet subtract the grouse and the whole thing is dead.*

That being the case, the Ruffed Grouse Society is an international wildlife conservation organization tasked with keeping the whole thing alive.

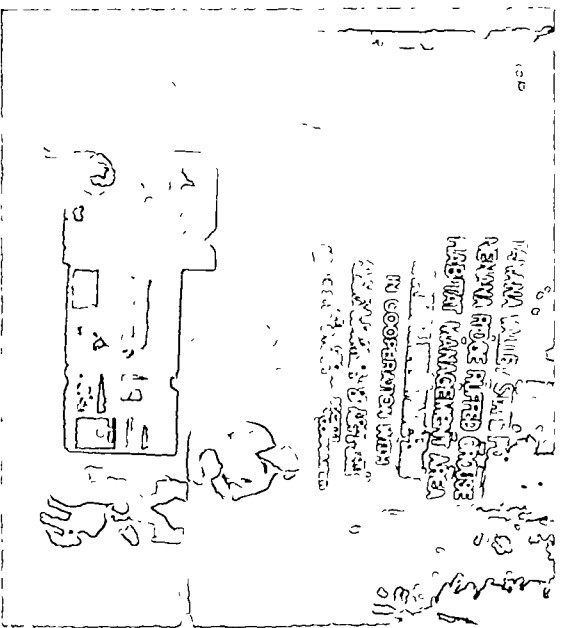
Established in 1961, RGS was founded to spearhead an effort to discover why grouse and woodcock numbers and populations of wildlife species that shared the game birds' cover were in decline. Through science-based research, habitat management methods were devised that would provide optimum protection for the wildlife species of young forests and benefit the health and vigor of the forests themselves. RGS has invested decades of dedicated effort not only in advancing the conservation of young-forest wildlife, including more than 40 species of songbirds, through habitat improvement but also has helped ensure that our hurting traditions and outdoor heritage are handed on to coming generations.



# Sound science, the only way to go

The Ruffed Grouse Society is proud to work alongside those who support sound, science-based wildlife and habitat management. The Society's methods are those learned through RGS-sponsored research and provide an in-depth understanding of the needs of young-forest species, including deer, rabbits, salamanders, turkeys, songbirds, grouse and woodcock.

The Society sponsors land management programs through its Management Area Program for public lands and Coverts - landowner outreach through educational workshops - for private landowners interested in learning about forest habitat improvement methods. RGS' education initiative has been shaped to include interactive with public and legislative bodies, which Society representatives inform about economic contributions associated with the recreational pursuit of grouse and woodcock and the need to scientifically enhance forestlands to ensure that the environmental requirements of these species are met. And as a strong advocate within the wildlife management community, RGS directly answers the protests of anti-hunting and wildlife management entities with solid, scientifically derived evidence validating the essential roles of habitat management and hunting in wildlife conservation.



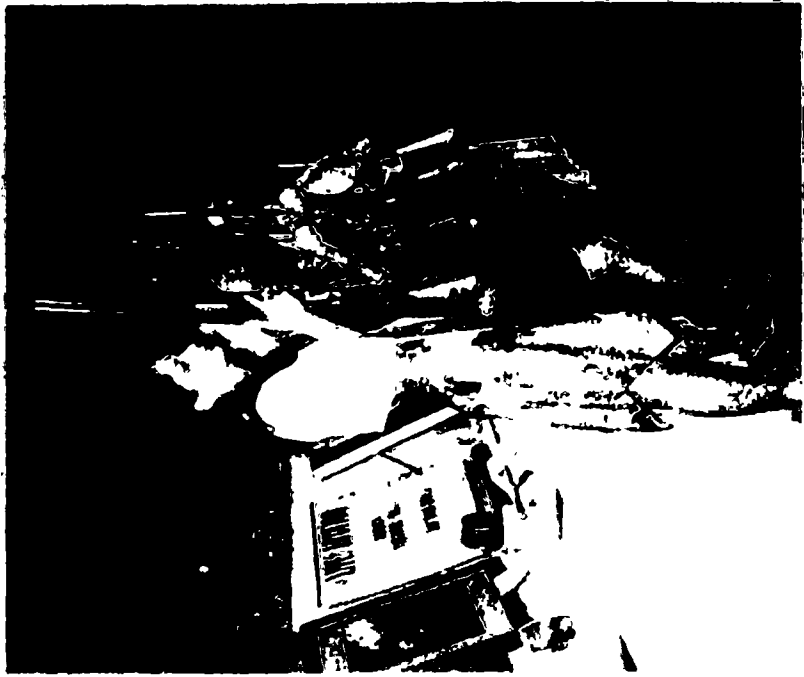
Through its Management Area Program projects RGS is...  
 Providing technical advice to ensure that projects yield greatest possible benefit to grouse and woodcock.  
 Access road construction or reconstruction for timber harvest and hunting opportunities.  
 Administration, offering a way to decrease cutting unit size and increasing the efficiency of  
 Reforestation, including the removal of non-target species and the planting of native species.  
 Planting conifers to provide wildlife cover during severe winter weather.  
 Clearing of brush and other vegetation to improve habitat quality.  
 Logging of brush and other vegetation to improve habitat quality.  
 Excavation of brush and other vegetation to improve habitat quality.  
 Identification of potential project sites.  
 Excavation of brush and other vegetation to improve habitat quality.



# Chapter volunteers, the heavy lifters

The Society relies heavily upon its members and chapter volunteers. Without them, RGS could not support the 150 banquets and special events that represent the major funding source for the Society's conservation programs. RGS employs a team of regional directors who assist chapters in hosting banquets and other events. Through its fundraising efforts, the Society supports a team of biologists. They assist landowners in improving their forested acres for wildlife.

The Society's senior biologist, Daniel R. Dessecker, was recently appointed as one of 12 representatives from the nation's leading wildlife conservation organizations to the newly created Sporting Conservation Council, which will provide input into the U.S. Department of Interior's decision-making process. Mike Zagata, executive director of the Ruffed Grouse Society, sees the appointment as confirmation that the Society is not only recognized as one of the nation's leading conservation organizations but also "that RGS' biologists, led by Dan Dessecker, are respected for their expertise in forest management practices that benefit wildlife. This recognition should be a source of pride for our membership and volunteers."



## *RGS in a class by itself*

The Ruffed Grouse Society is the only international wildlife conservation organization advocating the partial harvest of older trees to create forest openings that allow light needed by plants that provide food and cover for wildlife to reach the forest floor. This both assures the ongoing health of the forest and, in the process, provides the conditions needed by grouse, woodcock, neotropical songbirds and many other types of wildlife. Of critical importance is that sunlight must be allowed to reach the forest floor and allow shade-intolerant trees such as aspen to grow into thick cover. The plants that thrive following a controlled fire or planned-tree harvest provide the food and cover necessary for grouse, woodcock, songbirds and a host of other wildlife.



*Photo by Tim Farigan*

# The Society's help comes in all sizes

To accomplish its mission, the Society extends help to small private landowners, large commercial forest landowners and the overseers of public lands at the local, state and federal levels. Those who seek RGS assistance are interested in improving forested acres for ruffed grouse, woodcock and other wildlife – including more than 40 songbird species – that share food and cover needs with the two great upland game birds.

Wildlife species on the Ottawa National Forest in Michigan's Upper Peninsula benefit from a renewed partnership between the Ruffed Grouse Society and the U.S. Forest Service.

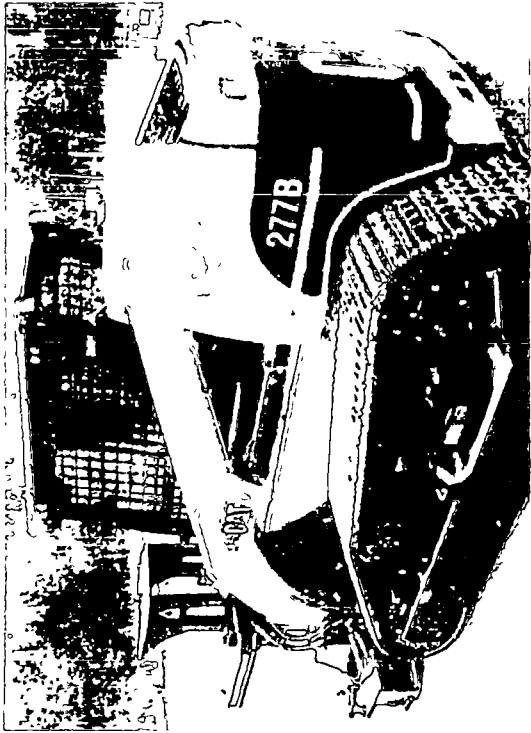
A Challenge Cost Share Agreement between the two organizations targets projects designed to benefit wildlife species dependent upon plants found in young forests that provide food and cover for wildlife. Both partners are providing funds and staff time to implement projects over a five-year period across the Ottawa National Forest.

Projects identified under this partnership include alder restoration, aspen regeneration and the improvement of hunter walking trails.

Thanks to a grant from the R.K. Mellon Foundation of Pittsburgh, the Ruffed Grouse Society's first piece of forestry equipment, a multi-terrain tracked CAT, is creating acres of new habitat on Pennsylvania's state-owned lands. RGS and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – Bureau of Forestry – have agreed to the use of the CAT on the 2.1 million acres of state forest.

While commercial timber harvest is the most efficient way to create dense, young forest

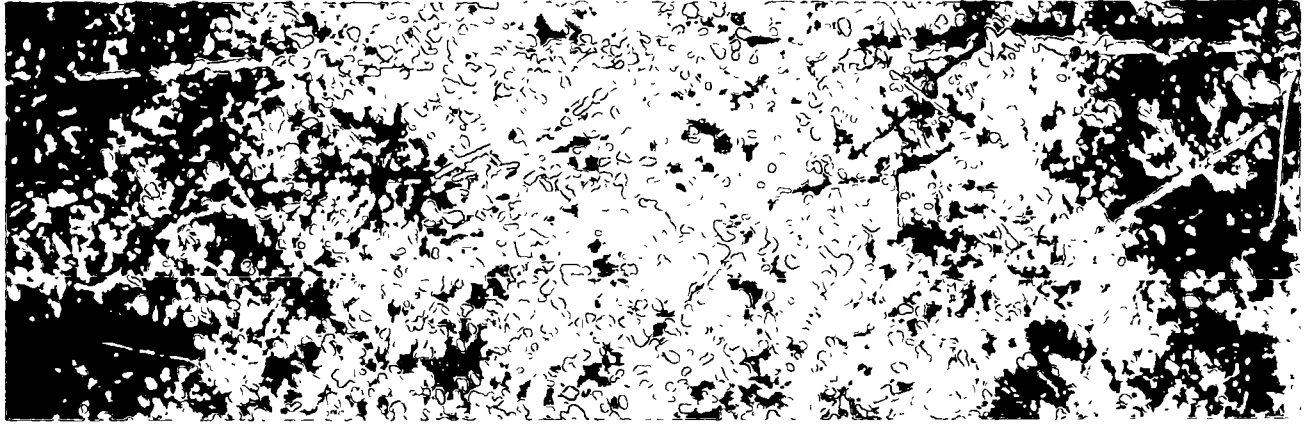




habitat for grouse, woodcock, deer, snowshoe hare and dozens of other game and non-game species, there are endless opportunities to do non-commercial management to benefit wildlife. Pennsylvania has lost about 1.6 million acres of prime young forest wildlife habitat in the last 40 years, bringing the total down to crisis levels.

Mature aspen and low-value hardwood forests are difficult to sell as timber, but can provide excellent habitat when harvested and allowed to grow back as dense, young forests.

RGS' Covers Program has brought forest wildlife habitat improvement education to hundreds of landowners throughout its lifetime. In turn, those landowners have passed valuable information on to their neighbors, friends and other receptive landowners with whom they've come in contact. A typical Covers workshop may include three days of indoor sessions and outdoor experiences for landowners who want to enhance their woodlands for wildlife. The participants hear from various experts on forest and wildlife maintenance and improvement, including talks by Ruffed Grouse Society regional biologists.



### RGS membership categories

- Regular Membership - \$25
- Conservation Membership - \$50
- Sustaining Membership - \$100
- Sponsor Membership - \$250 and up
- Centurion (Life) Membership - \$1,000 (Life sponsorship - \$10,000)
- Junior Membership - \$10 (16 and under)
- Timberdoode Web Membership Only - \$15

For more information or to join RGS, contact Ruffed Grouse Society at 451 McCormick Road, Conowingo, PA 17108. Toll free (888) 566-6747 [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

### RGS corporate sponsors

# The Ruffed Grouse Society is about:

Habitat for grouse, woodcock and the other wildlife that share the places where the two game birds live:

It's about the environment or habitat that provides them with food, cover from predators, shelter and a place to breed and rear their young.

It's about actively creating those young forests or "habitats" by using tools, such as controlled fire and forest thinning, recognized as effective by Aldo Leopold.

It's about educating the public concerning the habitat requirements of these birds and mammals, both game and non-game.

It's about explaining that they live in a place that, unless actively managed, will give way to trees that shade out the plants that are home to ruffed grouse, woodcock and many songbirds, rabbits, turkey and deer.

It's about gaining the public's support to actively manage forests and that clearcutting when done properly is not evil or ecologically unsound.

It's about walking in the woods and pausing at the sound of what seems to be an old John Deere tractor and realizing it is a grouse drumming in spring.

It's about taking one's dog afield with expectation of bagging a grouse or "partridge."

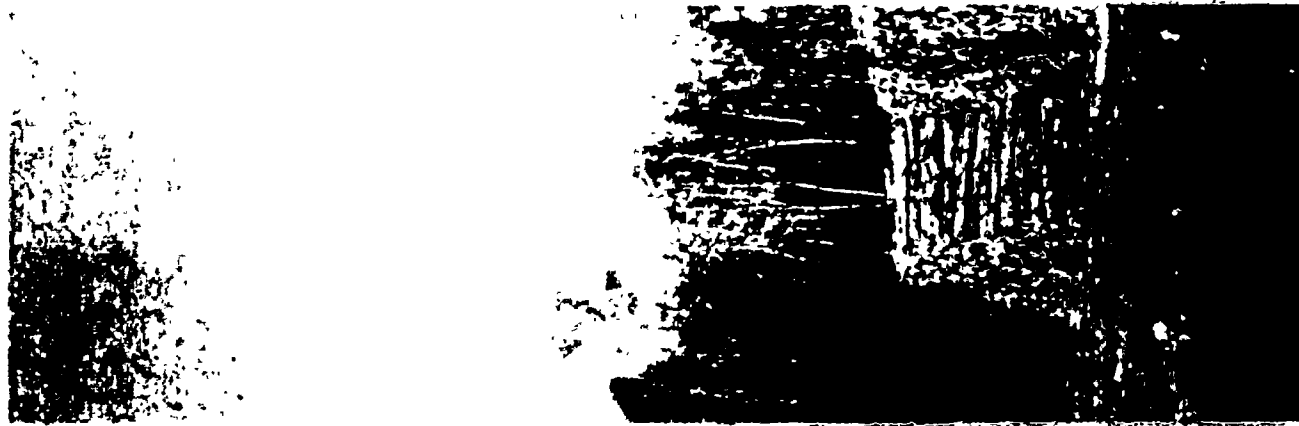
It's about being overtaken with pride as your dog locks on point and waits for you to flush the bird or as your son or daughter bags his or her first grouse.

It's about being totally embarrassed, even when alone, when the bird flushes across an opening and evades your well-placed number 8s.

It's about inviting friends to share a fine meal of grouse and all the trimmings and listening to how your spouse backed up on the shot because yours felled an aspen.

It's about gatherings called banquets where friends with a common interest in these birds and their conservation come together to have fun and provide the funding needed to make it all happen.

It's really not about us at all; it's about our kids, grandkids and their kids, for – without our help – these places will not be there for them, or for the birds, to enjoy.

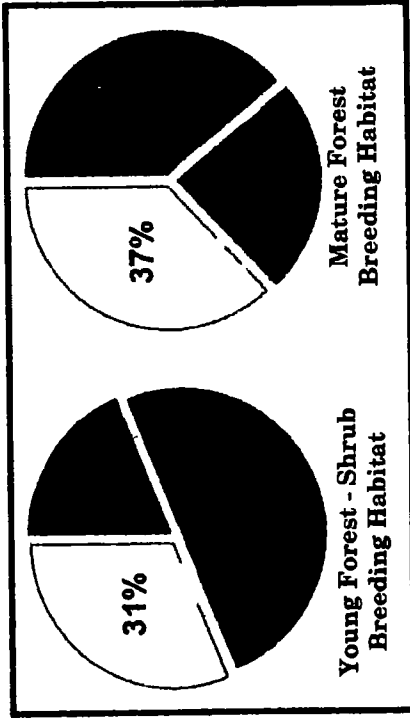


now have choices. The first choice is to continue on our present course and watch as the present decline in early successional species accelerates – an alternative that will lead to countless “train-wrecks” as more and more species are listed as threatened or endangered. (See Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6.) The other choices are to recognize what is happening; to alert others to what is happening; and to use the tools we have at our disposal to reverse this trend. Those tools have really not changed much since listed in the 1930s by Aldo Leopold: fire, axe (chainsaw or tree shearing device), cow, plow and gun. The first four can be used to modify plant communities (habitats) and the gun is used to reduce the surplus in game populations like deer that can literally eat themselves out of house and home.

## Not Seeing the Forests For the Trees

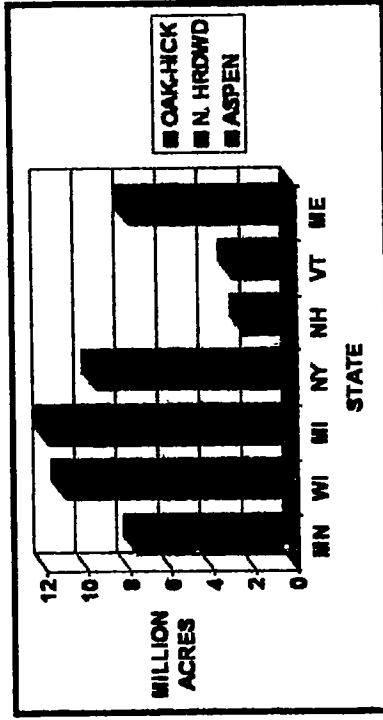
Just recently, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has, in some regions, begun requiring companies that cut trees as part of constructing a right-of-way to mitigate (doing something positive to offset the damage) what they consider to be an adverse impact or “take” under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Figure 1.  
BREEDING BIRD POPULATION TRENDS  
Eastern United States 1980 - 2005 (USFWS BBS Data)



Red = Decreasing Green = Increasing White = Stable

Figure 3.  
FOREST COMPOSITION - DECIDUOUS  
NORTHERN STATES 1966-1996



above, replaces the conservation, or wise-use, management strategy with a preservation-based strategy. That is not surprising as Smokey the Bear, The Nature Conservancy and the Audubon Society all led us to believe that locking up or “protecting” land was all that we needed to do in order to perpetuate it values – both to man and wildlife.

Figure 2.  
BREEDING BIRD TRENDS BY HABITAT TYPE  
1966-1996

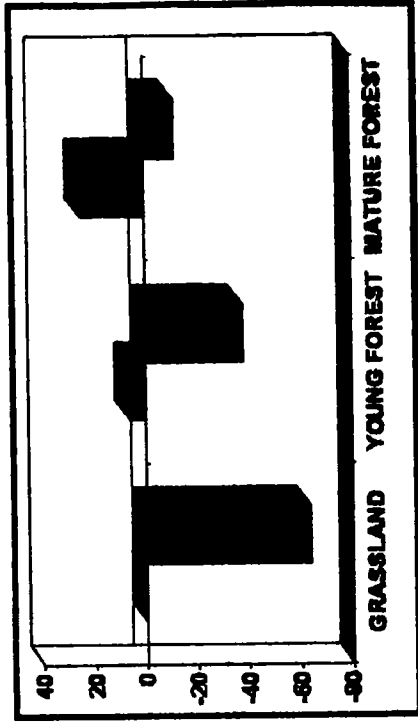
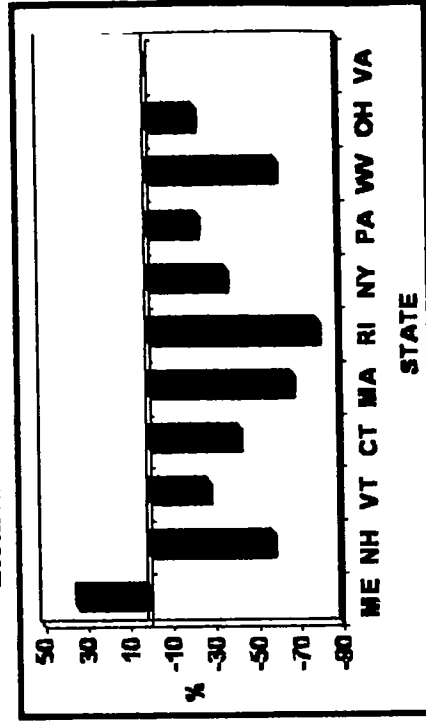


Figure 4.  
YOUNG FOREST HABITAT TRENDS  
Percent change in seedling/sapling acreage in  
northeastern states since the 1970's



Data Source: Forest Inventory & Analysis

Figure 5.  
RUFFED GROUSE HABITAT IS  
DECREASING IN MOST STATES  
IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES  
Adapted from USDA Forest Service FIA Data



created by cutting trees, is on the decline. One therefore can only question whether the companies should be given credit for creating a much-needed habitat type or punished by requiring them to mitigate for altering one that is in increasing abundance.

What set the stage for past and current mismanagement, often by well-intentioned people, on public lands? Certainly the litigation stemming from clear-cutting practices on the Monongahela and Bitterroot National Forests that led to passage of the 1975 National Forest Management Act can be pointed to as a vivid example of a shift in the pendulum – a shift that some might conjecture raised that pendulum too far in the other direction. It can be argued with some success that the mismanagement or over-cutting in the past set the stage for the mismanagement or non-management that is occurring today. The initial mismanagement was driven by greed. Today's mismanagement is driven more by misperception or basic ignorance of ecological principles. However, in the public policy arena perception often becomes reality and that has happened as the public, well intentioned but often lacking in knowledge of the sound, ecological principles outlined

the train-wreck associated with the rapid decline in early forest wildlife populations will require an active, versus passive, approach. They must openly become an advocate for ecologically sound forest management, including clear-cutting, that leads to a mosaic of age classes or successional stages that create diverse habitats within our public and private forests. This can most easily be accomplished by working with the recently created Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and helping that organization create a Standard that recognizes the environmental, economic, wildlife and recreational values of our forests and encouraging a management strategy that both protects and enhances those values.

Forest aging can be a good thing, but, like many things, too much of a good thing can be bad. Managing our public forests with a strategy that leads to a mosaic of habitats or successional stages will lead to forests that are healthier, more resistant to disease and insects,

provide a healthy economic return to the landowner and a diversity of wildlife, both hunted and non-hunted, for this and future generations to enjoy. Not adopting that strategy will be a violation of the "Public Trust Doctrine of Law".

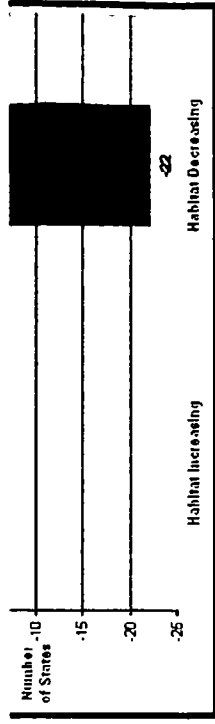
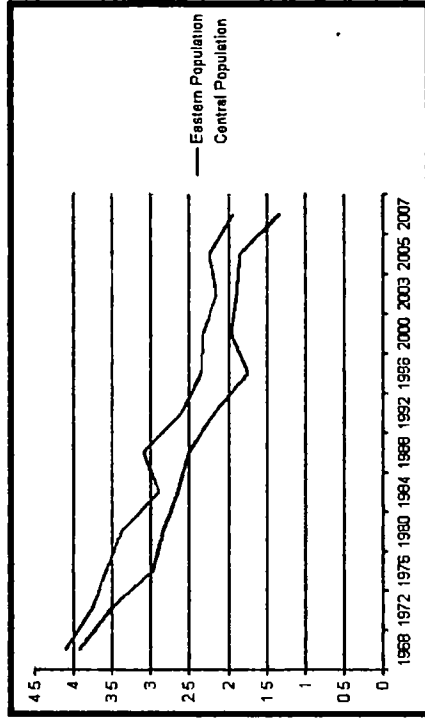


Figure 6.  
**AMERICAN WOODCOCK POPULATION TRENDS - BY SURVEY REGION**  
 US Fish & Wildlife Service Data 2007



## Ruffed Grouse Society

451 McCormick Road ♦ Coraopolis, Pennsylvania 15108-9377  
 412-262-4044 ♦ 888-564-6747 Toll Free ♦ [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

### MISSION

Established in 1961 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.



# Regional Director Info

**May 2009**  
*Inside this Issue:*

**1 Upland Dream Hunt Raffle**

**2 Planting Season-RGS Trail Mix  
RGS Reaches out To Chapters For Their Input On The RGS Website**

**3 Fund Raising Ideas**

**4 RGS Upcoming Events**

**5 RGS Upcoming Events Cont.**

**6 Doubles Club Announced  
Grants to Grow Habitat Management Capabilities in Midwest New Corporate Partners**

## Upland Bird Dream Hunt Raffle

**ONLY 2 MONTHS TILL WINNER'S ARE DRAWN**

### **ATTENTION ALL SPORTSMEN:**

The 2008-2009 Ruffed Grouse Society Upland Bird Dream Hunt Raffle is in the final stages **ONLY 2 MONTHS** till we announce the lucky winners. Winner will be drawn **JUNE 30, 2009**. If you have not purchased your chance now is the time to do so! Don't forget the first ticket drawn will receive a week-long ALL-EXPENSE-PAID trip consisting of two guided hunts for you and a guest. The first hunt will be in Havre, Montana for Sharp-tail Grouse and Hungarian Partridge. The second will be a spot for you and your guest at the RGS National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. I almost forgot to mention you and your guest will each receive a SKB model 785 over/under



shotgun. The lucky winners will have their choice of a 20-gauge or 28-gauge shotgun gun

with 26" or 28" barrels. This is a Dream Hunt all transportation is included. Approximate retail value of

**Cabela's**

this package is \$18,000.00. The second ticket drawn will receive a \$1,000.00 Cabela's Gift Card.



Number three ticket drawn will receive a custom fitted pair of upland hunting boots from Russell Moccasin Company. The boots have a retail value of \$400.00.

**DO NOT MISS OUT ON YOUR OWN ONCE IN A LIFE TIME UPLAND BIRD DREAM HUNT!! (To order your tickets please contact Mark Fouts at 715-399-2270 or [rgsfouts@centurytel.net](mailto:rgsfouts@centurytel.net) or see attached order form)**

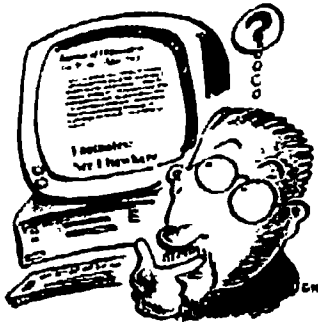


## Planting Season-RGS Grouse Trail Mix

Planting Season is here---Order your RGS Grouse Trail Mix. It is a combination of both perennial legumes and chicory formulated to produce high protein content all season long. RGS Grouse Trail Mix is formulated to tolerate poor soils. Plot Enhancer Brand Chicory will provide continuous feed in the summer when the legumes are either producing seed heads and are less palatable or during the doughtier times due to its tap root system. RGS Grouse Trail Mix can be seeded in the Spring or Fall or Frost Seeded. Sow RGS Grouse Trail Mix at 12 pounds per acre. For more information please visit the RGS web site <http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org>



## RGS Reaches Out To Chapters For Their Input on RGS Website—HELP!!



RGS is planning on changing the RGS website and is looking to our Chapters for input. What would you like to see on the RGS web site? What are the pros and cons of the current web site? The goal is to make the RGS website the best it can be and easier for our Members and potential Members to navigate. Please send me your thoughts suggestions and comments [rgsfouts@centurytel.net](mailto:rgsfouts@centurytel.net).

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 existed, 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 is our Members. The Members who make things happen are called Committee Members. If you would like to become an RGS Committee Member please contact:  
Mark D. Fouts, RGS Director of Regional Operations 715-399-2270 or e-mail [rgsfouts@centurytel.net](mailto:rgsfouts@centurytel.net)

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

## Fund Raising Ideas

Several of you have already held your 2009 fund-raising banquet and have done a GREAT job. I know some Chapters have seen a decrease in their banquet attendance this past season due to many uncontrollable factors. But during this obviously depressed economic times Chapters and RGS is trying do a more effective job as many organizations are. I know we have discussed this idea at Committee Meetings, but I wanted to put it in writing for all to read. A great way to grow banquet attendance is to use local contacts. Reach out to local businesses that you or your company do business with, many have matching programs. A tool to use is you local Chamber of Commerce listing. I have listed a few contacts in our region below:

### Anchorage, AK

**Anchorage Chamber of Commerce**  
[www.anchoragechamber.org](http://www.anchoragechamber.org)  
1016 W 6th Ave # 301  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
(907) 272-2401

### Grand Rapids, MI

**Chamber of Commerce**  
**Grand Rapids Area**  
[www.visitgrandrapids.com](http://www.visitgrandrapids.com)  
1 NW 3rd St  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
(218) 326-6619

### Bemidji, MN

**Bemidji Area Chamber-Commerce**  
[www.bemidji.org](http://www.bemidji.org)  
300 Bemidji Ave N  
Bemidji, MN 56601  
(218) 444-3541

### Hermann, MO

**Hermann Chamber of Commerce**  
[www.hermanninfo.com](http://www.hermanninfo.com)  
312 Market Street  
Hermann, MO 65041  
573.486.2313 / 800.932.8687

### Duluth, MN

**Duluth Chamber of Commerce**  
[www.duluthchamber.com](http://www.duluthchamber.com)  
5 W 1st St # 101  
Duluth, MN 55802  
(218) 722-5501

To find your local Chamber of Commerce list or additional Chambers in your area-- you can Google: Chamber of Commerce, City, State. It is a very effective was to get the word out. Give it a try!!



# RGS Upcoming Banquet Event Schedule



## Duluth/Superior Chapter 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Sportsmen's Banquet

**Thursday, May 7, 2009**

**At the**

**Holiday Inn—200 W. Superior, Duluth, MN**

**Pre-Dinner Raffle—Tickets Are \$10.00 Each—Only 400 Tickets Sold**

- 1. SKB Model 785 20-Ga. W/RGS Medallion or \$1000 Cash**
- 2. TriStar Hunter EX 28-Ga. or \$500 Cash**
- 3. Charles Daly Field Hunter 12-Ga.**
- 4. Ruger 10/22 Rifle**

**For More Information or Tickets Contact:**

**Dave Larson**

**218-722-9676**

**Email: [dlarson306@aol.com](mailto:dlarson306@aol.com)**

## Central Minnesota Chapter 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Sportsmen's Banquet

**Thursday, May 12, 2009**

**At the**

**Kelly Inn-Best Western—100 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Cloud, MN**

**For More Information or Tickets Contact:**

**Larry Brutger**

**320-529-2826**



**Lake Of the Woods Chapter 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Sportsmen's Banquet**  
**Thursday, May 14, 2009**

At the  
Springsteel Resort—38004 Beach Street, Warroad, MN

Pre-Dinner Raffle—Tickets Are \$10.00 Each

1. Mossberg Silver Reserve 20-Ga. or \$500 Cash
2. Ruger 10/22 Rifle
3. Pair of Binoculars

For More Information or Tickets Contact:

Ryan Cass

218-386-1979

Email: [rcass@centurytel.net](mailto:rcass@centurytel.net)



**RGS Chukar Partridge And Sporting Clays Challenge**  
**Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> & Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

At the  
Little Moran Hunt Club— 44357 Red Oak Road--Staples, MN



For Club Information Please Contact:

Little Moran Hunt Club

218-894-3852

Email: [mail@littlemoran.com](mailto:mail@littlemoran.com)

Little Moran Hunt Club  
[www.littlemoran.com](http://www.littlemoran.com)

For More information on the above events or to print out flyers please visit the  
RGS website  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

**Please check the RGS website for posting of  
2009 Fall RGS Event in our Region**

# **National News**

## **Doubles Club Announced**

Have you accomplished that rare feat of shooting a double on grouse or woodcock? RGS is announcing a brand new Doubles Club program. When you become a member you'll receive an exclusive honorary pin and an official certificate commemorating your achievement.

What is a double?

RGS defines a double as the occurrence of two grouse, two woodcock, or a grouse and woodcock (a mixed double) that are in flight at the same time, and are successfully harvested by one hunter. Please note: the birds must be in flight at the same time when harvested to qualify as a true double.

Applications will appear in the Summer issue of RGS, or you may also contact our membership department directly to apply at **412.262.4044**.

## **Grants to Grow Habitat Management Capabilities in Midwest**

RGS recently received three grants, totaling \$182,000, to purchase heavy equipment for managing habitat in the Midwest. Two ASV/Terex PT-100 Forestry loaders with mulching heads will be purchased with grant funds from the R.K. Mellon Foundation, the Frey Foundation of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the Charlevoix County Community Foundation in East Jordan, Michigan.

The new pieces of equipment will service Michigan, Wisconsin and surrounding states. The versatile equipment will allow RGS to help public and private partners aggressively manage neglected aspen, alder and brush habitats for ruffed grouse, woodcock and many other species. Cooperative projects with similar equipment have been in progress in the Northeast for several years with excellent results.

"These pieces of equipment are important tools to help the Ruffed Grouse Society target habitat improvements for woodcock in habitat, like alder, that is not being managed by commercial harvests," says Gary Zimmer, RGS Senior Biologist in the Western Great Lakes Region. "With this equipment RGS will be one of the primary implementers of the Upper Great Lakes Woodcock and Young Forest Habitat Initiative."

**Welcome to new Corporate Sponsors: New Page and Browning. Also thank you to Johnson Lumber in Wisconsin for providing paper to our headquarters office.**

**LAST CHANCE-- 2008/2009 RGS Upland Bird Dream Hunt Raffle**

If you would like to order ticket please contact Mark Fouts 715-399-2270 or [rgsfouts@centurytel.net](mailto:rgsfouts@centurytel.net) (To Order Please print below order form)

**2008/2009 NATIONAL RAFFLE**



Donation for Raffle Ticket is \$50.00 per Ticket  
**ONLY 2500 TICKETS TO BE SOLD.**

**UPLAND BIRD DREAM HUNT**

**October 2-10, 2009**

**FIRST PLACE 1ST TICKET DRAWN**

A week-long, all-expense-paid trip consisting of two Guided Upland Bird Hunts for the winner and a guest. Travel begins October 2, 2009

- First, Hunt at Bear Paw Mountain Outfitters in Havre, Montana for Sharp-tail Grouse and Hungarian Partridge from October 3-5.
- Then, Hunt at the Ruffed Grouse Society's National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota from October 6-9. This hunt cannot be purchased. You will depart October 10.

Both first place winner and guest will also receive an SKB model 785 over-and-under shotgun. Each SKB will have a commemorative RCS logo medallion on each side of the receiver, and is available in 20 or 28 gauge, with 26" or 28" barrels. The SKB has a retail value of \$2399.00. All transportation is included. Hunting dates are final. Approximate retail value of package: \$18,000.00



**SECOND PLACE - 2ND TICKET DRAWN**

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



Sponsor of the Ruffed Grouse Society, has three convenient ways to shop - on-line at [www.cabelas.com](http://www.cabelas.com), through world-famous catalogs or at one of 28 retail stores. Cabela's offers outdoor enthusiasts a wide and distinctive selection of high-quality outdoor products at competitive prices while providing legendary customer service

**THIRD PLACE 3RD TICKET DRAWN**

The third place winner will receive a custom-fitted pair of upland hunting boots from Russell Moccasin Co., a Corporate Sponsor of the Ruffed Grouse Society, located in Berlin, Wisconsin. The winner will receive either the woman's Judy Boot or, for the men, the Signature South 40 Bird Shooter



These boots, each with an approximate retail value of \$400.00, can be viewed at [www.russellmoccasin.com](http://www.russellmoccasin.com).

Three winners will be drawn on **JUNE 30, 2009** at the Ruffed Grouse Society's headquarters in Carapolis, Pennsylvania. Winner responsible for all taxes.



To Purchase Raffle Tickets Contact Mark Fouts, Reg. Director at 715-399-2270 or [rgsfouts@centurytel.net](mailto:rgsfouts@centurytel.net) or mail coupon to: RGS • 8154 South Dowling Lake Rd W • Superior, WI 54980

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tickets @ \$50.00 Each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_  
 CHECK (Payable to RCS)     CASH     CREDIT CARD  
 CC # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please forward this on to your friends. If you have someone that wishes to receive this, have them e-mail me their address. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to post information that fits this newsletter - [rqsfouts@centurytel.net](mailto:rqsfouts@centurytel.net).



**The Ruffed Grouse  
Society  
National Headquarters**

451 McCormick Road  
Coraopolis PA 15108

Phone: 412.262.4044  
Toll Free: 1.888.564.6747

Fax: 412.262.9207

E-Mail:  
[rqs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rqs@ruffedgrousesociety.org)

**Director of Regional  
Operations**

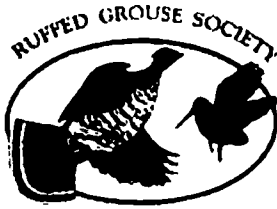
**Mark D. Fouts**

Phone: 715-399-2270

Fax: 715-399-2296

E-mail:  
[rqsfouts@centurytel.net](mailto:rqsfouts@centurytel.net)





# Western Great Lakes Newsletter

## National News

### ***Shawnee State Forest Uses RGS Trail Mix for Forest Trails***

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry recently re-opened recreation trails on the Shawnee State Forest lands. RGS donated our wildlife seed mix, *Trail Mix*, for use in reseeded some of the trails.

Seeding of the trails was accomplished in order to rehabilitate areas impacted by an April wildfire in the forest.

### ***New Equipment Will Enhance RGS Habitat Work***

RGS recently purchased two trucks and two trailers for use with the ASV/Terex PT-100 forestry loaders in the Midwest and the CAT loader in the Northeast. The new trucks and trailer will allow for the transport of the equipment to various locations for habitat work.

One truck and trailer will be used in the Midwest and the other in the Northeast. An additional truck is being supplied by the US Fish and Wildlife Service for use in Wisconsin. The remaining truck is also for use in the Northeast, and an additional trailer will be purchased very soon.

The new equipment was purchased with funds from several recently obtained grants.

### ***California Lawsuit Ends in Settlement Unfavorable for Healthy Forest Management***

A recent Northern California lawsuit ended with a settlement by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company agreeing to pay \$14.75 million as recompense for the 1999 Pendola fire in Plumas and Tahoe National Forests. The fire started due to a pine tree that fell onto a power distribution line.

Allegations that the fire caused damage to the lands, harm to the ecological habitat and loss of timber ended in the resulting settlement.

The decision is viewed by many to be a blow to conservation groups because fire, which is a natural act of nature that allows for forest renewal, was viewed as destructive.



### ***Wildlife Bill Introduced to Congress***

#### **Bill requires lengthy species monitoring, may be unrealistic**

In June this year Wisconsin Representative Ron Kind presented "American's Wildlife Heritage Act" (HR 2807) to Congress. The bill, though ostentatiously written to sustain wildlife and plants on federal public lands, may actually prove too cumbersome to be effective.

Requirements in the bill include overwhelming obligations placed upon federal land management agencies to monitor every species that may be impacted by a proposed activity. The manpower necessary to implement this requirement is beyond the current expertise available to these agencies, and there is no provision for additional funding. The large quantities of money that would be spent attempting to follow these guidelines would, perhaps, be better spent in accomplishing much needed habitat work on federal lands.

RGS intends to work with Representative Kind and other members of Congress to modify the language of the bill to better reflect more reasonable expectations.

***Welcome to new RGS Corporate Sponsor Connecticut Shotgun. They donated a 28-gauge RBL that will be used in an upcoming raffle or banquet.***

***Congratulations to our three 2009 National Raffle Winners: Jim Farrell from Altoona, Pennsylvania won the Dream Hunt, Andrew Lukashuk of Sussex, New York won a \$1000 Cabela's gift certificate and Kristin Dew of Elgin, Illinois won a pair of custom Russell Moccasin boots.***

## **Regional News**

### ***Upcoming Events for my region***

**Sept 10, 2009** Northeast Wisconsin Chapter, Green Bay, WI Banquet, Rock Garden Supper Club, Green Bay, WI Tickets: Matt Thennel 920-716-2397

**Sept 12, 2009** Wilderness Wings Chapter, Hayward, WI Hunt/Shoot/Banquet An all day event. Hunt Ruffed Grouse from Sun-up 'till 2pm. Shoot Five Stand following the hunt. Combined scores: Awards and Banquet to follow at 5. Tickets/Registration; Phil Johnson 715-354-7241; Dave Reardon 715-634-2674

**Sept 15, 2009** Superior Chapter, Ironwood, MI/Hurley, WI Banquet, Liberty Bell Chalet, Hurley, WI Tickets: Will Corcoran 906-364-5672, Dave Johnson 715-492-5858

**Sept 17, 2009** Marinette County Chapter, WI Banquet, Trillium on the Lake, Crivitz, WI Tickets: Bob Zutter 715-735-7311

**Sept 24, 2009** David Uihlein Chapter, Milwaukee, WI, Red Circle Inn, Nashotah, WI Tickets: Paul Seul 414-254-1861

**Oct 4-11, 2009** National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt, Grand Rapids, MN  
Contact Mark Fouts, Regional Supervisor 715-399-2270

**Oct 13, 2009** West Wisconsin Chapter, Marshfield/Neillsville, WI Holms  
RiverEdge Golf Course, Marshfield, WI Tickets: Rich Chronquist 715-387-1163

**Oct 15, 2009** Flambeau River Chapter, Park Falls, WI Northwoods Supper Club,  
Fifield, WI Tickets: Tony Blattler 715-332-5121

**Oct 16-18, 2009** Wisconsin Rendezvous, Boyd's Mason Lake Resort, Fifield, WI  
To Sign Up: Dick Simon 715-762-3469. Open to all chapter committees.

**Nov 02, 2009** (tentative) Rochester, MN Chapter Re-organizational Meeting  
Dave Johnson Regional Director 715-492-5858

**February 20, 2010** (tentative) 27th Annual Southwest Wisconsin Chapter Banquet  
Muscodia, WI

**May 06, 2010** 31st Annual T Stanton Armour Chapter Banquet Chicago, IL

### ***RD'S Notes***

*My first nine months on the job have introduced me to a wonderful group of volunteers who have a checkerboard assortment of backgrounds and interests. The most fulfilling aspect of that is being able to talk to and share experiences with other grouse and woodcock hunters. Among all the volunteer committees that I work with I've found a virtual plethora of different dog breeds and hunting styles. Everything from Munsterlanders to English Cockers, Griffons to Gordon's are represented among the dog owners on the committees of my region. Quite an array and contrast to me, having hunted with setters all of my adult life.*

*I awoke this morning in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to the first frost of the season. Aug 31 seems a little early to me, but many trees are starting to show the first colors of fall and the landscape is somewhat steamy at first light these cool crisp morning more like late September than August. Although drumming counts were only slightly up this spring, all first hand reports from grouse hunters I've spoken to show that brood survival was good and we should notice an increase in flush rates this fall. Here's hoping for a good season for all of you.*

*For those of you in and around the Hayward area, we are breaking new ground with an event in its first year. The fall hunt/banquet/shoot will feature a unique format. The hunters must register for the hunt/shoot by Friday September 11 at 9 p.m. Hunting begins at legal shooting hour and extends until 2 p.m. when all two person teams must check-in and register their birds at the Summit Lake Game Farm Teams will then shoot 25 clays per person at 5 stand. Scores will be combined and a winning team determined by combined score. Scoring will be as follows; 5 points for each grouse combined with 1 point for each clay. Any ties will be determined by a*

*shoot off at 5 stand Awards will be handed out at a traditional RGS Banquet to be held that evening beginning at 5:30 in the banquet hall. For more information or to register, please go to the RGS website or call Phil Johnson at 715-558-1664.*

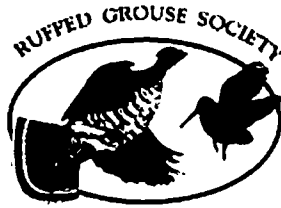
*I'm working toward re-establishing former chapters in the territory and welcome any help from those people who have served in the past and are willing to help kick start the effort, if only to get the chapter up and running again. If you'd like or need habitat work done in your area we need to create a funding source for that funding, and an active volunteer base with a banquet is the fastest way to achieve that goal.*

*Cities and/or towns that need a committee include; Rice Lake, La Crosse, Ashland/Iron River, Winchester/Manitowish Waters, Appleton/Oshkosh, Waukesha, Spooner/Cumberland, Rhinelander/Tomahawk. If you'd like to become active with RGS or have been active in the past and would be willing to help with the effort, even short term, please contact me by e-mail or telephone.*

*Here's hoping for a flush filled fall season for all of you.*

*Dave Johnson*

*[uptrek@gmail.com](mailto:uptrek@gmail.com)*



# News From the Drumming Log

## National News

### Have you seen us lately?

*Brand New Website Generates Growing Interest*

RGS recently launched a complete revision of our website, [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org). News updates, regional sporting events, exciting raffles and detailed information about habitat work are now in a format that is easier to read, navigate and explore. Great RGS merchandise, along with special deals on high-end shotguns, are available by clicking the "Shop RGS" tab on the homepage. Check us out today – and take your grouse hunting to the next level.

### Centurion Member Wins Kimber

Charles Hulbert of Tewksbury, Massachusetts recently became a Centurion member and won a Kimber Valier Grade II shotgun.

For every 10 new Centurions that join the Ruffed Grouse Society a raffle is held and a Kimber – or comparable shotgun – is awarded to the winner. To learn about becoming a Centurion, which begins at the \$1,000 donation level, call our membership department at 412-262-4044.

### 2010 National Raffle

*Win a Model 21 "Baby Frame" 28-Gauge Shotgun the shotgun made famous by Winchester built by CT Shotguns.*

This one of a kind gun features 28" barrels, choked IC/M with two beads, a straight English stock crafted from AAA fancy feathercrotch walnut to a checkered butt, and a 14 1/2" LOP. The approximate retail value is \$32,000.

If you're interested in a chance to win this gun, tickets are \$100.00 and can be purchased through your local Regional Director or by contacting RGS headquarters at 412-262-4044. Up to 1,500 tickets will be sold.

Last year's National Raffle winner, James Farrell, won the upland bird dream hunt, which included attending the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota this past October.

New York

3

RD Message/Chapter News

4

Resource News/Call to Action

## **New England Wildlife Biologist Joins RGS Team**

Andrew P. Weik joined the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) as New England regional wildlife biologist, and will begin his work in the new year. Weik will be responsible for implementing on-the-ground forest management, landowner and land manager education programs throughout New England

Weik's extensive experience includes five years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Northeast Region at Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge. Moosehorn is the only national wildlife refuge dedicated to woodcock management. His work at Moosehorn, along with his lengthy work history in various wildlife programs, makes Weik a superior fit for the RGS position.

One specific project that Weik hopes to see through to conclusion this year is the revision of the RGS publication, "A Woodcock in the Hand" (Sepik, 1994). The booklet is unique in that it details tips on examining, aging, and sexing American woodcock as well as information on population monitoring and conservation. Though currently out of print, the need and interest in the booklet have not waned.

## **RD Message**

I'd like to wish everyone a wonderful and joyous holiday season and happy new year! These past 5 months have gone by really quickly I have enjoyed meeting and working with all of the chapters and I appreciate all of the assistance and team spirit afforded me by all of the great volunteers across our region. We all know the conditions we are working under in these tough economic times. Who doesn't know Michigan leads the nation in unemployment and economic woes. What most folks don't know is that our volunteer spirit and commitment to natural resources and our hunting heritage have not waned.

I am happy to report that the recent trend in our banquets is encouraging. The particulars are little different for each event but the trend is with proper management (cost containment, aggressive tickets sales) we are holding our own and in most cases showing modest gains in net dollars and net dollars per attendee. This is crucial as these times put extra stress on resource management and our work nationally and locally is more important than ever.

Just as we are coming up with new tools to accomplish our habitat work such as our ASV forestry machine we need to develop new tools to raise the funds that fuel our conservation work. We are looking towards some new type of events such as major fundraisers with high dollar (\$500/plate) events targeting a smaller previously untapped part of our community. We are also incorporating our Board of Directors to host intimate "Dine with a Sportsman" or Wine and Cheese Parties. We are looking to work with some of the bigger hunt clubs to host special parties for their membership and raise awareness and dollars for the RGS mission.

Another change we will be instituting in 2010 is a major emphasis on membership and attendance numbers. An increase in membership will ensure our success, assist us in securing grants, increase advertising rates and give us a bigger pool of potential volunteers, donors, and future leaders. To accomplish this we will now require that all banquet attendees become RGS members. We will be offering a new family membership where each family member becomes a member with one magazine going out to the family. Instead of \$25 each for all family members attending an event the cost will be \$40 and cover all family members. Those attending will also need to pay for their dinner. Hopefully this will lead to an increase in attendance as well membership numbers. We need to emphasize the cost savings and benefits to the family membership as we solicit attendees to our events.

RGS will be budgeting money for projects and that chapters with successful events will be able to keep some of what they raise in a "Drummer Fund" for statewide projects.

All of these new ideas will dovetail with our current banquet fundraisers and allow us to fund more projects nationally and locally through our chapters working to raise the funds. Stay tuned for more news and please share any new ideas you may have as we meet to start the planning for our 2010 banquet season.

We will be having our State Workshop and Leadership meeting Saturday 30 January 2010 at the Ralph A. MacMullen Center at Higgins Lake as in years past. This next meeting will be a chance to create some leadership teams/committees to move our agenda forward and accomplish our lofty and noble goals. Please join us and bring a friend and your ideas for the future!

## Chapter News

We have had many chapters performing many exciting and beneficial activities across our state. These efforts have not gone unnoticed. The RGS Gun Dog of the Year trial was featured on Michigan Out-of-Doors TV. This event was the culmination of numerous qualifying local dog trials. The Ruffed Grouse Society values were highlighted illustrating the strength of our volunteer core and passion for our dogs, resources and hunting. Thanks and congratulations to all of the chapters that participated and especially to the Le Grande Traverse Chapter that hosted and coordinated the event held the morning after their annual fundraiser dinner in Traverse City.

All of the work done on habitat projects such as the work in the Muskegon State Forest by our West Michigan Lakeshore Chapter in Muskegon and the Andy Ammann Chapter's work in the Rose Lake Recreation Area outside of Lansing are being noticed and appreciated by many statewide. The dedication to our youth demonstrated by chapters such as the Robert J Lytle Chapter in Imlay City and The Southwest MI Chapter in Kalamazoo, the Saginaw Valley Chapter in Saginaw, the Eastern Upper Peninsula Chapter in St. Ignace, and the Andy Ammann Chapter in Lansing is helping to recruit, educate, and engage youth across the state. These are certainly not the only chapters and activities occurring but are examples of what is being accomplished by the RGS Team.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Wildlife Division is going to highlight partnerships with private conservation groups working with youth activities and our RGS chapters will be recognized and posted on the MDNR webpage.

Congratulations and thanks to all of you making things better for our resources, and our future.

## Conservation News

We continue to move forward with our ASV Forestry machine. Volunteer John Paige of Imlay City has kept both himself and the machine very busy doing habitat work across the state. The ASV has logged 127.9 hours on approximately 125 acres of habitat. Public land work has been the mainstay with 100.6 hours and 99 acres, and private lands work totaling 27.3 hours and 26.0 acres.

We are planning a travel route for work and the machine should be in the northern tier of the lower peninsula during the winter months doing work on private and public lands. We will be producing a demonstration CD for promotion purposes.

Please contact John Paige [jhpaige@chartermi.net](mailto:jhpaige@chartermi.net), 810-938-0560 with any questions or work related issues with the ASV

The following are two reports/requests from the MDNR that are meant to educate us and call us to action. Let's make our voices heard for grouse, woodcock, and early successional forests.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
Wildlife Report No 3504  
September 2009

## **RUFFED GROUSE AND AMERICAN WOODCOCK STATUS IN MICHIGAN, 2009**

Valerie R. Frawley and C. Alan Stewart

### **ABSTRACT**

Hunter cooperator surveys, spring breeding surveys, and mall harvest surveys are conducted each year to monitor ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) and American woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) populations. Yearly data comparisons are described for hunter cooperator surveys (2007-2008), spring breeding surveys (2008-2009), and mall harvest surveys (2006-2007). Hunter records were available from 191 cooperators who reported hunting activities in 2008. The average number of ruffed grouse flushed per hour by cooperators in 2008 (2.1) was similar to the average number of birds flushed per hour in 2007 (2.0). The average number of woodcock flushed per hour statewide by cooperators was similar between 2008 (1.3) and 2007 (1.2). Significant changes in the Michigan woodcock index based on the singing-ground survey from 2008 to 2009 were not detected ( $P>0.05$ ). Significant declines in the number of singing males also were not detected in Michigan and the Central Region during 1999-2009, but significant longerterm (1968-2009) declines were detected ( $P<0.05$ ). Woodcock banders in Michigan spent approximately 1,600 hours afield in 2009 and banded 912 chicks. There were 83.4 chicks observed and 55.8 chicks banded per 100 hours of search time, compared to 93.9 observed and 76.0 banded in 2008. Due to budget constraints, the ruffed grouse drumming survey was not conducted statewide in 2009. However, 42 drumming routes were run in the Upper Peninsula and there was no difference ( $P=0.6$ ) in the average number of drums heard per route between 2008 (18.9) and 2009 (18.0). An estimated 303,000 grouse were harvested in Michigan during 2007 which was not significantly different than the number harvested in 2006 (271,000).

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ruffed grouse and American woodcock are forest game birds appreciated by many people. In 2007, about 89,000 hunters pursued grouse and 38,000 hunters pursued woodcock (Frawley 2008). In addition, the federal Harvest Information Program indicates that

Michigan leads the nation in the number of active woodcock hunters and harvest (Cooper and Parker 2009). Non-hunters also value ruffed grouse and American woodcock. Bird watchers, hikers, bikers, campers, and others familiar with Michigan's woods know ruffed grouse well for the soft thumping beat of a drumming male and the surprising start of an explosive grouse flush. Bird watchers scour open areas on spring mornings and evenings to observe the woodcock's unique and entertaining courtship display. For these and many other reasons, ruffed grouse and American woodcock are a valuable Michigan wildlife

resource.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) uses several surveys to monitor grouse and woodcock populations. Hunter cooperator surveys, spring breeding surveys, and harvest surveys contribute valuable management information each year. Grouse and woodcock spring surveys are conducted by DNR staff, biologists from other agencies, and volunteers. The hunter cooperator survey is possible through data collected by volunteer hunters and shared with the DNR. Harvest information is collected from a random sample of license buyers after the end of each hunting season. The results from the 2006 and 2007 hunting seasons and 2008 and 2009 breeding seasons are described in this report.

## **METHODS**

### **2006-2007 Comparisons**

#### ***Harvest Survey***

Each year, questionnaires are sent to a randomly selected set of people who had purchased a small game hunting license during the previous hunting seasons. Detailed methods and results from the 2007 small game harvest survey are compiled in a separate report (Frawley 2008). Findings pertaining to ruffed grouse and woodcock have been summarized in the results section of this report.

### **2007-2008 Comparisons**

#### ***Hunter Cooperator Surveys***

Hunter Cooperator surveys rely on volunteer hunters that record numbers of hours hunted and ruffed grouse and woodcock flushed each day of hunting. Data obtained from cooperating hunters are summarized by county and by two-week intervals as the average number of grouse or woodcock flushed per hour of hunting. Hunting data were excluded from analyses when effort was <20 hours. Flush rates reported by cooperators provide an early indicator of harvest, but the final estimates of hunting effort and harvest come from a post-season mail survey of randomly selected hunters (e.g., Frawley 2008).

### **2008-2009 Comparisons**

#### ***Spring Breeding Surveys***

Department of Natural Resources personnel and volunteers conduct spring breeding surveys of ruffed grouse and woodcock along roadside routes. Each route has ten listening stops that are consistent from year to year. The number of ruffed grouse drums or

3 woodcock heard during a fixed time interval (four and two minutes, respectively) is recorded at each stop. Because timing of breeding and habitat preferences differ for the two species, separate surveys are conducted. The woodcock singing-ground survey is coordinated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in cooperation with the DNR. The grouse drumming survey is coordinated by the DNR. Ruffed grouse survey routes were established in locations of known grouse populations. Similarly, before 1968, woodcock routes were established in locations of known woodcock populations. However, beginning in 1968, the USFWS established woodcock routes within randomly-chosen 10-minute blocks (Cooper and Parker 2009). Data for both surveys are summarized as the number of woodcock or grouse heard per survey route.

In addition, volunteers band woodcock each spring to monitor recruitment and trends in survival. The data are summarized as the number of woodcock chicks observed and banded per 100 hours of effort.

## **RESULTS**

### **2006-2007 Comparisons**

#### ***Harvest Surveys***



An estimated 303,000 grouse were harvested in Michigan during 2007 which was not significantly different than the number harvested in 2006 (271,000; Frawley 2008). Approximately 89,000 grouse hunters spent nearly 647,000 days grouse hunting in Michigan during the 2007 hunting season.

Approximately 38,000 hunters harvested about 113,000 woodcock and spent about 219,000 days afield in 2007 (Frawley 2008). The 2007 harvest was approximately 71% lower than the record harvest of 390,000 woodcock in 1976. However, there also were more hunters (126,000) spending more days afield (908,000) in 1976 than in 2007 (Figure 1). The average number of woodcock harvested per hunter day was higher in 2006 than in 1976 (Figure 2).

### **2007-2008 Comparisons**

#### ***Hunter Cooperator Surveys***

Hunter records were available from 191 cooperators who spent 5,999 hours afield in 2008 and 5,770 hours afield in 2007. The average number of ruffed grouse flushed per hour by cooperators in 2008 (2.1) was similar to the average number of birds flushed per hour in 2007 (2.0). In 2008, grouse flush rates were highest in Zone 2 (Northern Lower Peninsula; 2.2), followed by zones 1 (Upper Peninsula; 2.1), and 3 (Southern Lower Peninsula; 1.1), respectively (Figure 3 and Appendix A). The highest average flush rates reported by cooperators were during October 16-31 in Zone 1. The highest average flush rates in Zone 2 were during September 15-30 and during November 1-14 (Table 1).

The average number of woodcock flushed per hour statewide by cooperators was similar between 2008 (1.3) and 2007 (1.2). Woodcock flush rates were highest in Zone 2 (1.5),

4

followed by zones 3 (1.4) and 1 (0.9), respectively (Figure 4 and Appendix B). Average flush rates peaked during October 1-15 in all zones (Table 1).

### **2008-2009 Comparisons**

#### ***Spring Breeding Surveys***

##### ***Ruffed Grouse Drumming Survey***

Due to personnel limitations, the ruffed grouse drumming survey was not conducted statewide in 2009. However, 42 drumming routes were run in the Upper Peninsula. In 2008, 50 drumming routes were run in the Upper Peninsula. A paired t-test was performed using data from the 42 routes run in both years. There was no difference ( $P=0.6$ ) in the average number of drums heard per route between 2008 (18.9) and 2009 (18.0). Because routes were not conducted in Ontonagon and Gogebic counties in 2009, results do not represent those counties

##### ***American Woodcock Singing Ground Survey***

Results of Michigan woodcock singing-ground survey were based on preliminary analysis of data from 109 survey routes (Cooper and Parker 2009). No significant changes in the woodcock index for Michigan between 2008 and 2009 were detected ( $P>0.05$ ). An average of 4.03 and 4.08 singing males were heard per route in 2008 and 2009, respectively. The 2009 Central Region index, consisting of information from Illinois, Indiana, Manitoba, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Ontario, and Wisconsin, was not significantly different from 2008 ( $n=405$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). In the Central Region, there were an average of 2.55 and 2.61 singing males heard per route in 2008 and 2009, respectively (Cooper and Parker 2009). Significant declines in the number of singing males were not detected in Michigan and the Central Region during 1999-2009, but significant longer-term (1968-2009) declines were detected ( $P<0.05$ ). In 2008, the Central Region had a significant decline in the 10-year trend, which was the first time since 2003 that the Central Region has shown a significant

decline in the 10-year trend (Cooper et al. 2008). Michigan and the Central Region have experienced an average long-term decline of 1.2% and 1.1% per year, respectively, since 1968 ( $P < 0.05$ ; Cooper and Parker 2009).

#### *Woodcock Banding Activities*

Woodcock banders in Michigan spent approximately 1,600 hours afield in 2009 and banded 912 chicks. The average brood size observed was 3.0, compared to 3.1 in 2008. In 2009, there were 83.4 chicks observed and 55.8 chicks banded per 100 hours of search time, compared to 93.9 chicks observed and 76.0 chicks banded per 100 hours in 2008.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **2009 Grouse Population Status and Hunting Forecast**

Ruffed grouse have approximately ten-year cycles in abundance over much of Canada, Alaska, and the Great Lakes states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan (Rusch et al. 1999). Biologists in Minnesota have conducted drumming surveys since 1949, and grouse

5 cycles have peaked near the end of each decade (Dexter 1999). In 2009, Minnesota experienced grouse drumming indices as high as counts during their last 3 peak years, including 1998 (Larson 2009; Figure 5). Michigan ruffed grouse harvest estimates appear to follow population cycles (Figures 3 and 6). This population cycle appears similar to the fluctuations observed in Wisconsin and Minnesota (Figure 5). Over the years many theories have been proposed to explain these cycles including diseases, weather, forest fires, sunspots, starvation, crowding, predators, genetic changes, and chance (Rusch 1989). The most recent low in grouse abundance occurred during 2004-2005 for most of Michigan (Figures 3, 6, and 7). The most recent high in grouse abundance occurred between 1998 and 2000 in Zone 1 (Figures 3 and 7). Michigan appears to be approaching the peak in the grouse population cycle. If this is the case, 2010 and 2011 may be the next grouse population peak.

We expect hunters to see about the same number or a few more grouse this fall. With favorable annual production, hunters could take approximately 300,000 grouse in 2009. Hunters should note that increased or decreased abundance of animals at a regional scale does not ensure the same trend locally. Areas of good habitat will continue to provide the best grouse hunting opportunities. Grouse are most abundant in areas where dense young forest habitats (5-15 years old) are common (Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies Resident Game Bird Working Group 2006). The best grouse cover is usually provided by dense aspen stands 6 to 15 years old or older stands with dense under stories of alder or hazel (Thompson and Dessecker 1997).

### **2009 Woodcock Population Status and Hunting Forecast**

The long-term decline in the woodcock population index raises questions and concerns about available habitat and the effects of hunting. The declining availability of quality habitat is believed to be a primary cause for the decline in the population (Dessecker and Pursglove 2000). The USFWS has adjusted woodcock hunting season dates and reduced bag limits four times since 1968 in response to the general status of woodcock.

A North American Woodcock Conservation Plan was written to help guide woodcock management in each region of the continent within woodcock range. The document is available online at [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr) or [www.timberdoodle.org](http://www.timberdoodle.org). Professionals are also working on developing habitat initiatives where the plan will be used to guide the creation of quality habitat that will benefit woodcock as well as other species that have similar habitat requirements.

More woodcock are banded in Michigan than in any other state or Canada. In fact,

Michigan banders have banded greater than 20,000 more woodcock than the next largest banding state (Maine) since 1981 (Mayhew and Luukkonen *in press*). Woodcock survival estimates based on Michigan woodcock banding data analyses is reported by Kremenz et al. (2003) and Mayhew and Luukkonen (*in press*).

Woodcock hunters may expect a season similar to last year. The USFWS framework allows for the woodcock hunting season to open no earlier than the Saturday closest to September 22 and to run for no more than 45 days. In 2009, the opening date is September 19 and hunters are projected to take up to 120,000 woodcock this fall. While good numbers of woodcock can be found in all parts of Michigan, the highest densities are located in the northern two-thirds of the state.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

We thank all the cooperators who provided grouse and woodcock hunting records and participated in banding woodcock. Steve Merchant and Adam Bump provided historical data for Minnesota and Wisconsin drumming counts. Many DNR employees and volunteers conducted spring breeding surveys and assisted in data entry. Theresa Riebow, Joseph Bauer, Ryan Soulard, and Jennifer Olson helped with the cooperator data. Artwork was drawn by Jennifer Kleitch. Brian Frawley, Pat Lederle, Dave Luukkonen, Russ Mason, Cheryl Nelson, and Doug Reeves, reviewed an earlier version of this report. Portions of this report were copied in whole or in part from previous status reports. Similar reports may be found at [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr).

#### **A CALL TO ACTION**

##### **DNR Seeks Public Input on Habitat Management for Wildlife**

The Department of Natural Resources will hold two public meetings in December to help wildlife officials identify species in need of special attention as the DNR develops habitat management plans across the state.

The meetings are scheduled for Dec. 8 at the Munising-Wetmore Area Super 8 Motel, located at East Hwy 28 and Federal Hwy 13 in Munising, and Dec. 9 at the Mt. Pleasant Comfort Inn & Suites, located at 2424 South Mission St. in Mt. Pleasant. Both meetings will be from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The DNR Wildlife Division recently has completed a management plan for bears and currently is writing a plan for white-tailed deer. In addition, wildlife officials have developed a list of featured species and are asking the public to help focus on the habitat needs of those and other species.

“Knowing which wildlife species Michigan citizens value most will

help in the effective management of wildlife habitat,” said DNR wildlife habitat specialist Kerry Fitzpatrick. “These meetings are an important step in creating a wildlife habitat program.”

Featured species are those that are highly valued and have a habitat issue the DNR can address. They may include mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians or insects. The needs of these species will impact habitat management decisions.

“We’re asking the public: Did we miss any important species?” Fitzpatrick said. “How should we prioritize these species? These are questions we need to answer before we embark on major habitat management efforts.”

All interested parties are encouraged to attend and participate. Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in the meetings should contact Kerry Fitzpatrick at 517-3737-1263 or [fitzpatrickk@michigan.gov](mailto:fitzpatrickk@michigan.gov), at least seven days prior to the meeting to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

Written comments may be sent to Kerry Fitzpatrick, DNR Wildlife Division, P.O. Box 30444, Lansing, MI 48909-7944 or [fitzpatrickk@michigan.gov](mailto:fitzpatrickk@michigan.gov). Written comments will be accepted until Dec. 15, 2009.

The DNR is committed to the conservation, protection, management, accessible use and enjoyment of the state’s natural resources for current and future generations.

###



# Chapter Coverts

Chapter Newsletter—Western PA, OH, WV, IN

**February 2009**  
*Inside this Issue:*

**1**

2008 Sponsor Rewards Winners

**2**

2009 Banquet Sponsor Rewards Program

The WNF Forest 2008 Honor Award

**3**

WV Habitat Update 2009

Gilbert R. Symons Chapter Working On Habitat In OH

**4**

Regional Chronicle--Snapshots From Our Region

**5**

RGS Spring Banquet Event Season

**6**

PGC Seedlings For Schools

PA WHISL Pilot Project Site-Oct Planting Day On SGL 39

**7**

The Brood-Cast--Attn: RGS Committee Members

**8**

RUFF Capital Campaign Update  
Tailfeathers Membership Drive

**9**

MN Court Favors Conservationists  
Alaskan Conservation Plan Omits Hunting as Priority

## 2008 Sponsor Rewards Winners

**Congratulations** to all of the 2008 RGS Sponsor winners, these are the Sponsors who choose entry into the 2008 National Drawing as their Sponsor option. RGS is awarding many great prizes, the lucky Sponsors are listed below:

Guerini Forum Grade 28-Ga. Shotgun  
**Muskegon, MI Chapter-Bruce Visniski**

Kimber Marias Grade II 20-Ga. Shotgun  
**Chicago, IL Chapter-Paul Zelisko**

Kimber Grade II Valier Shotgun  
**FairbanksAK Chapter-Shannon Staiger**

Guerini Magnus 28-Ga. Shotgun  
**Muskegon, MI Chapter-Dave Miles**

Pair Of Steiner Binoculars (Winners Choice)  
**Lancaster, OH Chapter-Terry Saylor**

Pair Of Steiner Binoculars (Winners Choice)  
**Sherburne, NY Chapter-Damian Croyle**

\$1000.00 Cabela's Gift Certificate  
**Stevens Point, WI Chapter-John Charewicz**

We have selected the Sponsor Rewards National Drawing Items for 2009 and they are just as good if not better. Please see page 2 of the newsletter, the back of the 2009 Banquet Flyers or the RGS website for a list of the New Great 2009 Sponsor Option items.

## 2009 Banquet Sponsor Rewards Program

The 2008 Banquet Sponsor Rewards Program was very popular this year. We will be selecting the 2008 Sponsor Rewards winners before the end of the year. The 2009 Sponsor Rewards Program Options is just as good if not better.

### 2009 Banquet Sponsor Rewards Program

Option 1 – A sponsor may elect to receive an unframed print of the year, either the new one or one from prior years (while supplies last).

Option 2 – A sponsor may elect to participate in a national drawing at the end of the 2009 Fall Banquet Season. There will be seven tickets drawn. The first winner will win the first item in the list below and so on until all seven tickets are drawn. Sponsors who choose this option will be assigned a ticket number(s) for the drawing by RGS National.

The Following Are The Seven Prizes Being Offered:

1. AYA #2 side-lock with detachable lock, 20 ga., 28" barrels, double trigger, side-by-side shotgun
2. Connecticut Shotgun's RBL-28 round action, box-lock, 28 ga., 26" barrels, single trigger, side-by-side shotgun; 3X wood grade
3. Caesar Guerini Magnus over/under 20 ga. shotgun
4. Smith & Wesson Elite Gold side-by-side 20 ga. shotgun
5. SKB Limited Edition RGS #7 over/under shotgun in 20 or 28 ga., 26" or 28" barrels
6. Choice of any pair of Steiner Binoculars \$1,600 or less
7. \$1,000 Cabela's gift certificate

## The Wayne National Forest 2008 Honor Award



The Ruffed Grouse Society received the Wayne National Forest 2008 Honor Award on December 4, 2008. In late 2008, the Wayne National Forest and the Society completed a 400+ acre exotic vegetation elimination project on some abandoned mine lands that are part of the Wayne. RGS provided the heavy equipment (CAT and mulcher) to maintain native vegetation on the area. The Forest Service staff and local volunteers did a great job orchestrating the project on the local level. The project provided considerable income to the Society which will help fund further habitat work with the equipment.

**Dale Dalrymple, RGS Committee Member Hocking River Valley Chapter, Athens, Ohio, Cheryl Coone, Wayne National Forest and Lisa M. Rossi, RGS Regional Director at the presentation.**

**Steve Buckley, RGS Hocking River Valley Chapter and Mark Banker, RGS Biologist working on the RGS and the Wayne National Forest Project— Autumn Olive Invasive Species Removal**



## **West Virginia Habitat Update 2009**

RGS has led an initiative to help the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge manage aspen and alder management. Contributors and partners have included RGS volunteers, WV Trophy Hunters Association, WV Division of Wildlife, Woodcock Limited, National Wild Turkey Federation, and many other individuals. Aspen has already been cut thanks to this initiative and more management is scheduled.

RGS is partnering with the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife and the WV Wildlife Resources Section to manage a large tract of habitat on private lands adjacent to the Refuge. It is extremely important to manage habitat anywhere the opportunity allows to maintain some of the historic cover. The WV Wildlife Resources Section did a terrific job of putting together the contract with the landowner. RGS, the USFWS' Partners for Fish and Wildlife, and WV Wildlife Resources Section combined to complete many acres of alder management last winter and more work will be done winter 2009. The work can be seen from the power-line off of Timberline Road.

IN 2007, RGS gave the DNR a \$15,000 grant as part of a cost share agreement totaling \$84,000. The project will create about 150 acres of early successional forest and about 50 acres of forest openings on 8 pieces of state land across the state. So far, progress has been made on Underwood, Elk River, Beury Mountain, Conaway Run Lake, and McClintick WMAs as well as Calvin Price State Forest.

The DNR also has developed a "wish list" of habitat projects they would like to fund in the near future. This is a large initiative totaling over \$200,000. RGS is considering which parts of this proposal we may be able to tackle.

Focusing on the bigger picture, RGS recently lead the development of a National Ruffed Grouse Management Strategy, authoring several sections of a National Woodcock Management Strategy, and co-authoring two chapters of a book on the ecology and management of grouse in the southern Appalachians.

## **Gilbert R. Symons Chapter Working On Habitat In Ohio**

RGS volunteers from the Cincinnati chapter have been working with the Ohio Division of Wildlife and Division of Forestry to develop and fund a habitat project at Shawnee State Forest. Shawnee State Forest is one of the better places to find grouse in Ohio right now due to the extensive forestry work done following the ice storm. We hope this will be a long-term relationship.

RGS plans to provide the Ohio Division of Wildlife with a CAT and tree shear to manage aspen on wildlife areas in Ashtabula County in the winter of 2009.



## Regional Chronicle -- Snapshots From Our Region

Below are some of the photos received from the Members in our region. If you have some hunting/sportsmen photos you would like to share please e-mail them to [rgslmt@msn.com](mailto:rgslmt@msn.com) also include a brief description of the photo and I will try to include them in this new section in our regional electronic newsletter.



**Mark Jones, RGS Gilbert R. Symons Chapter,  
A day in the life of a newly Retired young man**



**Eric Slayer/RGS Southern West Virginia Chapter,  
enjoying the 2008 season**



**Kenn Popko and John Brandstatter  
RGS Covered Bridge Chapter  
2008 Sponsor Hunt**



**Ohio Hill Chapter Committee, Lancaster, OH  
at the 2008 Fun Shoot.  
First Row: Tom Barnett; Rob Borah-1<sup>st</sup> Place Shooter; Terry Borah, Jr. Back Row: Terry Borah, Sr.; Steve Buckley; Lyndon Danison**

**Last Day of PA Ruffed Grouse Season  
Ends with one in the bag for Brian Hanna  
and Trooper, Washington, PA Chapter**





## RGS Spring Banquet/Event Season

Mark your calendar and make plans to join us. Below are listing of upcoming events in our region.

**February 6<sup>th</sup>—Greensburg, PA Banquet at The Four Points By Sheraton, Greensburg, Pennsylvania**  
Contact: Lisa 724-693-9032



**February 14<sup>th</sup>—Franklin, PA Fun Shoot at the Sandy Creek Conservancy, Franklin, Pennsylvania**  
Contact: Steve 814-437-1290

**February 21<sup>st</sup>—Lancaster, OH Banquet at the Lancaster Eagles, Lancaster, Ohio**  
Contact: Terry 740-569-4457

**March 7<sup>th</sup>—Cincinnati, OH Banquet at The Oasis Golf Club & Conference Center, Loveland, Ohio**  
Contact Margie 513-248-2000 Ext 214  
800-762-5469 (Fax)  
[margleg@bryanequipment.com](mailto:margleg@bryanequipment.com)

**March 14<sup>th</sup>—Clarksburg, WV Banquet at Westchester Village, Fairmont, West Virginia**  
Contact: Roger 304-782-1259  
[rogermet@yahoo.com](mailto:rogermet@yahoo.com)

**March 21<sup>st</sup>—Franklin, PA Banquet at Sandy Creek Firehall, Franklin, Pennsylvania**  
Contact: David 814-226-5574  
[dgalbreath@zoominternet.net](mailto:dgalbreath@zoominternet.net)

**March 28<sup>th</sup>—Meadville, PA Banquet at the BPO Elks Meadville Lodge #219, Meadville, Pennsylvania**  
Contact: Joyce 814-382-1905

**April 15<sup>th</sup>—Pittsburgh, PA Banquet at The Four Points Sheraton Pittsburgh North, Mars, Pennsylvania**  
Contact: Tracy 412-262-4044  
[trayg@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:trayg@ruffedgrousesociety.org)



**April 25<sup>th</sup>—Washington, PA Field Day at SGL232**  
Contact: Brain 412-296-1178  
[setter@gundogalliance.com](mailto:setter@gundogalliance.com)



**August 29<sup>th</sup>—Washington, PA Sporting Clays Shoot at Hunting Hills Sporting Clays, Dilliner, Pennsylvania**  
Contact: Brain 412-296-1178  
[setter@gundogalliance.com](mailto:setter@gundogalliance.com)

### **Sport Show Events:**

February 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>—Washington County Sport Show--Washington Crown Center  
February 27<sup>th</sup>—Laurel HS Conservation Club Sportsmen's Night Out—Laurel HS

## PA Game Commission—Seedlings For Schools

The Pennsylvania Game Commission invites PA Schools to participate in the 2009 Seedling for Schools Project. Trees are important to wildlife, people and the environment. 1. Seedlings to develop habitats: Primarily for middle school and high school students, the Commission provides a variety of seedlings to students interested in planting seedlings on school or community grounds to improve habitat, plant along a stream, develop a tree nursery, or create a habitat area. 2. Seedlings for your class: primary for third grade students, the Commission will provide enough seedlings for each student to take a seedling home to plant. For more information on the Seedlings For Schools visit the Pennsylvania Game Commission website [www.pgc.state.pa.us](http://www.pgc.state.pa.us).



## PA WHISL Pilot Project Site –Oct Planting Day On SGL 39

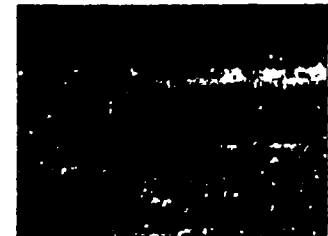
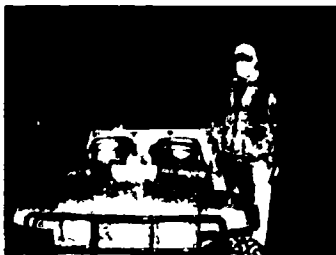


The PA WHISL project partnership sponsored and coordinated a planting day at the Pilot Site on October 4, 2008. The goal of the event was to plant approximately 18,000 dogwood and alder seedlings over an approximately 15-acre constructed wetland area located on SGL 39 in Sandy Creek Twp, Venango County, PA. A group of approximately 25 volunteers, including PGC, RGS, PennDOT District

1-0, Mackin Engineering gathered on October 4, 2008 at the PGC field building located east of the project site to discuss the project, identify work assignments, and distribute planting materials and equipment. The PGC donated the time of two employees and their seedling planter/tractor to assist in the planting effort. The RGS

Allegheny Northwoods Chapter provided a six-wheel "Gator" ATV to help move seedlings, equipment and volunteers around the site. The ATV was very valuable as the wetland site contains three distinct cells and sprawls across a very large area. At the conclusion of the planting day, over 12,000 seedlings had been planted at the site and over 3/4<sup>ths</sup> of the entire 15 acres had been completed. PGC assembled at the site and planted the remaining areas with the tractor/planter and hand planting methods on October 6, 2008. Future long-term monitoring of the site will be conducted by

PennDOT District 1-0, PADEP, and RGS to evaluate the success and extent of wetland and woodcock habitat development. RGS has included the site in their statewide management plan and will play a pivotal role in the future management of the site.



## The Brood-Cast—Attn: RGS Committee Members

If you have never attended an RGS habitat field day, attended an RGS function, written a letter on behalf of wildlife or hunting 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, [rsgbank@comcast.net](mailto:rsgbank@comcast.net) or Regional Director Lisa Rossi, 724-693-9032, [rgslmt@msn.com](mailto:rgslmt@msn.com).

I am looking to post on the next news letter some of your Ruffed Grouse & Woodcock hunting photos. Please e-mail me some photos with you your hunting buddies to [rgslmt@msn.com](mailto:rgslmt@msn.com). If you are the lucky winner of a firearm at an RGS events, send a photo of when you broke it in. Also welcome are any photos of your new pups. I would like to include them in our electronic newsletter. Also include a brief description on the photo for the new section "Regional Chronicle—Snapshots From Our Region".

Planting Season is just around the corner—Order your RGS Grouse Trail Mix. It is a combination of both perennial legumes and chicory formulated to produce high protein content all season long. RGS Grouse Trail Mix is formulated to tolerate poor soils. Plot Enhancer Brand Chicory will provide continuous feed in the summer when the legumes are either producing seed heads and are less palatable or during the droughtier times due to its tap root system. RGS Grouse Trail Mix can be seeded in the Spring or Fall or Frost Seeded. Sow RGS Grouse Trail Mix at 12 pounds per acre. For more information please visit the RGS web site <http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org>.



### **Don't Forget the 2008/2009 RGS Upland Bird Dream Hunt Raffle**

The Tickets Make GREAT GIFTS!! If you would like to order ticket please contact Lisa Rossi 724-693-9032 or [rgslmt@msn.com](mailto:rgslmt@msn.com). (The order form is attached to the end of the newsletter.)



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 existed, 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 is our Members. The Members who make things happen are called Committee Members. If you would like to become an RGS Committee Member please contact: Lisa M. Rossi, RGS Regional Director 724-693-9032 or e-mail [rgslmt@msn.com](mailto:rgslmt@msn.com).

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

Please forward this on to your friends. If you have someone that wishes to receive this, have them e-mail me their address. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to post information that fits this newsletter --- [rgslmt@msn.com](mailto:rgslmt@msn.com)



## **RUFF Capital Campaign Nears Halfway Mark**

RUFF, or Restoring Upland Forests' Future, is a capital campaign aiming to raise \$5 million dollars in the next two years. The money will be used to fully endow our team of biologists and to reduce overhead by purchasing a building for headquarters.

To date a total of \$2.1 million dollars has been raised – placing us just shy of the halfway mark.

Make a donation today by calling 1-888-564-6747, or on our website [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

## **Tail feathers Membership Drive**

*Will you be our 2009 Super Recruiter?*

A new membership recruitment program will allow members, and their chapters, to compete for the title of Super Recruiter 2009.

When you introduce a new member to the Ruffed Grouse Society, let us know and we will track your credits. Top recruiters will be posted, along with a running tally of credits, on our website. We'll also keep you posted of your standing during the course of the year.

Rules:

Each member will receive one individual credit, and one credit for their chapter every time they sign up a new member through the end of 2009. In January, 2010 a tally will be taken to determine the top individual recruiter and the top chapter recruiter.

The individual will receive a special edition Tail Feather Super Recruiter Grouse Display from headquarters, as well as recognition on the website, magazine and at their banquet.

The chapter with the most credits will get their chapter name engraved on a plaque to be displayed at headquarters and presented by their Regional Director at the 2010 chapter banquet.

### **To receive credit for the contest you must do one of the following:**

1. Fill out a recruitment form, (which is posted on the website) and send the completed form to: Membership Department, 451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108,
2. Send an email with your new member information to: [membership@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:membership@ruffedgrousesociety.org), or
3. Write your name on the back of the banquet stub, and specify that you are a super recruiter.

*Note. If you have already signed up new members this year, let us know and you will receive credit accordingly.*

A new member is anyone brand new to the organization, or someone who has not renewed their membership in the past 365 days. Any level of new membership/sponsorship counts for one credit toward the program.

**Contact the Membership Department with questions: 1-888-564-6747.**

## **Minnesota Court Sides with Conservationists in Superior National Forest Lawsuit**

*US Forest Service to Proceed with Habitat Management Projects*

An important legal victory was won recently in a case regarding the Superior National Forest (SNF) in northern Minnesota. The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) joined with others - including Minnesota Forest Industries, Inc., Minnesota Timber Producers Association, All Terrain Vehicle Association of Minnesota, Blue Ribbon Coalition, Lake County and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - to

defend important habitat management projects being proposed by the US Forest Service in the area. These projects were part of the recently revised Forest Plan.

In 2008 the Sierra Club and other preservationists had filed suit to halt the implementation of the Forest Plan, on the grounds that the Plan allowed habitat management projects adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). They argued that these projects would affect the wilderness character of the BWCAW itself, and should be prohibited.

Last November the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota granted RGS its request to appear as amicus curiae in support of the US Forest Service (USFS) and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) in their defense against the litigation.

Preservationists argued that aspen clear-cutting and other logging – despite the fact that it will benefit ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other species of wildlife in the SNF - will negatively impact not only the forest itself, but the adjacent BWCAW as well.

Speaking on behalf of RGS, attorney Ryan Woody of Hartford, Wisconsin, provided arguments to the contrary of the preservationists' claims. In late January of this year the court ruled in favor of the defense on all counts.

“The win on the SNF case is important because it involved the newly revised Forest Plan, which governs all future management and projects on the SNF for at least the next 15 years. In addition, I think the court's decision is important for future projects, because the court showed its respect for the Forest Service's expertise and reviewed the Plan under a very deferential approach ... As far as RGS is concerned the newly affirmed plan should provide for important opportunities to actively manage forest conditions to improve early successional habitat for ruffed grouse and other species,” Woody said.

RGS Senior Regional Wildlife Biologist Gary Zimmer agreed with Woody's assessment, adding that “The Court decision supports the many years of planning conducted by the Forest Service when it revised the Superior National Forest Plan. After years of delays, it is now time to implement that revised Plan in this area.”

### **Conservation Plan of Alaskan Wildlife Refuge Omits Hunting as Priority Objective**

#### *RGS Disappointed at Absence*

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Draft Revised Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge does not list enhancing game wildlife habitat and populations or hunting opportunities in the listed goals of the Plan to enhance wildlife-oriented recreation.

At nearly two million acres in size, the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge - located about two and a half hours from Anchorage in south-central Alaska - is characterized by its diverse habitats and wildlife. Created in 1941 to protect the Kenai moose, 65 percent of refuge lands are designated wilderness.

In a letter to US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) Planning Team Leader Rob Campellone, Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) Director of Conservation, Dan Dessecker wrote: “This is especially disconcerting given that public comments provided during the development of the Draft demonstrate that hunting is tied with hiking as the second most popular form of public recreation on the refuge. In addition, this conspicuous absence of hunting from the list of priority objectives for the refuge runs counter to clear direction provided by President George W. Bush in his Executive Order 13443, the stated purpose of which is to facilitate the expansion of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitats.” Dessecker added that if implemented, the current Draft will lead to reductions in habitats essential for game wildlife and, therefore, hunting opportunities.

RGS respectfully urges the US Fish & Wildlife Service to modify and select an alternative for implementation that will aid in meeting public expectations for recreation on the refuge and help to secure the future of our hunting heritage.

**Don't Forget the 2008/2009 RGS Upland Bird Dream Hunt Raffle**  
 The Tickets Make GREAT GIFTS!! If you would like to order ticket please contact Lisa Rossi  
 724-693-9032 or rgsmt@msn.com. (To Order Please print below order form)

**2008/2009  
 NATIONAL  
 RAFFLE**



Donation for Raffle Ticket is  
**\$50.00 per Ticket**  
**ONLY 2500 TICKETS  
 TO BE SOLD.**

**UPLAND  
 BIRD  
 DREAM  
 HUNT**

**October 2-10, 2009**

**FIRST PLACE - 1ST TICKET DRAWN**

A week-long, all-expense-paid trip consisting of two Guided Upland Bird Hunts for the winner and a guest. Travel begins October 2, 2009

- First, Hunt at Bear Paw Mountain Outfitters in Havre, Montana for Sharptail Grouse and Hungarian Partridge from October 3-5
- Then, Hunt at the Ruffed Grouse Society's National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota from October 6-9. This hunt cannot be purchased. You will depart October 10.

Both first place winner and guest will also receive an SKB model 785 over-and-under shotgun. Each SKB will have a commemorative RGS logo medallion on each side of the receiver, and is available in 20 or 28 gauge, with 26" or 28" barrels. The SKB has a retail value of \$2399.00. All transportation is included. Hunting dates are final. Approximate retail value of package: \$18,000.00



**SECOND PLACE - 2ND TICKET DRAWN**

The second place winner will receive a \$1,000.00 Cabela's gift certificate. Cabela's, a Corporate Sponsor of the Ruffed Grouse Society, has three convenient ways to shop - on-line at [www.cabelas.com](http://www.cabelas.com), through world-famous catalogs or at one of 28 retail stores. Cabela's offers outdoor enthusiasts a wide and distinctive selection of high-quality outdoor products at competitive prices while providing legendary customer service.



**THIRD PLACE - 3RD TICKET DRAWN**

The third place winner will receive a custom-fitted pair of upland hunting boots from Russell Moccasin Co., a Corporate Sponsor of the Ruffed Grouse Society, located in Berlin, Wisconsin. The winner will receive either the woman's Judy Boot or, for the men, the Signature South 40 Bird Shooter. These boots, each with an approximate retail value of \$400.00, can be viewed at [www.russellmoccasin.com](http://www.russellmoccasin.com).



Three winners will be drawn on  
**JUNE 30, 2009**  
 at the Ruffed Grouse Society's  
 headquarters in  
 Coraopolis, Pennsylvania.  
*Winner responsible for all taxes.*



To Purchase Raffle Tickets Contact: Lisa Rossi, Reg. Director  
 at 724-693-9032 or [rgsmat@msn.com](mailto:rgsmat@msn.com) or mail coupon to  
 RGS • 215 Marshall Road • Oakdale, PA 15071

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tickets @ \$50.00 Each = \$\_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed

CHECK (Payable to RGS)     CASH     CREDIT CARD

CC # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



**The Ruffed Grouse  
Society  
National Headquarters**

**451 McCormick Road  
Coraopolis PA 15108**

**Phone: 412.262.4044  
Toll Free: 1.888.564.6747**

**Fax: 412.262.9207**

**E-Mail:  
[rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org)**

**Regional Director**

**Lisa M. Rossi**

**Phone: 724.693-9032**

**Fax: 724.693-9676**

**E-Mail: [rgslmt@msn.com](mailto:rgslmt@msn.com)**

Established in 1961, 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.

Information on the RGS, its mission, management projects and membership can be found on the web at:  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)



# Southeast Regional Newsletter

February 2009

## *Inside this Issue:*

1

RUFF Capital Campaign Update  
*Tailfeathers* Membership Drive

2

Minnesota Court Favors  
Conservationists

3

Alaskan Conservation Plan Omits  
Hunting as Priority

Regional News

Banquets

National Dream Hunt Raffle

4

Habitat

## National News

### **RUFF Capital Campaign Nears Halfway Mark**

RUFF, or Restoring Upland Forests' Future, is a capital campaign aiming to raise \$5 million dollars in the next two years. The money will be used to fully endow our team of biologists and to reduce overhead by purchasing a building for headquarters.

To date a total of \$2.1 million dollars has been raised – placing us just shy of the halfway mark.

Make a donation today by calling 1-888-564-6747, or on our website [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

### **Tail Feathers Membership Drive**

*Will you be our 2009 Super Recruiter?*

A new membership recruitment program will allow members, and their chapters, to compete for the title of Super Recruiter 2009.

When you introduce a new member to the Ruffed Grouse Society, let us know and we will track your credits. Top recruiters will be posted, along with a running tally of credits, on our website. We'll also keep you posted of your standing during the course of the year.

Rules:

Each member will receive one individual credit, and one credit for their chapter every time they sign up a new member through the end of 2009. In January, 2010 a tally will be taken to determine the top individual recruiter and the top chapter recruiter.

The individual will receive a special edition Tail Feather Super Recruiter Grouse Display from headquarters, as well as recognition on the website, magazine and at their banquet.

The chapter with the most credits will get their



chapter name engraved on a plaque to be displayed at headquarters and presented by their Regional Director at the 2010 chapter banquet.

**To receive credit for the contest you must do one of the following:**

1. Fill out a recruitment form, (which is posted on the website) and send the completed form to: Membership Department, 451 McCormick Road Coraopolis, PA 15108,
2. Send an email with your new member information to: [membership@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:membership@ruffedgrousesociety.org), or
3. Write your name on the back of the banquet stub, and specify that you are a super recruiter.

*Note: If you have already signed up new members this year, let us know and you will receive credit accordingly.*

A new member is anyone brand new to the organization, or someone who has not renewed their membership in the past 365 days. Any level of new membership/sponsorship counts for one credit toward the program.

**Contact the Membership Department with questions: 1-888-564-6747.**

**Minnesota Court Sides with Conservationists in Superior National Forest Lawsuit**

*US Forest Service to Proceed with Habitat Management Projects*

An important legal victory was won recently in a case regarding the Superior National Forest (SNF) in northern Minnesota. The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) joined with others - including Minnesota Forest Industries, Inc., Minnesota Timber Producers Association, All Terrain Vehicle Association of Minnesota, Blue Ribbon Coalition, Lake County and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - to defend important habitat management projects being proposed by the US Forest Service in the area. These projects were part of the recently revised Forest Plan.

In 2008 the Sierra Club and other preservationists had filed suit to halt the implementation of the Forest Plan, on the grounds that the Plan allowed habitat management projects adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). They argued that these projects would affect the wilderness character of the BWCAW itself, and should be prohibited.

Last November the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota granted RGS its request to appear as amicus curiae in support of the US Forest Service (USFS) and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) in their defense against the litigation.

Preservationists argued that aspen clear-cutting and other logging – despite the fact that it will benefit ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other species of wildlife in the SNF - will negatively impact not only the forest itself, but the adjacent BWCAW as well.

Speaking on behalf of RGS, attorney Ryan Woody of Hartford, Wisconsin, provided arguments to the contrary of the preservationists' claims. In late January of this year the court ruled in favor of the defense on all counts.

“The win on the SNF case is important because it involved the newly revised Forest Plan, which governs all future management and projects on the SNF for at least the next 15 years. In addition, I think the court’s decision is important for future projects, because the court showed its respect for the Forest Service’s expertise and reviewed the Plan under a very deferential approach ... As far as RGS is concerned the newly affirmed plan should provide for important opportunities to actively manage forest conditions to improve early successional habitat for ruffed grouse and other species,” Woody said.

RGS Senior Regional Wildlife Biologist Gary Zimmer agreed with Woody’s assessment, adding that “The Court decision supports the many years of planning conducted by the Forest Service when it revised the Superior National Forest Plan. After years of delays, it is now time to implement that revised Plan in this area.”

## **Conservation Plan of Alaskan Wildlife Refuge Omits Hunting as Priority Objective**

### ***RGS Disappointed at Absence***

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Draft Revised Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge does not list enhancing game wildlife habitat and populations or hunting opportunities in the listed goals of the Plan to enhance wildlife-oriented recreation.

At nearly two million acres in size, the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge - located about two and a half hours from Anchorage in south-central Alaska - is characterized by its diverse habitats and wildlife. Created in 1941 to protect the Kenai moose, 65 percent of refuge lands are designated wilderness.

In a letter to US Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) Planning Team Leader Rob Campellone, Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) Director of Conservation, Dan Dessecker wrote: "This is especially disconcerting given that public comments provided during the development of the Draft demonstrate that hunting is tied with hiking as the second most popular form of public recreation on the refuge. In addition, this conspicuous absence of hunting from the list of priority objectives for the refuge runs counter to clear direction provided by President George W. Bush in his Executive Order 13443, the stated purpose of which is to facilitate the expansion of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitats." Dessecker added that if implemented, the current Draft will lead to reductions in habitats essential for game wildlife and, therefore, hunting opportunities.

RGS respectfully urges the US Fish & Wildlife Service to modify and select an alternative for implementation that will aid in meeting public expectations for recreation on the refuge and help to secure the future of our hunting heritage.

## **REGIONAL NEWS**

### ***Spring Banquets***

We are starting up on our regional spring banquets. Here is a list of those currently planned. We didn't have an update at the last newsletter, but I'm glad to report that this year the gain needed for chapters to share in banquet revenue is 10%, where it was 15% last year. We hope this encourages folks to come out and support banquets to help generate revenue for local projects.

Kanawha Valley Chapter, Charleston, WV – March 6, 2009

Highland Drummer Chapter, Lewisburg, WV – March 21, 2009

Appalachian Highlands Chapter, Johnson City, TN – March 28, 2009

Volunteer Chapter, Knoxville, TN – April 4, 2009

Flyers for all of these banquets can be found on our website, [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org), under Events and Banquets on the Membership tab at the top of the home page.

### ***Hunting Season***

As you read this the hunting season is winding down. Hope your season has been moderately successful. I'm getting mixed reports from my travels through the region. I was having early season success and have had numerous non-productive points late in the season. It's a mixed bag. One member told me he and some friends went hunting in NC near the VA border and flew 14 birds one Saturday and in the same spot a week later only flew 4. Weird.

### ***National Dream Hunt Raffle***

We've still got tickets for our National Raffle, this year a all-expenses Dream Hunt for two to Montana and Minnesota with an SKB shotgun thrown in for both hunters. We will be selling these tickets at our

banquets but you don't want to wait. We only have 2500 and when they're gone that's it. You can contact me if you are interested. The drawing is June 29<sup>th</sup>. So if you have a Fall banquet you better order them now!

### ***Habitat***

I saw a quote a couple of weeks ago from a fellow named Josiah Gilbert Holland that I thought was appropriate for this topic: "God gives every bird his food, but he does not throw it into the nest." I think this is appropriate because we can't sit back and wait for "someone else" to get something started in habitat improvement.

We've got several chapters currently involved in projects in NC, VA, and WV. But we don't have to get our boots muddy to get involved. Here's an example. Last Fall we sent an email to members requesting their comments on a Forest Service project in North Carolina. (Dylan). The Decision Notice was just released and the District Ranger chose our preferred alternative. He was supported by 38 members of RGS in his decision. Only four preservationist groups commented. This can always be appealed, but with overwhelming support they might just decide not to.

My point is, we have to "get out of our nests" and not wait on "someone else" to do the work if we want to impact management of our National Forest. We must comment on projects, attend public hearings, let our voices be heard. There are two things you can do to that end. Contact your local District Ranger and get on their mailing list for Scoping Notice and Environmental Assessment announcements. That way you know when something is about to happen. Second, make sure your email address is updated at National, either in the membership box on the website or calling member services at National. We will continue to email notices to our members when we are aware of a NF action that needs their input. It only takes a few minutes to write an email response in support of sound forestry management. All comment **MUST** be considered as part of the review process. Let's shout down the preservationists!



# Grousin' Around the Mid-Atlantic

## ...Recent Happenings

May – August, 2009

### Banquets

#### **Charles E. Bechtel Chapter, Reading PA, Southeastern PA Sponsor Dinner**

Wednesday, May 13 – Another great sponsor success! Sponsors dined on a raw bar, then lobsters and steak. Congratulations to Ron Kistler for winning the sponsor gun—an SKB 785 Limited Edition RGS model 20 gauge. Funds raised will help create local grouse habitat.

#### **Bonasa Chapter, Dubois PA Banquet**

Friday, June 19 – Another successful banquet for the Bonasa Chapter. For the second straight year, net proceeds increased. Funds raised will benefit grouse and woodcock.

### Shoots

#### **Cumberland Valley Chapter, Carlisle PA Sporting Clays Shoot**

Saturday, June 6 – The Cumberland Valley Chapter held their first Sporting Clay tournament at Marts's Gap View Hunting Preserve in Dalmatia, PA. Over forty shooters turned out to support the chapter and the good work they do in support of RGS. Gerry Putt was the high shooter—an artist with both a brush and a shotgun! After the shoot, Jeff and Julie Reed put on a wonderful bird dog training exhibition. Many thanks to Tim Wentz and the rest of the chapter volunteers for putting on this first of many successful shoots.

#### **Ruffed Grouse Society New Jersey Sporting Clays Challenge**

Sunday, July 26 – Hudson Farm was a perfect location for this prestigious shoot. Thirty five shooters made their way through this beautiful course. High Gun was Michael Geitz with an impressive score of 91. Ron Dombrowski was second with an 89 and Dr. Bjorn Hanson was third with an 88. High team honors went to Chuck Jencarelli, Tom Toohey and Jay Buffum. Second place team included Dr. Bjorn Hanson, Howard Birdsall III, John Roswech and John Connelly. Special thanks are due to the wonderful staff at Hudson Farm for not only making the day such a pleasure but for also donating to our mission.

September 2009

Inside 2009/2010

### 1-2 Recent Happenings

Just Completed Events

### 2-4 Upcoming Events

Local Chapter Meetings and Events

### 4-5 National News

Shawnee State Forest Uses RGS

Trail Mix Donation

New Equipment to Enhance RGS

Habitat Work

California Decision Inhibits Healthy

Forest Management

Cumbersome Wildlife Bill Introduced to Congress

### 6 from your RD

Dave Hansroth  
Regional Director, Mid Atlantic  
Office: 240-912-9294  
Cell: 412-303-1405

### **Backbone Mountain Chapter, Oakland MD Chukar Challenge and Sporting Clays Shoot**

Sunday, May 3 – The first event for this brand new chapter was a resounding success! Over forty dogs competed in this inaugural chukar challenge. Participants and their dogs ignored the steady cold rain to find their birds. When it was all over, Lisa Calhoun and her GSP, Mandy, took top honors and the title “Queen of the Mountain.” Rich Skeweris and his German Wirehair, Jake, took second. Third went to Chad Fridley and his English Setter, Magnum. Don Helbig and Chad Fridley tied for first place in the sporting clays shoot.

## **Dog Events**

### **South Mountain Chapter, Lancaster, PA Cover Dog Training Seminar**

Saturday, August 22 – Professional trainer Robert Ecker gave an interesting and informative seminar on cover dog training methods. The presentation was complete with demonstrations of his fine dogs. Dr. McGrath gave the second part of the seminar, focusing on canine first aid in the field. The seminar was very well attended and money raised will go toward local habitat work. Thanks go to Jan Christen for organizing this event and to Rick Ober for providing and cooking the food.

## **New Chapter Development**

Two new chapters have started recently. **Allentown, PA** had a well attended meet and greet and is off to a flying start. They already have a treasurer and co-banquet chairs. They will be manning a booth at the upcoming Outdoor Expo. Next meeting will be held in early to mid September. Contact Ron Kistler at 610-392-8243 or via email at [ronkis@ptd.net](mailto:ronkis@ptd.net) for more details or to sign up to help man their booth

**Goochland, Virginia** also had a great first meet and greet. Lots of enthusiasm emerged from that first meeting. We already have a treasurer, banquet chair/president and co-habitat chairs. The next meeting is scheduled for the evening of Sept. 10 at Orapax Plantation. Informal sporting clays shooting will be followed by dinner and a meeting. Topics for the meeting include choosing a name for this chapter and a discussion of habitat concerns. Contact Wayne Thacker, 804-357-9448 or [BumCW@aol.com](mailto:BumCW@aol.com).

# **...Upcoming Events: Mark Your Calendar**

## **August 2009**

### **Lehigh Valley Chapter, Allentown, PA - Outdoor Expo - August 28-30**

We still have a few slots to fill to keep our RGS booth properly manned. No experience required. Contact Ron Kistler at 610-392-8243 or via email at [ronkis@ptd.net](mailto:ronkis@ptd.net) for more details or to sign up to help man their booth.

### **Glenn Bowers Chapter, York PA - Sporting Clays Shoot, August 29**

Central Penn Sporting Clays, Includes 100 sporting clay targets, Lewis class and lunch for \$45.00. Wobble trap is \$10.00 for 25 targets. Registration starts at 7:45 with the last shooter out at 12:30. Awards presented after last shooter finishes. Raffles and prizes. For more information contact Tom Kieffer at 717-413-9205 or email at [tkieffer@ptd.net](mailto:tkieffer@ptd.net).

## September 2009

### **Backbone Mountain Chapter, Oakland Maryland**

Committee Meeting and picnic, Thursday, Sept 3, 7pm, Potomac State Forest picnic pavilion. Topics will focus on the upcoming banquet. All are welcome. For more information, contact Rich Skeweris at 301-334-5814 or via email at [rskeeweris@pennswoods.net](mailto:rskeeweris@pennswoods.net)

### **Charles E. Bechtel Chapter, Reading, PA**

Committee Meeting, Sept. 8, 7:30 at Trig Kleppinger's home. Discussion will focus on the upcoming banquet and a wrap up of the recent fun shoot. All are welcome. Contact Trig at 610-376-7011, or [kleppy@comcast.net](mailto:kleppy@comcast.net).

### **Goochland, VA**

Fun shoot and committee meeting, Thursday, September 10, Orapax Plantation. Sporting clays shooting from 5-7pm, dinner at 7pm, meeting at 7:30pm. Cost is \$30.00 for 50 sporting clays targets, including trapper tip, \$5.00 for dinner and no charge to attend meeting only. Topics at the meeting will include choosing a name for this new chapter, habitat discussion by the habitat chairs and future plans. Contact Wayne Thacker at 804-357-9448 or email at [BumCW@aol.com](mailto:BumCW@aol.com)

### **Potomac Valley Chapter, Frederick, MD**

Fun Shoot - Sept 12, Izaak Walton near Poolesville. Registration starts at 12:30pm with last shooter out at 4pm. Dinner is 4-6pm. Awards presented after last shooter finishes. Cost of \$40.00 includes 25 sporting clays targets, 25 skeet targets, and full dinner, optional classes for seniors and side by side shooters, trophies and prizes given in five categories. For more information, contact Terry Oland at 301-874-5269 or email at [terry.oland@comcast.net](mailto:terry.oland@comcast.net).

### **Ninth Annual Lion Country Supply Bird Dog Days**

Saturday, September 12, 2009, 9am-5pm. Numerous demonstrations and clinics including seminars by Rick Smith and others, vendors and conservation group displays, door prizes throughout the day. Pig roast lunch at 1pm. The event is free but for a free lunch, you must register in advance by calling 1-800-662-5202. There is also a bird dog challenge and sporting clays event at Warriors Mark Wingshooting Lodge and Kennels nearby. Trophies will be awarded at the end of the day at Lion Country Supply. Check out their website for more details: [www.lcsupply.com](http://www.lcsupply.com). RGS will be well represented at this event.

### **Charles E. Bechtel Chapter, Reading, PA Annual Sportsman's and Conservation Banquet**

Wednesday, September 16, 2009. Cocktails and raffles at 5:30pm, dinner at 7:00pm. Games, live and silent auctions and raffles. Contact Trig Kleppinger for tickets or information at 610-478-4500 or [kleppy@comcast.net](mailto:kleppy@comcast.net).

### **Backbone Mountain Chapter, Oakland Maryland Banquet**

Saturday, September 19. Cocktails and raffles at 5:30pm, dinner at 7:00pm. Games, live and silent auctions, door prizes and raffles. Contact Tom Gearhart at 301-268-0771 or email at [rskeeweris@pennswoods.net](mailto:rskeeweris@pennswoods.net) for tickets or more information

### **The Vintage Cup**

September 25-28, Pintail Point, Centerville, MD. Set up on Wednesday afternoon with the show running Thursday through Sunday. RGS will join a fantastic array of vendors. Help still needed to man our booth. For more information contact Dave Hansroth.

### **Combined New Jersey Chapters**

Sept 25-27, Phillipsburg, NJ Outdoor Expo, The Sussex and Pine Barrens Chapters are combining forces to man an RGS booth at this show. They are still looking for volunteers to help man their booth. For more information, contact Jim Dcsayc at 973-702-8380 or email at [jjdcsayc@yahoo.com](mailto:jjdcsayc@yahoo.com). or Mark Dreyfus at 732-364-3809 or email at [markd@netlabs.net](mailto:markd@netlabs.net).

### **Bonasa Chapter, Dubois PA Sporting Clays Shoot**

Sept 27, Firebird Wingshooting, Brookville, PA, Registration starts at 9:45 with the last shooter out at 1pm. Cost is \$50.00 and includes 100 sporting clays targets, complete lunch, trophies and raffles. For more information, contact Tom Noble at 814-590-9431 or [bonasa13@yahoo.com](mailto:bonasa13@yahoo.com)

## **October 2009**

### **Eastern Sponsor Hunt**

Weatherby's Lodge, Grand Lake Stream, Maine, October 15-18. Last year's hunt was a great success with plenty of grouse and woodcock in the local coverts. A limited number of slots are still available for this year's hunt. You do not need to be a sponsor to participate. In addition to great hunting, landlocked salmon fishing is available. Of course a lobster dinner is included along with other fine meals. Book signings, silent auction - this one has it all! Contact Alison Kelley at 412-262-4044 or email at [alisonk@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:alisonk@ruffedgrousesociety.org) for more information.

## **November 2009**

### **Thunderbird Chapter, Altoona, PA 28th Annual Sportsmen's and Conservation Banquet**

Friday, November 6, 2009, The Calvin House, Duncansville, PA. Cocktails and raffles at 6pm, dinner at 7:30pm. Auctions, games, raffles and door prizes. Contact Jim Farrell at 814-932-1307 for more information

**Note: Details on all upcoming events, except committee meetings, can be found on our website: [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).**

## **National News**

### ***Shawnee State Forest Uses RGS Trail Mix for Forest Trails***

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry recently re-opened recreation trails on the Shawnee State Forest lands. RGS donated our wildlife seed mix, Trail Mix, for use in reseeding some of the trails.

Seeding of the trails was accomplished in order to rehabilitate areas impacted by an April wildfire in the forest.

### ***New Equipment Will Enhance RGS Habitat Work***

RGS recently purchased two trucks and two trailers for use with the ASV/Terex PT-100 forestry loaders in the Midwest and the CAT loader in the Northeast. The new trucks and trailer will allow for the transport of the equipment to various locations for habitat work.

One truck and trailer will be used in the Midwest and the other in the Northeast. An additional truck is being supplied by the US Fish and Wildlife Service for use in Wisconsin. The remaining truck is also for use in the Northeast, and an additional trailer will be purchased very soon.

The new equipment was purchased with funds from several recently obtained grants.

### ***California Lawsuit Ends in Settlement Unfavorable for Healthy Forest Management***

A recent Northern California lawsuit ended with a settlement by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company agreeing to pay \$14.75 million as recompense for the 1999 Pendola fire in Plumas and Tahoe National Forests. The fire started due to a pine tree that fell onto a power distribution line.

Allegations that the fire caused damage to the lands, harm to the ecological habitat and loss of timber ended in the resulting settlement.

The decision is viewed by many to be a blow to conservation groups because fire, which is a natural act of nature that allows for forest renewal, was viewed as destructive.

### ***Wildlife Bill Introduced to Congress***

#### **Bill requires lengthy species monitoring, may be unrealistic**

In June this year Wisconsin Representative Ron Kind presented "American's Wildlife Heritage Act" (HR 2807) to Congress. The bill, though ostentatiously written to sustain wildlife and plants on federal public lands, may actually prove too cumbersome to be effective.

Requirements in the bill include overwhelming obligations placed upon federal land management agencies to monitor every species that may be impacted by a proposed activity. The manpower necessary to implement this requirement is beyond the current expertise available to these agencies, and there is no provision for additional funding. The large quantities of money that would be spent attempting to follow these guidelines would, perhaps, be better spent in accomplishing much needed habitat work on federal lands.

RGS intends to work with Representative Kind and other members of Congress to modify the language of the bill to better reflect more reasonable expectations.

***Welcome to new RGS Corporate Sponsor Connecticut Shotgun. They donated a 28-gauge RBL that will be used in an upcoming raffle or banquet.***

***Congratulations to our three 2009 National Raffle Winners: Jim Farrell from Altoona, Pennsylvania won the Dream Hunt, Andrew Lukashuk of Sussex, New York won a \$1000 Cabela's gift certificate and Kristin Dew of Elgin, Illinois won a pair of custom Russell Moccasin boots.***





Having completed a year and a half as a Regional director for RGS, I wanted to share a few thoughts with you. I have really enjoyed this work so far. I have met a lot of wonderful people that value our mission just as much as I do. These people are willing to give of their time and money to protect a resource we deem as invaluable. We have a lot in common; sharing a love of crisp fall days in the uplands with our favorite bird dog. We also share some real concerns about the future of grouse and woodcock hunting.

One of my primary goals so far has been to strengthen the confidence and relationship among my chapters, volunteers, members and RGS. Toward that end I have tried to be totally available and to communicate on every level with my chapters and volunteers. I have listened to your comments and concerns. I am pleased to report that RGS has been and is listening. Positive changes are in the wind. Stay tuned!

My other primary goal is, of course, to raise funds so that RGS can accomplish its mission of creating and protecting habitat for grouse, woodcock and other wildlife. During these tough economic times, my chapters have really responded positively. Revenues have been good and will only increase as the economy begins to recover. I wish to offer a heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers that have given their time and resources so that we will continue to thrive. ***Your efforts are greatly appreciated.*** Please remember that without you there would be no RGS. I look forward to working closely with you for a great fall season and beyond.

Wishing you wonderful fall days afield,

Dave



# Chapter Coverts

Chapter Newsletter- New England

## New Regional Director in New England

I'm excited about being your Regional Director in the Northeast and would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Tripp Way and I'm originally from Pennsylvania. However, please don't hold that against me as I've hunted throughout New England and share your appreciation for all it has to offer. With your help and support, I can help grow RGS' presence in New England – and I plan to stay!

Prior to RGS, my career was focused in sales – however, like most of you, my passion drove me to spend my free time Grouse and Woodcock hunting with Duke, my German Wirehaired Pointer. Since I graduated from college in 2003, learning about and pursuing grouse has been a large part of my life. By working for RGS, I hope to merge that passion with my career to focus on the true matter – Grouse, Woodcock and the young forests they need to survive and prosper.



I am looking forward to working in New England. Although I have not worked here before, I am aware of the rich culture and history of its coverts. I am equally aware of the number of Grouse... and Grouse hunters. My goal is to remain in this area, bind our members, and ultimately broaden our membership.

Many parts of New England are currently involved in chapter events, however some areas are not. I would highly encourage anyone in New England who is interested in volunteering or becoming a member of RGS to contact me immediately. I equally invite anyone who currently is not involved in Grouse hunting to contact me so that I can introduce them to our sport - and explain how RGS' focus on habitat can be of value to the wildlife. I would also encourage that members in New

4-2010 National News  
-09/10 National Raffle  
5: National News  
-Check out our new website  
-Centurion member wins Kimber  
-2010 National Raffle  
6: National News Cont.  
-RGS Hires Biologist for  
7-8: National News  
Cont.  
- '09/'10 National Raffle

England introduce their friends and family to RGS by getting them involved with our many events.



I am looking forward to the opportunity of working with all of you. I hope that you enjoyed a wonderful fall season afield... and as it slowly winds down and our focus turns to the Holidays – I want to remind all of our members that the best way to immediately help your local chapter is to volunteer your time to our mission, "Hunting and conservation of young forest species."

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, comments or hunting stories. My best.

Tripp Way

## RGS Committee Members

I would first like to wish all of you a Happy and Safe Holiday Season. I have had the opportunity to meet with some of you and we have begun planning our 2010 Banquet or Event. I am looking forward to meeting with all of you and working toward a GREAT 2010 season. RGS has many new ideas for 2010 and I look forward to discussing them personally with all of you at our next Committee Meeting.



RGS has introduced a new **banquet ticket for 2010: the Family/Household Membership**, this includes an RGS Membership for each attending household Member. What a great way to introduce your children and spouse to RGS and to conservation. We encourage all Members to bring their spouse and children to an RGS banquet. An increase in membership will ensure our success, assist us in securing grants, increase advertising rates and provide potential volunteers, donors, and future leaders. To accomplish this, we will now require that all banquet attendees become RGS members.



Each family member becomes a member with one magazine going out to the family. Instead of \$25 each, the whole family is provided a membership for only \$40. Those attending will also need to pay for their dinner. Hopefully this will lead to an increase in attendance as well as membership numbers. We need to emphasize the cost savings and benefits to the family membership as we introduce new members.

RGS will be budgeting money for projects and that chapters with successful events will be able to keep some of what they raise in a "Drummer Fund" for statewide projects.

*Top: Committee members Carole and Russ Dyer with their two Setters German Shorthair Pointer after a successful bag Bottom: Committee members N Anisfield & Terri Wilson's*

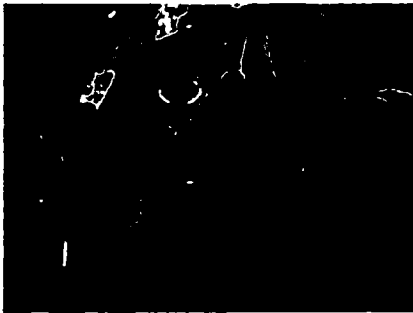
# Upcoming RGS Events

The hunting season is winding down and winter is on its way. A great way to celebrate the upcoming holidays is to attend an RGS event in your area and bring along a friend. Mark your calendar and make plans to join us. Below are listings of upcoming events in our region. For more information, check the RGS website at [www.RuffedGrouseSociety.org](http://www.RuffedGrouseSociety.org)

March 13th, Banquet, Colchester Vermont, at the Hampton Inn Contact: Tripp at (607) 743-0760 or [trippway@gmail.com](mailto:trippway@gmail.com)

April 17th, Banquet, Augusta, ME, Augusta Civic Center Contact: Tripp at (607) 743-0760 or [trippway@gmail.com](mailto:trippway@gmail.com)

# Call for Volunteers



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 is our Members. The Members who make things happen are called Committee Members. If you would like to become an RGS Committee

Member please contact: Tripp Way, RGS Regional Director (607) 743-0760 or e-mail [trippway@gmail.com](mailto:trippway@gmail.com).

**RGS Committee Member Make Things Happen—Become Part Of The Process-Join An RGS Committee In Your Area. We are currently seeking volunteers in the following locations.**

Connecticut -

New Hampshire -

Massachusetts -

Rhode Island -

Maine -

Vermont -



## Check Out the RGS Store Online— RGS-Mart—

Having trouble finding just the right item for a friend or relative? How about an RGS Membership as a gift for the hard-to-buy-for person on your list? You will find the perfect holiday or birthday gift for the hunter and outdoorsman on your list at the RGS Mart on line at [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org). If you purchase a gift membership during this holiday season, you will receive a \$10 Cabela's gift card for yourself (while supplies last). RGS Membership includes the RGS Magazine and invitations to all local events in your area. **This gift of an RGS Membership will keep on giving all year long!**



Check out the NEW RGS website [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)  
What do you think?-- Please send your thoughts, suggestions and comments  
to [trippway@gmail.com](mailto:trippway@gmail.com).



## 2009/ 2010 National Raffle

Don't Forget the 2009/2010 RGS National Raffle Model 21 Baby Frame 28-Gauge Shotgun, Made Famous by Winchester Raffle Tickets Make Great Christmas, New Year's and Birthday Gifts!! If you would like to purchase a chance at this fantastic gun, please contact Regional Director Tripp Way – (607) 743-0760 or [trippway@gmail.com](mailto:trippway@gmail.com)

**N I W —**

If you would like to purchase tickets, please contact Regional Director, Tripp Way at (607) 743-0760 or [trippway@gmail.com](mailto:trippway@gmail.com)

## **National News**

### **Have you seen us lately?**

#### ***Brand New Website Generates Growing Interest***

RGS recently launched a complete revision of our website, [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org). News updates, regional sporting events, exciting raffles and detailed information about habitat work are now in a format that is easier to read, navigate and explore. Great RGS merchandise, along with special deals on high-end shotguns, are available by clicking the "Shop RGS" tab on the homepage. Check us out today – and take your grouse hunting to the next level.

### **Centurion Member Wins Kimber**

Charles Hulbert of Tewksbury, Massachusetts recently became a Centurion member and won a Kimber Valier Grade II shotgun.

For every 10 new Centurions that join the Ruffed Grouse Society a raffle is held and a Kimber – or comparable shotgun – is awarded to the winner. To learn about becoming a Centurion, which begins at the \$1,000 donation level, call our membership department at 412-262-4044.

### **2010 National Raffle**

*Win a Model 21 "Baby Frame" 28-Gauge Shotgun first made famous by Winchester*

This one of a kind gun features 28" barrels, choked IC/M with two beads, a straight English stock crafted from AAA fancy feathercrotch walnut to a checkered butt, and a 14 ½" LOP. The approximate retail value is \$32,000.

If you're interested in a chance to win this gun, tickets are \$100.00 and can be purchased through your local Regional Director at 607.821.7744 or by contacting RGS headquarters at 412-262-4044. Up to 1,500 tickets will be sold.

Last year's National Raffle winner, James Farrell, won the upland bird dream hunt, which included attending the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota this past October.

### **New York/ New England Wildlife Biologist Joins RGS Team**

Andrew P. Weik joined the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) as New England regional wildlife biologist, and will begin his work in the new year. Weik will be responsible for implementing on-the-ground forest management, landowner and land manager education programs throughout New England.

Weik's extensive experience includes five years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Northeast Region at Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge. Moosehorn is the only national wildlife refuge dedicated to woodcock management. His work at Moosehorn, along with his lengthy work history in various wildlife programs, makes Weik a superior fit for the RGS position.

One specific project that Weik hopes to see through to conclusion this year is the revision of the RGS publication, "A Woodcock in the Hand" (Sepik, 1994). The booklet is unique in that it details tips on examining, aging, and sexing American woodcock as well as information on population monitoring and conservation. Though currently out of print, the need and interest in the booklet have not waned.

NEW--

Tickets \$100.00 Each - Up To 1,500 Tickets Will Be Sold Winner To Be Drawn June 30, 2010

If you would like to order ticket please contact Regional Director, Tripp Way at 607.743.0760 or [TrippWay@gmail.com](mailto:TrippWay@gmail.com). (To Order, please print order form below)

Established in 1961, 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.

Information on the RGS, its mission, management projects and membership can be found on the web at: [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

Please forward this on to your friends. If you have someone that wishes to receive this, have them e-mail me their address. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to post information that fits this newsletter - [trippway@gmail.com](mailto:trippway@gmail.com).



# Ruffed Grouse Society 2009-2010 National Raffle



To purchase raffle tickets contact  
Tripp Way, Regional Director  
607-743-0760 or [trippway@gmail.com](mailto:trippway@gmail.com)

or Mail Coupon To:

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**  
451 McCormick Road  
Coraopolis, PA 15108

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tickets @ \$100.00 Each =

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed

CHECK (Payable to RGS)     CASH

CREDIT CARD

CC # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## Model 21

## 28-Gauge Shotgun

(Available in the form of  
by Winchester)

This one of a kind gun features 28" barrels choked IC/M with two beads, a straight English stock crafted from AAA fancy featherrotch walnut to a checkered butt, and a 14 1/2" L.O.P.

The D.A.H. is 2 3/8", D.A.C. is 1 1/2", pitch is 5" and the cast is neutral.

The beavertail forend has an ebony insert in the tip. It has a single selective trigger and the RGS logo is engraved in gold on the bottom of the receiver.

Approximate  
retail value:



Winner to be drawn on  
**June 30, 2010**  
at RGS headquarters in  
Coraopolis, Pennsylvania.

*\*Winner is responsible for up to 10% tax*

Donation for each ticket is \$100.00,  
Up to 1,500 tickets to be sold.





*ruffed* GROUSE  
SOCIETY

2008  
*Report to  
Sponsors*



---

---

## 2008 REPORT TO SPONSORS

---

---

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WAYNE JACOBSON - RGS NATIONAL BOARD PRESIDENT

This year the Ruffed Grouse Society has maintained momentum in creating habitat for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and all the wildlife that shares their young-forest habitat. Some of our accomplishments in 2008 have been detailed in the following annual report, and wouldn't have been achieved without the hard work of our dedicated members and volunteers and the generosity of our many contributors.

In 2008 we launched our third capital campaign - RUFF - or Restoring Upland Forests' Future. Our goal is to raise 5 million dollars, funds will be used to endow our regional biologists and purchase a building for headquarters. The campaign is expected to take several years to complete, and is off to a great start. To date monies totally nearly half the goal - or 2.1 million dollars - have been pledged or received. We look forward to achieving our goal in the next several years, thereby strengthening our financial position for the future.

Several new board and staff members have been added this

year - their energy has helped to renew our enthusiasm in our mission and places us in a vibrant position for positive transitions in the new year.

There have been significant changes in our business model this year as well, a new banquet incentive program was launched and a cooperative project that is the first of its kind was completed between a state forest and RGS, to name a few. Changes like these, though they may come with initial difficulties to surmount at their inception, will enable us to be better prepared for obstacles that may appear on our horizon in the future.

The difficulty of our current economic times has impacted almost every aspect of our life - and RGS has not avoided being affected. However, our careful management of funds and better business practices will enable us to weather this storm and continue to impact the creation of habitat for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other wildlife far into the future.

### RGS CEO INDUCTED INTO NYS OUTDOORSMEN HALL OF FAME

Michael D. Zagata, executive director and CEO of RGS, has been inducted into the New York State Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame (NYSOHOF).

One of 11 new inductees, Zagata, a native of Otsego County, New York, is a former commissioner of New York's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The selection committee noted that Zagata was, (as commissioner) "...a strong supporter of programs to increase participation in outdoor sports by youth and women."

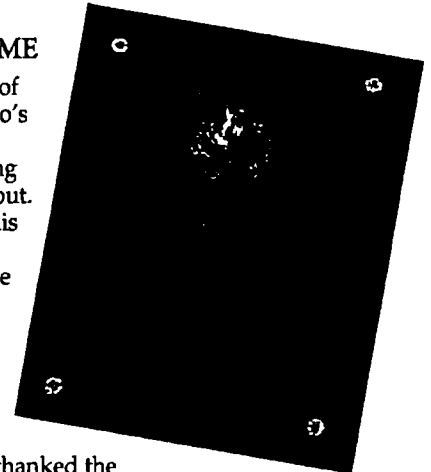
In making the announcement, NYSOHOF President Leo Maloney said, "Mike Zagata was selected as an outdoor professional who as DEC commissioner made significant contributions to our outdoor heritage beyond what the job required. During his tenure, he supported many programs to increase participation by women and youngsters, including Free Fishing Days and Becoming an Outdoors Woman.

He was also active in supporting stream access projects for

the physically handicapped; emergency legislation to stop the spread of whirling disease in state fisheries,

banning the snagging of salmon in Lake Ontario's tributaries, and the introduction of stocking larger two-year-old trout. These initiatives and his many other achievements will have a positive impact on future generations of outdoorsmen and women," Maloney said.

Upon learning of his induction, Zagata thanked the board; his wife Beth for her unquestioning support; and all those who supported his nomination. "This is truly a great honor, but with every honor comes a responsibility and being elected into the NYSOHOF is no exception," Zagata said. "Because of that newfound responsibility, I invite my fellow hall-of-famers to come together, for the good of the natural resources we are charged with stewarding for future generations, and work through the organizations we represent to push for increased support for, and proper use of, the Conservation Fund, educate the public and legislature about the environmental and economic benefits that derive from healthy fish and wildlife populations and, educate the public and legislature about the need to properly manage our waterways, fields and forests to provide for a diversity of wildlife - both hunted and non-hunted."



Mike and his wife Beth at the New York State Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame induction ceremonies.

### CAPITAL CAMPAIGN GAINS MOMENTUM

This year RGS announced RUFF - or Restoring Upland Forests' Future - Capital Campaign. The goal is to raise \$5 million dollars in the next two years. The money will be used to fully endow our team of biologists and to reduce operating costs by purchasing a building for the Ruffed Grouse Society's offices. To date 2.1 million dollars have been pledged or received.

---

---

## 2008 REPORT TO SPONSORS

---

---

### 2008 UNDER BROKEN WINGS RECIPIENT



Brittany Zebrasky attended the Ruffed Grouse Society's National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt (NGWH) at the invitation of the Under Broken Wings (UBW) program. She is the third participant in as many years to attend the hunt at the invitation of UBW. Jerry Snetsinger, the driving force behind the organization, believes that the event is "about letting these kids experience things we take for granted. When they see the dogs jump out of the kennels, their faces light up! And when they shoot their first bird, it's such a thrill."

Jim Hayett – a member of the RGS board of directors and one of the founders of UBW – remembers Brittany's hunt well. "The best part that will always stay in my heart was the moment I yelled, "shoot" to Brittany as the grouse took off and made a sharp left turn in the only open part of the forest. Still not sure that she downed the bird, we sent in the shorthairs. Our prayers were answered. Knotty retrieved [Brittany's] first grouse!"

Brittany and her family hunted with Hayett and Tom Knapp. Knapp – Benelli's American Birdhunter TV show host – was on-site to obtain footage for a future show. The show, featuring UBW and Brittany, first aired on the Outdoor Channel on February 9, 2009.

After two days of hunting, Brittany and her team had harvested enough grouse and woodcock to score 54 points and take second place in the NGWH Division III.

During the NGWH banquet, 11 different donors each pledged \$1,000 to purchase an RGS Life Sponsorship for Brittany. She received a Kimber Valier Grade II 20-gauge side-by-side shotgun as part of her Life Sponsorship. A UBW vest was also auctioned off during the festivities. This item, in addition to a mystery raffle held in concert with RGS, raised \$2,500.00 for UBW that evening.

Mike Zagata, UBW board member and CEO of RGS, said "The UBW program is really what it's all about. RGS and the UBW board work to involve youth in a sport we are passionate about and working with kids like Brittany is all the reward one could ever expect."

### RGS BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEW MEMBERS



William B. Johnson recently joined the RGS board of directors. He has been involved in the forest products industry since 1973 when his father founded Johnson Timber Corporation. The family-owned chip mill has grown from the original mill, located in Hayward, WI, to mills in Ashland and Park Falls, WI. They also operate forestry operations in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, producing over 400,000 cords of roundwood annually.

Mr. Johnson (better known as "Butch") has been active with the American Forest & Paper Association since the early 1980s, as well as chairman of the Governor's Council on Forestry, in Wisconsin, from 1984 to 1998. He has also served on the state's Racing Commission, State Fair Commission, and chaired the State Lottery Board. Butch has been president of the Hayward Community Schools Board of Education, and held numerous positions within the Republican Party. He is currently a Director of Johnson Bank and on the board of the Nature Conservancy.

Butch and his wife, Patricia, live in Hayward, WI. They have six children ranging in age from 32 to 22. He enjoys watching his children (and grandchildren) participate in their various activities in school and sporting events. Butch has been a proud supporter of RGS for many years, and has even purchased a lifetime membership for both of his grandchildren.

Jim Hayett is a new member of the RGS board of directors. Born and raised in Wisconsin, Jim has been an avid grouse hunter for over 4 decades. His father, Art Hayett, first took Jim grouse hunting in the late 60's. "I didn't shoot my first grouse until 1972, [with] my dad's 1930 Browning."



Jim has been selling stocks and bonds since 1980. He owns his own business, a small fee-based money management firm near Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His company, Morgan-Aly Financial Group, is named after his two daughters. His wife of 19 years is Shellee.

Jim has been a participating member of the RGS David Uihlein Chapter for over 20 years. For the last 17 he has served as Chairman.

He also serves on the board for St. Rose's Family and Youth Center, a Wisconsin child welfare organization founded in 1848.

John C. Oliver recently joined the RGS National Board of Directors. John was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, and attended both Roanoke College in Virginia and the University of Colorado.

While studying in Colorado, John enjoyed the area so much he spent the next 30 years of his life there as a professional ski instructor. His son Chadwick carries on the family tradition, and is a competitive snowboarder at the University of Colorado.

John's father was an avid fisherman and bird hunter. He opened up the world of field sports to John when he was very young. Today John has been hunting birds for over 50 years and has been on shooting trips to many different parts of the world. "Without a doubt," he concedes, "the ruffed grouse is still the king."

Several years ago John moved to Brays Island Plantation, South Carolina. Snow is rare, and he can work his Elhew pointers most of the year. John's only complaint is that he hasn't seen any ruffed grouse in the area.

"Since I spent the first half of my life chasing ruffed grouse, I now look forward to promoting their existence so future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy this incredible bird," he said.

George S. Rich is a managing partner of GRI Fund, L.P., an investment partnership specializing in consumer service businesses. George has served on the board of directors for many organizations throughout his career, and has lately become a director on the board for RGS.

George has a BA from Hobart College in Geneva, New York and a MBA from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He also holds the rank of colonel in the Maryland Defense Force.

In addition to being a member of the Board of Trustees of the Maryland Historical Society, George is also Vice President of the Maryland Military Historical Society.



## CLEARING THE WAY FOR DIVERSE HABITAT IN OHIO COOPERATIVE PROJECT IS FIRST OF ITS KIND

RGS recently signed an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to help maintain native flora and other wildlife habitat on approximately 700 acres of reclaimed mine lands on the Wayne National Forest in western Ohio. The Forest Service is battling invasive shrubs, including native 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.

Vast acres of reclaimed mine lands in Ohio and surrounding states hold great potential for the creation of diverse wildlife habitat, especially when they are part of a public lands system. For example the Wayne National Forest covers a territory of 238,800 acres, most of which is mature forest. Some of the mine lands on Wayne, which have been reclaimed to grass, will remain areas of native grasses. These will provide much needed habitat for grassland songbirds and possibly even quail. Other portions of the former mine lands will be allowed to succeed to native shrubs and small trees. This stage of succession will provide prime habitat for grouse, woodcock, deer, and an entirely different group of songbirds.

One of the main difficulties in meeting these management goals are exotic shrubs. These invasive species tend to establish themselves on these sites more rapidly than the native species. The many birds that eat the seeds of these exotic shrubs further accelerate their establishment. Wayne Forest staff members are attempting to control these extremely fast growing, unwanted plants during the early stages of habitat progression.

"This is probably the largest cooperative project RGS has ever done with the Forest Service and the first of any kind for RGS in the Wayne," noted Senior Biologist Mark Banker, who is overseeing the project for RGS. "The Forest Service staff and local RGS members have really been the catalyst for getting things rolling. It's a very ambitious project, but a unique opportunity for RGS to support early successional habitat management in this national forest."

Garry Coopr and Art Martin handle logistics as the project began on August 18. Coopr, the architect of the cooperative agreement, and Martin are Wayne National Forest staff members.

RGS and the Forest Service will share the cost of up to 500 hours of operation of a Caterpillar 297C multi-terrain loader, bucketing 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.

"The logistics of such a large project are a little complicated," explained Banker, "but it's all worth it because at the end of the day this equipment makes us much more efficient at managing habitat."

The project, which began in late August, was completed by year-end with continuing work in 2009.

### WOODCOCK STAMP PROPOSAL

Dedicated woodcock hunters tend to be passionate about their sport and the well-camouflaged critter that is the focus of their attention. So it isn't surprising that a cadre of woodcock enthusiasts has been promoting the idea of a federal "woodcock stamp."

Although some of the details of this proposal are still being ironed out, suffice it to say that a woodcock stamp would be analogous to the federal duck stamp and the other species-specific stamps required by various states (pheasant, wild turkey, trout, etc.). Sportsmen and women who wish to hunt woodcock in the US would be required to purchase this stamp before doing so.

The cost of the proposed stamp is uncertain, but probably in the \$10 range. Administration of the stamp program and the disbursement of the revenues generated through the sale of a stamp would be the responsibility of the US Fish & Wildlife Service. The Service and state resource management agencies would deduct a proportion of the stamp revenues for administrative overhead. The remainder of the revenues would target woodcock

conservation. It has not yet been determined if conservation activities funded by stamp revenues would be limited to on-the-ground habitat management or would include research projects as well.

Woodcock need our help; which is why RGS continuously works to help the public, the media and state and federal land management agencies understand the role of forest habitat management in the conservation of forest wildlife. Any proposal to establish a "woodcock stamp" will increase the amount of funds available for woodcock conservation and most likely will decrease the hunting constituency for this magnificent bird.

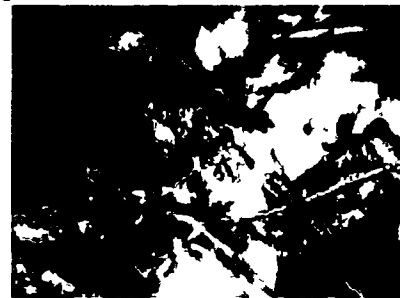


Photo by T. Flanigan

---

---

## 2008 REPORT TO SPONSORS

---

---

### NEW STAFF REGIONAL DIRECTORS



Boyd Cooke has been named the RGS Northeast regional director to better serve upland bird hunters and other sportsmen in the New England area. Cooke lives in Stonington, Connecticut, and will oversee regional activities in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

A retired naval commander, Cooke is an avid grouse hunter and is active in the Southern New England Chapter of the North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association. Among his responsibilities with RGS will be broadening relationships with state natural resources agencies and other conservation-minded groups in addition to working with regional chapters on fund-raising activities and habitat restoration projects.

"Ruffed grouse and woodcock have been my passion for as long as I can remember," Cooke said. "And to be able to work on behalf of these magnificent game birds is like a dream come true. I look forward to working with RGS and the many New England chapters in my region. And, much like RGS, I'm committed to improving habitat so that future generations will be able to enjoy the thunder of a flushing grouse as much as I do."



Dave Hansroth has assumed the duties of RGS regional director covering southcentral and southeastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and northern Virginia. He holds a BS in wildlife management from West Virginia University and an MA in environmental biology from Hood College. Hansroth, a resident of

Gaithersburg, Maryland, is a community activist and a longtime RGS member. Prior to his RGS employment, he served 7 terms as president of the Maryland RGS Chapter.

Initially, Hansroth is scheduled to oversee 19 chapters and the projects in which they are involved.

An avid grouse hunter who trains his own bird dogs, Hansroth approaches his new assignment with RGS from the experience of an association of many years with the conservation organization. "He knows the chapters' concerns and will bring a fresh perspective to the region and to the many chapters he will represent," said Mike Zagata, Executive Director and CEO of RGS as he announced the hiring of the new regional director.

"As a chapter president, I understand the satisfactions and frustrations that come in obtaining the goals a chapter hopes to achieve," Hansroth said. "My plan is to capitalize on that knowledge by increasing communication between the chapters so they can share their own experiences with each other. It is also my intent to get each of the DNRs within my region to spend as much time and energy on upland bird projects as they do on deer and turkey.

"Habitat is critical to the success of wildlife populations," he continued, "and ultimately our enjoyment of hunting

grouse, woodcock and other upland bird and game animals as well as our enjoyment in observing wildlife - both game and non-game."



Ken Walte III has joined RGS as the New York area regional director. As a former principal in Stonewood LLC, Ken has 14 years of sales experience representing firearms, ammunition and accessory manufacturers throughout New England.

He and his wife Debbie have two children. Ken is an avid grouse and woodcock hunter, and he particularly enjoys hunting when accompanied by family and friends. He also collects vintage American shotguns, and enjoys reading outdoor books. In addition to being a long-time member of the Old Pat's Society, RGS and Parker Gun Collectors Association, Ken is a patron member of the National Rifle Association (NRA).

### HEADQUARTERS' STAFF

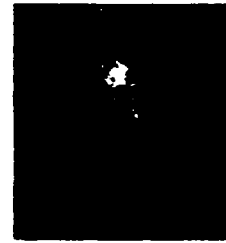


Julie Caugherty joined RGS headquarters staff as the new Director of Membership and Marketing. She has close to ten years of marketing experience, and has worked primarily with sports' teams and non-profit organizations. She is excited about being a part of RGS, and is looking forward to utilizing her marketing background in her

new position. "Everyone here is very hardworking and motivated to grow and expand our programs for future generations," she notes. Her plans to increase awareness of the society and grow membership are going to keep her pretty busy.

Hailing from rural Indiana County, Pennsylvania, Julie is happy to call Pittsburgh home. She majored in communications at Robert Morris University in Moon Township, Pennsylvania and recently completed her MBA at Chatham University in Pittsburgh.

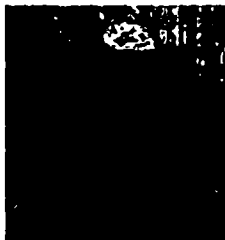
The best part of living in Pittsburgh is simple for Julie. "I love the Penguins," she says, "and I go to as many games as I possibly can."



Anna Stubna took over as editor of the RGS magazine this year. The former editor for 26 years, Paul Carson, retired and is currently enjoying life with his family and new puppy. Anna spent nearly three years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in West Africa from 2005 through 2007 and also worked as a freelance writer prior to joining RGS.

Though Paul left some pretty big shoes to fill, Anna is looking forward to putting together a magazine with the help of some talented freelance writers and photographers. "There is so much potential in the magazine to attract new members and keep current volunteers aware of what's happening in RGS," she said. "I'm looking forward to the challenge of putting together a magazine that can begin to realize these objectives."

## STAFF PROMOTIONS



Gary Zimmer, 7-year RGS wildlife biologist, was recently promoted to senior regional biologist and together with several gifts to the RUFF campaign designated to support the Wisconsin regional biologist position is now the Sally B. Searle Senior Regional Biologist. Zimmer has nearly 30 years of experience working in the wildlife profession.

His current projects include partnerships with the US Forest Service on the Chequamegon/Nicolet, Hiawatha and Ottawa National Forests. "[These projects] are really taking off. I'm looking forward to working with the Forest Service ... to greatly increase the effectiveness of our management projects on these forests," Zimmer said.

He is also planning to have RGS equipment on the ground in the Upper Midwest in the near future. This equipment will be used to assist private landowners in managing habitats for ruffed grouse, woodcock and other young forest wildlife. "This is a program that we have been working on for several years, and has the potential to have a significant impact on declining young forest habitats across the region," Zimmer added.

In addition to his wildlife work, Zimmer still finds time to dedicate to youth. Among his activities are organizing wildlife field trips and educational seminars for students of all ages, and coaching girls' softball.

Executive Director Mike Zagata noted, "Gary continues to do excellent work ... this much deserved upgrade is a direct result of Gary's professionalism and his many accomplishments on behalf of wildlife."

Zimmer joins Mark Banker as the second biologist promoted to the senior level, in recognition of outstanding contributions to RGS. A Wisconsin native, Zimmer will continue his work in the five state Western Great Lakes region in the same capacity as present.

## NEW HEAD OF RGS CANADA NAMED



Gary McWilliams started as RGS Canadian Coordinator this year. He has been laying the groundwork to reestablish a Ruffed Grouse Society in Canada Board of Directors and hopes to hold three of what he terms "super banquets" in 2008.

McWilliams' vision for the board of directors is to have two representatives serving from each of the regions - Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. He has sent out letters to people he believes may be interested and is open to talking to anyone who would like to be a part of the board.

While working on putting together a board, McWilliams is also working on a marketing plan for the organization. "Once the new board is established, we plan to hold one major fund-raising banquet in each geographical area," he said, adding the new directors will hopefully recruit volunteers for the banquet committees.

In addition to his work with RGS, McWilliams also runs a festival and event consulting service.



*Kayley White, wearing her new binoculars, is pictured here with her family's Gordon setter, Sydney, in Amberg, Wisconsin.*

## YOUTH POSTER & ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED

This spring we held our first junior RGS poster and essay contest. Thank you to everyone who sent in a poster or essay and helped to make our first junior contest a success.

The winner of the poster contest is 8-year-old Kayley White from Little Chute, Wisconsin. The topic was "Show some kinds of animals you might meet in a forest that's young and thick." Kayley put a lot of work into her winning poster. She even listed all the animals included in her forest drawing.

Kayley won a pair of 8x22 Steiner binoculars, and plans to use them on her next outdoor adventure with her dad, Mark White. She likes to save pictures from the RGS magazine to hang on her wall, so she was happy to hear she will also be receiving her very own copy of the magazine with her RGS junior membership.

Owen Morgan, a 12-year-old from Wytheville, Virginia, wrote his winning essay on this topic, "Describe your favorite day in the grouse woods." He won a Tri-Star Youth Model 20-gauge shotgun, an RGS membership, and a day in the woods with RGS biologist Mark Banker learning about young forests.



---

---

## 2008 REPORT TO SPONSORS

---

---

### 2007-2008 NATIONAL RAFFLE WINNERS

The 2008 RGS national raffles featured a 2008 Chevy Tahoe and a 2007 AAHE 28-gauge Parker shotgun. The winner of the Chevy was Jim Chase of Shelby Township, Michigan.

The winner of the Parker was Seth Cosans of Middletown, Delaware. Valued at \$49,000, the Parker features a beaver-tail fore-end, 26" barrels with twin ivory beads and an intricate engraving pattern. The shotgun was provided in partnership with Remington Arms.



*Jim Chase (l) from Shelby Township, Michigan receives the keys to his new Chevy suburban from Kevin Beaver, general sales manager at Wright Chevrolet in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. Jim won the Chevy Tahoe 2008-2009 RGS national raffle in April 2009, and was able to upgrade to a Suburban.*



*Seth Cosans, from Middletown, Delaware, poses with his new 28-gauge parker shotgun along with Mike Zagata, RGS Executive Director and CEO. Seth, a life-long outdoorsman, won the gun in the 2008 RGS national raffle. He and his wife, Kathleen, traveled to RGS headquarters to pick up the gun. "I'm probably never going to shoot it," he admitted. Seth works for a law enforcement and public safety distributor, and is an NRA benefactor member.*

### PRINT OF THE YEAR

The RGS 2009 Print of the Year is Autumn Delight by Georgette Kanach of Gray, Maine. Prints will be featured at all RGS 2009 banquets, and the original painting will be auctioned off at the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in October, 2009.

Georgette Kanach, a nature artist and also a Master Maine guide, has a lifelong love of nature. Her range of art includes paintings, relief carving, airbrushing and jewelry making. One of her specialties is working with natural mediums, and her hand-carved and wood-burned countertops and mantelpieces are showcased in many homes across the country.

When she isn't working on her art, Georgette spends time on her other passion – hunting. "I do what I love and love what I do, and that is grouse hunting with my Brittany's, Alex and Diamond, and nature art," Georgette says. To see more of her artwork, visit [www.mainenatureart.com](http://www.mainenatureart.com).



### AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE 2008 CENTERFOLD ARTIST

Scott Ward is a nature artist currently residing in Unadilla, New York. He was selected to complete illustrations for the 2008 grouse centerfold in the magazine.

From his earliest work, nature's diversity and beauty have captivated Scott's attention. He began to study drawing and painting in his early teens. Throughout high school and then college, Scott studied art revolving around the human figure. His appreciation for the work and command of media by traditional Master Painters has inspired many of his works.

He holds a BFA in illustration and a minor in fine arts from the Fashion Institute of Technology, in New York City. Throughout his academic career, Scott received awards for excellence in painting and drawing. His work has been

published in Field & Stream magazine and featured in Mead Corporation's Timepeace calendar line. Galleries in New York City, Washington D.C. and Tokyo, Japan have also exhibited his work. Many of his pieces also reside in private collections in Canada, England and Japan.

Some of Scott's personal favorites from the RGS centerfold series include the great horned owl, red fox and young grouse – which were featured in the summer issue centerfold. All of the paintings and drawings featured in 2008, and prints of these works, are available for sale. For more information about these works, his private collection or custom people and pet portraits contact Scott Ward at [drawsart@hotmail.com](mailto:drawsart@hotmail.com).

***"This is truly an historic opportunity for sportsmen and women across the nation. RGS members can be proud that the Society is playing such a key role in this effort to safeguard the future of hunting in America."***

- Dan Dessecker, RGS Director of Conservation Policy

## THE VOICE OF HUNTERS A SPORTING CONSERVATION COUNCIL UPDATE

When the Sporting Conservation Council was founded in 2006, it was with the goal to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretaries of the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture on wildlife conservation and sport hunting related issues.

Two years later, Dan Dessecker, Director of Conservation Policy for RGS and an inaugural member of the council, is optimistic about the progress being made. "The Ruffed Grouse Society and other leaders in wildlife conservation have really stepped up to the plate to work with the current administration on behalf of wildlife and hunting," says Dessecker.

Two meetings of the Sporting Conservation Council in 2008 have harvested results. In spring the Council took part in a Washington D.C. centennial celebration honoring President Theodore Roosevelt's commitment to hunting and conservation.

The event was held exactly 100 years after Roosevelt's Conference of Governors from May 13-15, 1908. Roosevelt called the 1908 conference together in order to address the environmental concerns raised by the rapid industrialization occurring in the nation at the time. It was an important step in our nation's history when, during the opening speech at the conference, Roosevelt declared environmental conservation to be a national duty.

"As we celebrate the past achievements of one of history's greatest conservationists, Theodore Roosevelt, we look ahead toward securing his legacy through the

upcoming White House Conference on Wildlife Conservation," said Dessecker at the event.

In June the Sporting Conservation Council met again, this time to refine the recommendations they crafted for the White House Conference on Wildlife Conservation, held in mid-September. Dessecker is chairing the work group that is developing recommendations designed to enhance habitat for game wildlife on our National Forests and other federal lands. Aiding state fish and wildlife agencies in sustaining habitats sufficient to maintain populations of ruffed grouse and other game wildlife at state goals is the foundation of this effort.

The outcome of the White House Conference will be to identify solutions to the issues currently impeding hunting opportunities on federal lands. A 10-year Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Plan will also be created, and will outline concrete steps to move President Bush's Executive Order 13443, signed last August and designed to enhance federal land hunting opportunities, into the next decade.

The White House Conference will be pivotal in shaping future conservation policy in the United States. "This is truly an historic opportunity for sportsmen and women across the nation," says Dessecker, "RGS members can be proud that the Society is playing such a key role in this effort to safeguard the future of hunting in America."

The **RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY** is a not-for-profit entity dedicated to improving the environment for the ruffed grouse, the American woodcock and many other species of forest wildlife. The accompanying financial statements include the accounts of the Society's headquarters operations only and do not include the accounts and operations of the Society's various chapters.

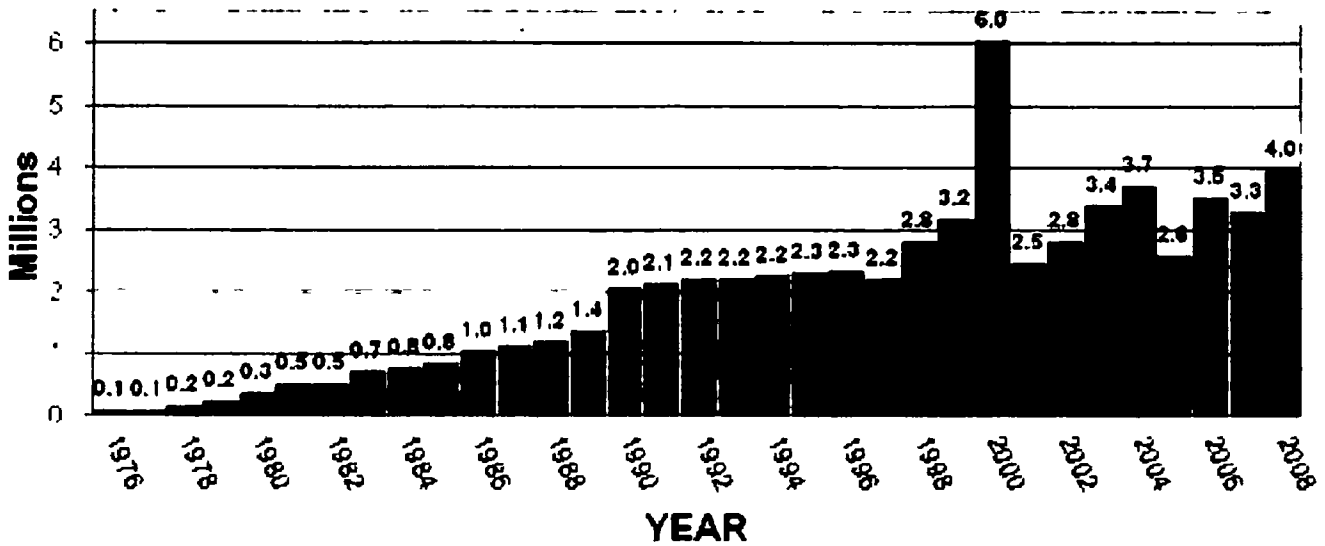
The Society is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Income from certain activities not directly related to the Society's tax-exempt purpose, however, is subject to taxation as unrelated business income.

Notes pertaining to the Ruffed Grouse Society audit are on file at the Ruffed Grouse Society headquarters.

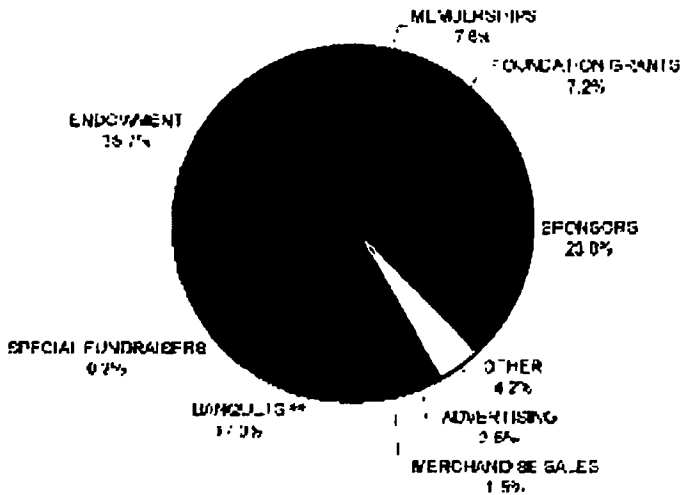


2008 REPORT TO SPONSORS

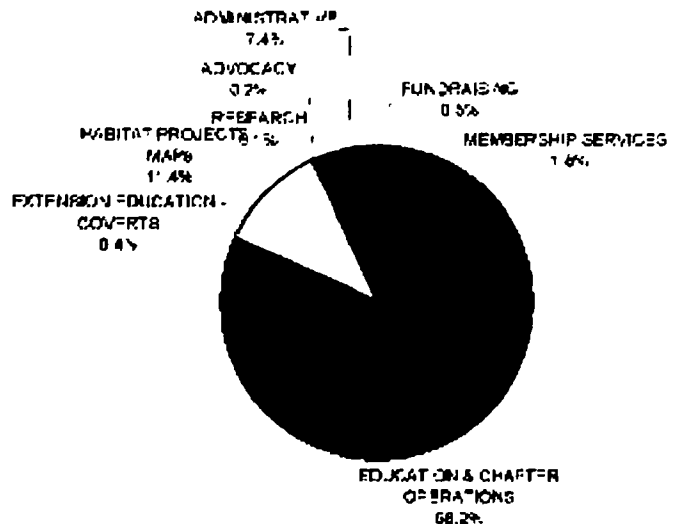
**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY INCOME**  
(Includes Direct Contributions to FWF)



**SOURCES OF INCOME**  
(2008)



**WHERE YOUR DOLLAR GOES**  
2008



\*\*BANQUETS does not include payments for Regular and sponsor memberships made via banquets. these payments are included with all others in the categories "MEMBERSHIPS" and "SPONSORS."

---



---

**2008 REPORT TO SPONSORS**

---



---

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**DECEMBER 31, 2008**

(With comparative totals for the year ended December 31, 2007)

<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>
Cash & cash equivalents, temporarily restricted, designated & undesignated	\$ 1,666,210	\$ 897,795
Short-term investments	\$ 1,966,563	\$ 2,807,210
Accounts receivable	\$ 139,354	\$ 186,495
Pledges receivable	\$ 1,419,373	\$ 301,465
Contribution receivable	\$ 66,406	\$ 70,518
Inventory	\$ 264,339	\$ 192,370
Land held for resale	\$ 193,652	\$ 193,652
Property & equipment (net)	\$ 245,691	\$ 296,542
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 5,961,588</b>	<b>\$ 4,946,047</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Line of Credit	\$ 708,609	\$ 407,987
Accounts Payable	\$ 99,872	\$ 134,655
Payable - retirement fund	\$ 25,963	\$ 26,471
Accrued expenses	\$ 18,750	\$ 18,797
Deferred revenue	\$ 44,921	\$ 39,881
Notes payable	\$ 79,851	\$ 56,442
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$ 977,966</b>	<b>\$ 684,233</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted		
Undesignated (net deficit)	\$ 1,018,635	\$ 631,179
Designated	\$ 3,443,317	\$ 3,245,585
Temporarily restricted	\$ 521,670	\$ 385,050
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 4,983,622</b>	<b>\$ 4,261,814</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 5,961,588</b>	<b>\$ 4,946,047</b>

---



---

**2008 REPORT TO SPONSORS**

---



---

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY  
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
DECEMBER 31, 2008**

(With comparative totals for the year ended December 31, 2007)

	2008	2007
<b>REVENUES, GAINS &amp; OTHER SUPPORT</b>		
Contributions	\$ 3,512,056	\$ 1,551,005
Membership dues	\$ 382,095	\$ 389,537
Proceeds from banquets/events	\$ 704,509	\$ 817,951
Sales of merchandise (net)	\$ 60,294	\$ 41,451
Advertising income	\$ 143,172	\$ 154,127
Fundraising	\$ 8,814	\$ 11,620
Investment income	\$ 90,175	\$ 95,520
Realized gain (loss) on sale of investments	\$ (95,772)	\$ 187,400
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	\$ (878,856)	\$ 6,193
Gain (loss) on disposal of property & equipment	\$ 3,097	\$ (5,597)
Miscellaneous income	\$ 36,267	\$ 29,073
<b>TOTAL REVENUES, GAINS &amp; OTHER SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$ 3,965,851</b>	<b>\$ 3,278,280</b>
<b>FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES</b>		
<i>Program services</i>		
Membership services	\$ 382,797	\$ 381,155
General education & chapter operations	\$ 2,212,438	\$ 2,210,899
Habitat projects	\$ 369,820	\$ 370,744
Extension education	\$ 12,976	\$ 11,381
Research	\$ 3,244	\$ 3,893
Advocacy	\$ 6,488	\$ 5,989
<i>Supporting services</i>		
Management & general	\$ 240,059	\$ 242,503
Fundraising	\$ 16,221	\$ 15,271
<b>TOTAL FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 3,244,043</b>	<b>\$ 3,241,835</b>
Changes in net assets	\$ 721,808	\$ 36,445
<b>NET ASSETS BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 4,261,814</b>	<b>\$ 4,225,369</b>
<b>NET ASSETS END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 4,983,622</b>	<b>\$ 4,261,814</b>

---

---

2008 REPORT TO SPONSORS

---

---



Four Gateway Center, 9th Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15227  
Tel: 412-281-8771 • Fax: 412-281-7000  
e-mail: info@louisplung.com

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT**

To the Board of Directors of  
The Ruffed Grouse Society

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of The Ruffed Grouse Society (a nonprofit organization), as of December 31, 2008, and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. The prior year summarized comparative information has been derived from The Ruffed Grouse Society's 2007 financial statements and, in our report dated May 30, 2008, we expressed an unqualified opinion on those financial statements.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes consideration of internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of The Ruffed Grouse Society as of December 31, 2008, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the basic financial statements taken as a whole. The schedules of functional expenses and unrestricted and temporarily restricted net assets on pages fourteen through seventeen are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the basic financial statements. Such information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the basic financial statements and, in our opinion, is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the basic financial statements taken as a whole.

*Louis Plung & Company, LLP*

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
May 14, 2009

American Institute of  
Certified Public Accountants  
  
Firm's credentials of  
Certified Public Accountant

**OBKR**  
International  
Independent Member Firm in Pittsburgh, PA

OBKR Pittsburgh, PA  
AICPA No. 08-0000  
  
The Ruffed Grouse Society  
Certified by AICPA

**2008 REPORT TO SPONSORS**

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY  
FUNCTIONAL EXPENDITURES**

Year ended December 31, 2008 (Unaudited)

	PROGRAM SERVICES EXPENDITURES						SUPPORTING SERVICES EXPENDITURES		TOTAL EXPENDITURES
	Membership Services	Gen Educ. Orat. Conv. Bot. Support	Habitat Projects	Coverts	Research	Advocacy	Admin-istration	Fund raising	Total Expenditures
Advertising	\$1,204	\$2,240	\$1,850	951	\$10	\$25	\$50	\$0	\$11,176
Bank Charges	206	4,109	289	24	5	13	424	52	5,633
Chapter Activities Expense	25,836	261,404	11,751	1,545	365	773	26,537	1,752	385,211
Chapter Expenses	24,735	147,957	75,355	353	210	43	15,511	1,918	279,624
Cost of Sales	4,407	11,351	7,237	184	46	52	2,440	231	45,241
Data Processing	2,600	10,000	2,500	100	22	43	1,600	170	21,131
Depreciation	15,406	17,945	17,000	287	174	220	8,440	521	71,773
Dues and Contributions	856	3,780	533	22	6	11	414	28	5,456
Educational Programs	1,215	7,472	1,244	44	11	29	614	45	10,557
General Support	3,274	15,741	3,521	52	23	46	1,728	175	24,691
Habitat Workshops	0	795	14	4	1	2	0	0	1,117
Insurance	3,172	10,300	2,364	100	27	54	1,524	124	25,890
Interest	2,572	17,175	2,371	101	25	50	1,654	125	25,373
Investment Fees	1,140	5,583	1,101	50	0	12	745	48	7,649
Legal and Accounting	4,865	27,271	4,579	164	41	67	3,037	215	41,712
Meetings and Conferences	1,015	11,500	1,057	62	5	14	1,144	77	16,414
Miscellaneous	4,040	20,900	4,000	160	39	79	2,522	197	31,440
Miscellaneous Contributions	125	7,250	1,200	43	11	21	724	50	10,671
Postage & Delivery	5,218	18,567	3,100	100	27	55	2,016	178	27,560
Printing	1,526	8,327	1,454	52	13	25	557	65	13,116
Professional Merchandise	217	21,349	3,407	179	30	60	2,228	141	29,726
Rent, Utilities & Leasing	16,724	55,111	16,172	567	142	204	10,484	219	41,150
Research Projects	292	1,705	280	0	3	5	135	0	2,691
RGS Publications	21,827	138,525	21,325	901	200	400	14,617	1,001	271,227
Salaries & Benefits	150,117	770,064	167,549	5,740	1,455	2,371	176,226	7,179	1,155,911
Supplies and Equipment Rental	1,836	60,345	1,056	254	73	147	5,430	367	71,390
Telephone	5,124	30,000	5,007	170	44	68	1,257	200	44,130
Travel and Auto	2,610	104,400	20,054	1,000	250	541	20,000	1,200	270,455
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$3,327,717</b>	<b>\$2,212,436</b>	<b>\$969,500</b>	<b>\$2,205</b>	<b>23,244</b>	<b>10,408</b>	<b>\$240,650</b>	<b>\$76,211</b>	<b>\$3,240,161</b>

**CFC PARTICIPATION**

RGS participates in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) as a member of the Conservation & Preservation Charities of America Federation under the listing of "National Federations." RGS' permanent ID number is 12058. Federal employees are encouraged to add RGS to their payroll deduction plans.



PLANNED GIFTS AND GIVING

RGS is eligible to receive tax-deductible gifts of cash, stocks, land, bequests, and other forms of planned gifts. Members are encouraged to add RGS to their estate plans by providing the information available on those subjects on the RGS website, www.ruffedgrousesociety.org on the

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

D. Wayne Jacobson, Jr. ....President
Denis Karnosky .....Vice President & Treasurer
Scotty Searle .....Secretary

DIRECTORS

Larry Brutger; Gaylen J. Byker; Leon H. "Joe" Chandler; Edwin H. Gott, Jr.; James Hayett; Joe R. Irwin; William "Butch" Johnson; Bruce Ogle; James H. Oliver; John C. Oliver; Stephen F. Quill; George Rich; Terald J. Wilson

DIRECTORS EMERITI

T. Stanton Armour, S. Prosser Mellon
Sally B. Searle, David V. Uihlein

HEADQUARTERS STAFF

Dr. Michael D. Zagata .....Executive Director/CEO
Ronald P. Burkert.....Information Systems and Webmaster
Anna Stubna.....Editor and Special Projects
Margie Vollmer.....Controllor
Tracy M. Greene.....Director - Banquet Operations
Julie Caugherty.....Director - Memembership Services and Marketing Director
Shirley Rice.....Membershp Services
Rudy Mamula.....Accounts Payable
Kim Swisher.....Accounts Receivable
Leatha M. Veiock.....Information Systems Assistant and Mailroom
Alison R. Kelley.....Administrative Assistant
Wallace L. Chevront.....Staff Assistant -- Shipping and Receiving
Dick Nelson.....Publicist

CONSERVATION POLICY

Dan R. Dessecker.....Director

BIOLOGISTS

Mark E. Banker.....Senior Biologist
Paul Karczmarczyk.....New England
Gary Zimmer.....Western Great Lakes
Russell W. Sewell.....Minnesota

REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Mark D. Fouts.....Director of Regional Operations & AK, MO, MN, OR, WA
Ken Waite.....NY, PA
O. Boyd Cooke.....ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT
Douglas R. Doherty.....MI, IN
David Johnson.....WI, MI, MN, IA, IL
Dave Hansroth.....PA, MD, NJ, DE
Don Mallicoat.....GA, KY, LA, NC, TN, VA
Lisa M. Rossi.....PA, OH, WV, IN

NATIONAL OFFICE

Ruffed Grouse Society
451 McCormick Road
Coraopolis, PA 15108
(412) 262-4044
Toll Free (888) 564-6747
www.ruffedgrousesociety.org
E-MAIL: rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org

RGS CANADA

Contact Gary McWilliams, Chief Administrative Officer
John Lockerbie, RGS Canada Chapter Information Coordinator

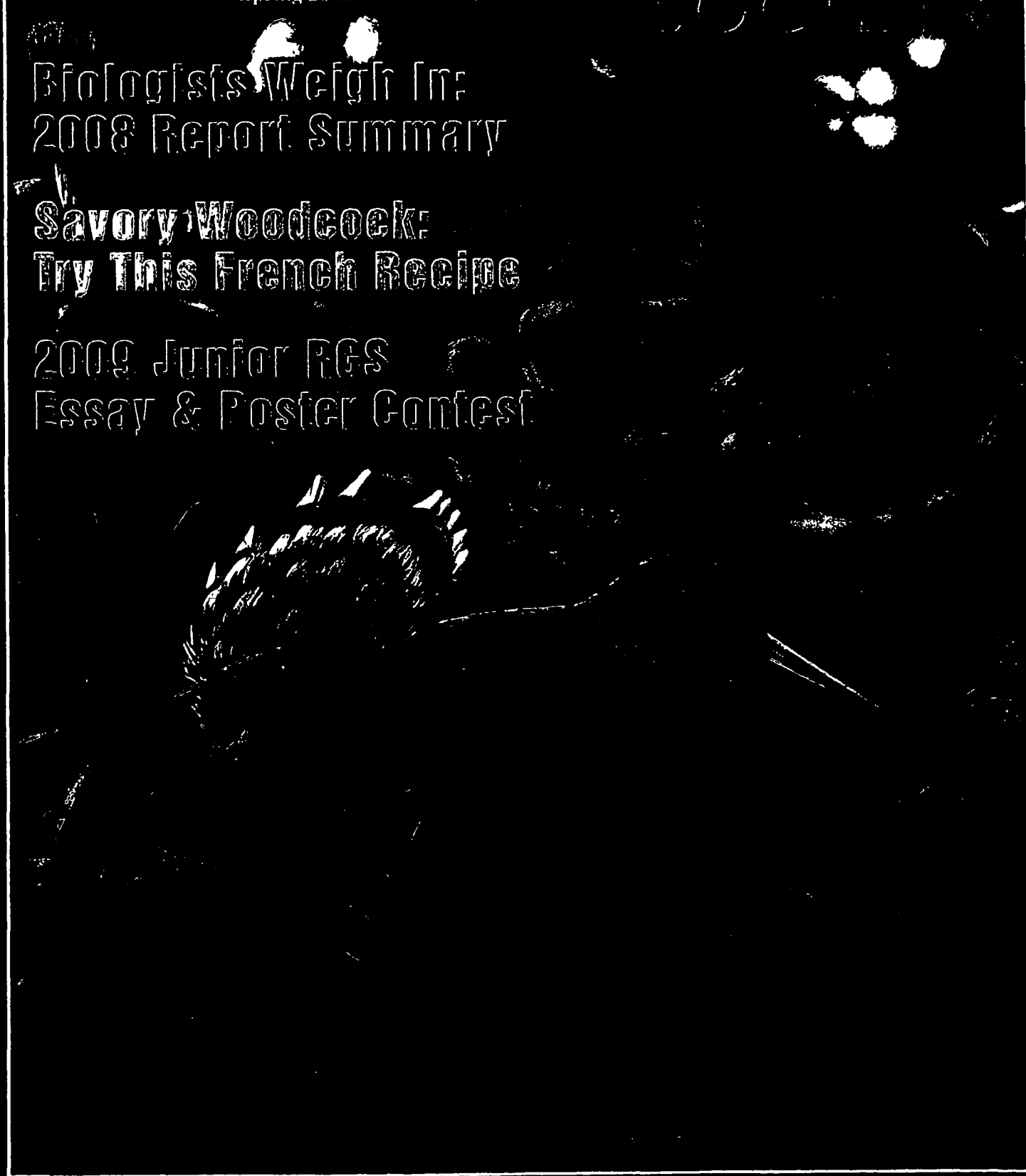
# ruffed Grouse Society

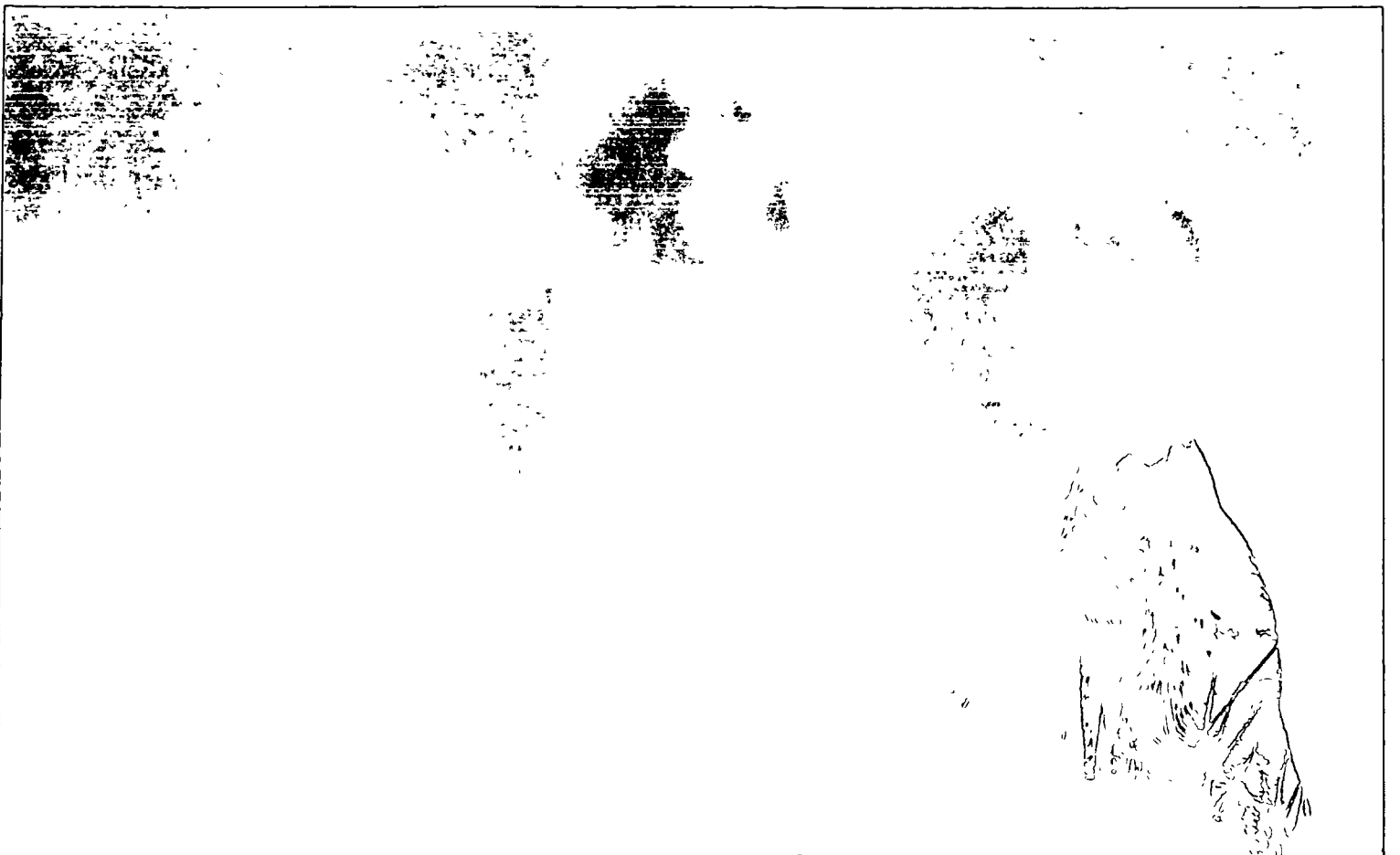
Spring 2009 • Volume 21, Issue 1

Biologists Weigh In:  
2008 Report Summary

Savory Woodcock:  
Try This French Recipe

2009 Junior RGS  
Essay & Poster Contest





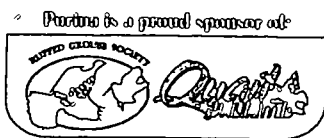
# Pro Plan<sup>®</sup> Performance: A Track & Field Diet for Leading Athletes.

On those wonderful days, your dog can zero-in on a bird and remain motionless and steady on point. You can just sense his intensity and readiness. Such challenging work calls for trusted, tried nutrition like Purina<sup>®</sup> Pro Plan<sup>®</sup> brand dog food.

Pro Plan<sup>®</sup> Performance Formula delivers important benefits to help support the hardworking dog:

- rich in omega-3 fatty acids, including EPA and DHA
- contains natural sources of glucosamine for joint health and mobility
- supports increased endurance and lean muscle mass
- optimizes oxygen metabolism (VO<sub>2</sub> max) so dogs burn fat more efficiently
- real chicken (#1 ingredient) provides high-quality protein to help support muscle mass for strength and provides energy

For more information or interest in sporting dog enthusiasts, visit [proplan.com/sportingdog/mag](http://proplan.com/sportingdog/mag)



PURINA<sup>®</sup>

# PRO PLAN<sup>®</sup>

FUEL THE CHAMPION WITHIN<sup>™</sup>



© 2011 Purina Animal Health, a division of Purina. All rights reserved.



# L.L.Bean—Official Boot Sponsor of the Ruffed Grouse Society



We've been outfitting wingshooters for over 97 years with gear that stands up to the rigors of the field. Our upland boots are crafted from tough yet supple kangaroo leather and rugged canvas that can take the punishment of pushing through brush without weighing you down. They're lined with waterproof, breathable Gore-Tex® and cushioned for long-lasting comfort.

Bean's Gore-Tex Kangaroo Leather/Fabric Cap-Toe Upland Boots  
Available in Men's whole and half sizes Medium D and Wide EE 7 to 12, 13. Women's Medium B 6 to 11

FOR A FREE CATALOG  
Call 800-791-8164 or [shop llbean.com](http://shop.llbean.com)

## L.L.Bean



L.L. BEAN IS PROUD TO BE THE OFFICIAL BOOT  
SPONSOR OF THE RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



*Ruffed Grouse Society*  
**SERIES**

SKB proudly presents a Limited Edition of 20 and 28 gauge Over & Unders. Available in 28" & 26" barrels. Featuring Fancy American Black Walnut Stock and Forend, Automatic Ejectors, Manual Safety, Selective Trigger, Briley Choke Tubes.

The Ruffed Grouse Society depends upon members, volunteers, staff, landowners and corporate sponsors to insure that this and future generations can enjoy ruffed grouse, woodcock, songbirds, deer and many other types of wildlife that depend upon young forest habitat.

**WWW.SKBB**

- 4 Editor's Log**  
The Dirt on Spring  
*By Anna Stubna*
- 6 Letters to the Editor**
- 8 Executive Director's Report**  
Moving Forward  
*By Mike Zagata*
- 10 Purely Dogs**  
Working and Hunting  
with Older Dogs  
*By Bob West*
- 18 RGS Canada**  
Introducing the RGS Canada  
Board of Directors  
*By Jeff Helsdon*
- 20 Junior RGS**  
Branching Out
- 26 Chapter Spotlight**  
A Well-Rounded Approach  
to Conservation in Alaska
- 31 Seasons of the Grouse**  
Spring in the East
- 36 Home Covers Calling**
- 47 RGS Staff Changes**
- 50 Wild Flavors**  
La Bécasse: A Michigan  
Eatery with a French Twist
- 56 Gear and Gadgets**  
New Product Reviews
- 58 Classified Ads**
- 64 Ruffly Speaking**  
Early Spring Ruminations  
*By Paul Carson*



## FEATURES

- 14 Our First Double**  
Remembering a special hunt – *by H. Bauer*
- 18 Benelli's Ultra Light**  
Light grouse guns examined – *by Nick Sisley*
- 21 2009 Youth Poster and Essay Contest**
- 22 Celebrating 15 Years of Woodland Wildlife Education**  
The story of the Wisconsin coverts program – *by Jamie Nack*
- 28 Ha!**  
Humorous hunting dog tales – *by Nancy Anisfield*
- 40 Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge**  
Creating American woodcock habitat in Maine – *by Cathy Genthner*
- 42 News Updates**  
Spruce grouse conservation plan published  
RGS receives Missouri grant for habitat work  
Iowa program promotes ruffed grouse habitat
- 44 RGS Biological Program**  
The 2008 annual report summary
- 48 Hiding Favorite Coverts**  
The difficulties of new hunting partners – *by G. N. Allen*
- 52 Rising to the Challenge**  
Bringing the great outdoors to disadvantaged youth – *by Anna Stubna*
- 53 RGS Plays Leadership Role in Historic White House Conference**
- 54 Savoring Sporting Prose**  
– *by Art Wheaton*

About Our Cover – This issue's cover is a detail from *A Woodcock in Spring* by Christopher Smith. Smith is from Interlochen, Michigan and specializes in wildlife scenes and original birding portraits. He is the also the featured artist for the RGS 2009 centerfold series. Smith has illustrated over a dozen hunting and fishing books, and is a Contributing Artist for *The Retriever Journal*, *Painting Dog Journal*, *Shooting Sportsman*, *Upland Almanac*, *Ducks Unlimited* and several others. He is author and illustrator of *Field Guide to Upland Birds* and *Waterfowl*, a pocket guide to help hunters and bird watchers properly identify sporting birds in the field. Smith and his brother Jason co-authored *Waterfowling Horizons*, a book about modern waterfowl hunting. In 2005 Smith had a painting selected as the Michigan Duck Stamp, and just recently took top honors in the 2009 Michigan Ducks Unlimited Sponsor Artist of the year contest.

He is a graduate of Lake Superior State University in Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan with a BS in Fisheries and Wildlife Management. He and his wife, Lanu, have two children, Nathan and Audrey and a yellow Labrador, Libby. Chris has hunted, fished, and photographed across North America, adding hands-on experience to his education in the wildlife sciences. To order prints of *A Woodcock in Spring* or any of the centerfold images visit [www.chrissmithart.com](http://www.chrissmithart.com)



# EDITOR'S LOG

## The Dirt on Spring

by Anna Stubna

I'm the first one to admit that I love cold weather. The sticky hot days of summer hold a peculiar dread for me. Just thinking of the lethargy that grips me during those unbearably humid days is distasteful. Yet, despite knowing those days will follow shortly, I still anticipate the first warm day of early spring with keen excitement. After biting winter days, even a warm, light rain is enough to put a smile on my face.

The promise of spring's rebirth and nature's renewal – as she dresses her trees in fresh foliage and bursts forth in lush displays of color - are irresistible. The break in weather means it's finally time to accomplish all the outside tasks that need attending to: home repairs, yard work, gardening – you name it, it needs done. The rapidity with which these chores present themselves is truly amazing.

Another thing about spring: it's an inexplicable fact that I always sleep more deeply when I have dirt under my fingernails. A few hours spend digging in the ground with more enthusiasm than skill leaves me covered with a satisfying layer of water, dirt, an occasional worm, a few sleepy bugs and a leaf or two wedged into my hair. Odd jobs in the spring are one of the few opportunities to get grubby as an adult and not have to offer any apologies.

One of the favorite outdoor activities of my youth consisted of a large dirt pile abandoned in the corner of our yard, a vestige of one of my father's renovation projects. Nothing could compare to the allure this seemingly innocuous mound held for me. I would spend entire days hauling water for ponds, planting twigs, digging trenches and smoothing roads on its rough face. There are few things as delightful to a child as driving one's arms clean up to the elbow in mud.

A vestige of this pure satisfaction returns every time I'm outdoors in the spring. It doesn't matter if the occasion is task driven or just a ramble in the woods with a friend. This sentiment of simple appreciation is one that I find in common with many of our contributors this issue. "Our first double," by H. Bauer is a bittersweet recollection of a man and his dog on their first hunt together. Our team of RGS biologists put together an extended report of their activities this past year, a summary of which is included in this issue. It's apparent they've also logged quite a few hours in the woods this year! Even Bob West's column on taking care of older dogs has a nostalgic air.

Perhaps the renewal of life so evident in spring also serves as a gentle reminder to us: every new beginning also marks the end of something else. Here at headquarters, staff will soon be caught up in the whirlwind of the spring banquet season. As daylight hours increase, so will the multitude of tasks you yourself must accomplish.

Now, just before you gain the momentum that will carry you through to summer, take a few minutes to say goodbye to last year. Your work, your dedication and your generosity have allowed RGS to succeed for another year - habitat work has been accomplished, banquets held, funds raised and friends made. What a year is was.

# ruffed GROUSE SOCIETY

### MEMBERSHIP RATES:

Junior membership (16 and under)	..... \$10
Timberdoodle (Web access only)	..... \$15
Regular membership	..... \$25
Conservation membership	..... \$50
Sustaining membership	..... \$100
Sponsor membership	..... \$250
Centurion (life) membership	..... \$1,000

### Officers and Staff

#### OFFICERS

D. Wayne Jacobson, Jr.	..... President
Denis S. Karnosky	..... Vice President & Treasurer
Scotty Searle	..... Secretary

#### DIRECTORS

Larry Bruiger	Denis S. Karnosky
Gaylen J. Byker	Bruce Ogle
Joe (Leon H) Chandler, M.D.	James H Oliver
Edwin H. Gott, Jr	John C Oliver
Jun Hayett	Stephen F. Quill, Sr
Joe R. Irwin	George Rich
D. Wayne Jacobson, Jr.	Scotty Searle
Butch Johnson	Terald J Wilson

#### DIRECTORS EMERITI

T. Stanton Armour
S. Prosser Mellon
Sally B. Searle
David V. Uihlein

#### HEADQUARTERS STAFF

Dr. Michael D. Zagata Executive Director/CEO
Ronald P Burkert Information Systems and Webmaster
Anna Stubna Editor & Special Projects
Margie Vollmer Controller
Tracy M. Greene Director of Banquet Operations
Julie Caugherty Director of Membership and Marketing
Rudy Mamula Accounts Payable
Kim Swisher Accounts Receivable
Leatha M Veiock Information Systems Assistant & Mailroom
Shurley Rice Membership Services
Alison Kelley Administrative Assistant
Wallace L. Chevront Staff Assistant - Shipping & Receiving
Dick Nelson Publicist

#### CONSERVATION POLICY

Dan R. Dessecker	..... Director
------------------	----------------

#### BIOLOGISTS

Mark E. Banker	..... Senior Biologist
Gary Zimmer	..... Senior Biologist
Russell W. Sewell	..... Minnesota

**Announcing the RUFF Capital Campaign**

**RUFF**, or Restoring Upland Forests' Future, will raise \$5 million dollars in the next two years. The money will be used to fully endow our team of biologists and to reduce overhead by purchasing a headquarters building.

The Campaign is off to a good start, pledges in the sum of \$1.5 million dollars have been received.

Make a donation today by calling 1-888-564-6747 or on our website at [www.ruffed-grousesociety.org](http://www.ruffed-grousesociety.org)

## REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Mark D Fouts . . . Director of Regional Operations  
& AK, MO, MN, OR, WA  
Douglas R Doherty . . . MI & northwestern IN  
Dave "Swede" Johnson . . . WI, far western UP of MI,  
Twin Cities, MN; IA, & IL  
Boyd Cooke . . . ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT  
Dave Hansroth . . . NJ, eastern PA, MD, portion of VA  
Kenneth N Waite III . . . NY, portion of PA  
Lisa M Rossi . . . IN; OH, western PA, northern WV  
Don Mallicoat . . . GA, KY, LA, NC,  
TN, VA & southern WV

## FIELD EDITORS

Art Wheaton  
Jeff Helsdon

## NATIONAL OFFICE

Ruffed Grouse Society  
451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044 • Toll Free (888) 564-6747  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)  
E-MAIL [rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org)

## RGS CANADA

Contact Gary McWilliams  
RGS Canadian Coordinator  
PO Box 272, Cobourg, ON K9A 4K8

To report RGS-Canada chapter news contact Jeff  
Helsdon, Canadian Field Editor, [jhelsdon@bellnet.ca](mailto:jhelsdon@bellnet.ca),  
(519) 842-8468 in RGS-Canada

## MAGAZINE DESIGN

Fd Ramaley, Art Director - Marcomnordic Printing

## ADVERTISING

Dill & Associates, Inc (612) 308-5571  
E-mail [dillassocmc@sherbtel.net](mailto:dillassocmc@sherbtel.net)

Eric Hubbell (520) 881-8767  
E-mail [erichubbell@msn.com](mailto:erichubbell@msn.com)

The Ruffed Grouse Society is the one international nonprofit  
wildlife conservation organization dedicated to promoting condi-  
tions suitable for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and related  
wildlife to sustain our sport hunting tradition and outdoor heritage.  
It was incorporated as the Ruffed Grouse Society of America on  
October 24, 1961 in Monterey, Virginia. National headquarters are  
located in Coraopolis, PA. Donations and gifts may be tax de-  
ductible.

RGS is a quarterly publication of the Ruffed Grouse Society  
and is published seasonally in the spring, summer, fall and winter.  
Positions or views expressed by advertisements and articles which  
appear in the magazine may not reflect those held by the Ruffed  
Grouse Society.

**EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS:** Letter article and photo submis-  
sions are welcomed. No responsibility is assumed for unsolicited  
materials. Please address emails to

[editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org).

**UNWANTED MAIL ALERT:** Occasionally we make our  
member listing available to select organizations whose services  
or products may interest you. If you prefer not to share your  
name and address, you can simply remove your information  
from our mailing lists by contacting our membership depart-  
ment at [juliec@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:juliec@ruffedgrousesociety.org). Also contact our  
membership department if you receive multiple magazines  
to your household, and wish to consolidate your memberships.

## CHOICE HOTELS INTERNATIONAL

Special rate identification number: 00802089

© Copyright 2008 Ruffed Grouse Society. All Rights Reserved



# Win an Upland Bird Dream Hunt October 2-10, 2009

## The Ruffed Grouse Society 2008-2009 National Raffle

### 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 at  
Bear Paw Mountain Outfitters in Havre, Mon-  
tana and hunt for sharp-tail grouse and Hungar-  
ian 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 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 call 1-888-564-6747.  
Donation for each ticket is \$50.00.  
Only 2500 tickets to be sold.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Share your thoughts, opinions and questions with us. Send emails to: [editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org). Letters should be mailed to: Attn: Editor, 451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108. Submissions should not exceed 150 words, and may be edited for content and length. Name and address must be included.

## A Shotgun Conundrum

Nick,

I've read your articles for years and years and I, too, have shot a fair bit in my life; birds, clays and big game. I just read your article, 'The Light Shotgun', in the winter issue, and I fully agree with everything you wrote.

I primarily shoot Italian shotguns, Berettas and Benellis. I have a custom-fitted 686 Special Sporting 12-gauge that was only sold in Europe. I came upon it used in a Minneapolis suburban gun shop. A previous owner had varnished the wood. That summer I disassembled the piece, removed the horrifying varnish, sanded, buffed and oiled it back into respectability with 20 coats of hand rubbed oil. I even retraced all of the checkering - it turned out fantastic! I had it ported, coned, fitted and could not be happier.

I also purchased a 20-gauge Beretta 687 EL for my wife some years ago. Even though she is tall and lanky, we had to chop off about 3 inches from the stock for the gun to fit her properly. She did well with it, but ultimately decided she wasn't cut out for bird hunting, chasing around the country and fussing with dogs like I love to do. So I inherited the gun.

First off, we had to add back most of the length that had been removed for her. I had the gunsmith install the same Decel pad (the one with the hard rubber or plastic top butt plate insert) that I have on my 12-gauge. I also gave him my 12-gauge and told him to make everything identical in every way; the drop at the heel, drop at the comb, length, etc. Now, looking at the 20-gauge laid over my favorite 12-gauge, and even measuring it, they both appear to be the same.

The problem is, however, the 20-gauge does not shoot the same. I am not an inexperienced shooter. I used to shoot 30,000 or more shotgun rounds a year, but this little bugger has me vexed. Despite the fact that it looks the same as my 12-gauge, I can't hit anything with it! Well, I take that back. I am accomplished at shooting the legs and feet off every bird that gets up. Every time I take this 20-gauge to the game farm I embarrass myself. A week ago in South Dakota, hunting real wild pheasants, I would have much preferred carrying my light 5.5 lb. 20-gauge, but opted for my old standby 686 12-gauge because I know where it shoots.

What is going on? Please shed some light on my little gun. It also has the same length barrels (28") as my 12 gauge gun, so the difference is not due to barrel length. I have also owned and shot a number of good light 20-gauge guns in my life; Belgian Brownings, SKB's, and a host of Berettas - but this one has me stumped.

Please advise. I await your advice with keen anticipation.

Richard Sanders  
Prescott, Wisconsin

Richard,

*I've been thinking about your problem, as it's not an easy one to answer. My first guess is that the two guns are not shooting to*

*the same point of impact. You may have already determined this, but if not, here's what to try. Go to a place where you can do some patterning on big sheets of paper. Put tight chokes in both guns, both barrels. Shoot three patterns at each piece of paper - with each gun and each barrel - so you will need four big paper sheets. With a Magic Marker make an easy-to-see mark on each. When you shoot - don't aim. Make a well-practiced gun mount - and then shoot immediately or almost immediately after the stock hits your shoulder and cheek. There's a good chance that all four barrels aren't hitting at the same spot, regardless of the fact that both guns are stocked the same. If both guns and all four barrels are hitting all in the same place - get back to me - we'll go to Plan B, but I'm hoping this Plan A will work. Keep me posted.*

*The top and bottom barrels of your 20-gauge might not be hitting at the same place either. Shoot three shots with each barrel at one piece of paper - to reduce the possibility of a poor gun mount.*

*If both 20-gauge barrels are hitting more or less together - but not the same as your 12-gauge barrels - a little stock work can fix that. If the two 20-gauge barrels are not hitting at the same place Briley can fix that with a special screw choke.*

Good Shooting-  
Nick Sisley

## A Lifelong Passion

My father, John P. Wilkins, passed away late last year at the age of 90. How he loved hunting and was interested in the husbandry of wild birds! The only sticker on his automobile (which he hadn't been able to drive for several years, but which I continue to drive) was one for the Ruffed Grouse Society, and right below his TV was a large picture of a ruffed grouse. Although I'm not a hunter myself, I know how much he greatly enjoyed that sport and was interested in the support of wild game birds.

Paul C. Wilkins, M.D.  
Charlottesville, Virginia

## When Answers Fall From the Sky

I enjoyed Art Wheaton's article "The Doubles Club." Who will ever forget a hunt with a double or triple on grouse? Certainly not my German shorthair, Ranger. Just started at 10 months, Ranger and I had the great fortune to shoot 3 birds in early season on a straight-away over a solid point with a Ruger Red Label.

Two of the birds dropped and landed a solid 10 feet apart, the third one got wrapped around a branch 10 feet above them until a death flap took it to grouse heaven. The entire retrieve took over twenty minutes for the young pup, and it had me "tripled-over" with laughter.

Ranger first brought back one bird, then another, then took them back, making a pile of the two solid-hit grouse underneath the tree with the third bird dangling above him. Ranger was thinking very hard with his dog calculator "one-two...hmm... there's

one missing here.” Just when I thought his canine cranium needed human assistance, a gust of wind blew the third bird out of the tree right onto the top of his head. If a German shorthair ever found religion in one moment, that was it! He managed to get all three in his mouth, and with just a few fumbles made a beautiful delivery.

We have had a lot of doubles in the years since, and letting him do his job has paid off. With my gunnery skills using an over-and-under, there is almost always one bird I call a “miss” that Ranger marks and retrieves first, while I move towards the mark on the more solidly hit bird. Building trust in my dog - that he is moving on the bird that has to be scooped up first - has been the key to doubles for this team! Dogs who can score doubles need a club too!

Dean Robinson  
Fly Creek, New York

## A Friend Says Farewell

I was sorry to read of Andy Ammann's passing - what a friend of wildlife. Too bad there aren't more like him! It's really sad that others didn't follow his lead and open layman banding programs in other states. In the words of a friend of Maine, “Banding is a jealously guarded practice.”

When Andy broke me in on banding he corrected me, “Please - don't call me Doctor.” What a great guy.

Mike Hradel  
Free Soil, Michigan

## Final Footnote

*Editor's note: In fall of 2008 we ran a feature called “The Story of Mac,” by Doug Stamm. The story - which won first place in the Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers competition - chronicles the amazing life of Mac, an English setter with rare talent. Mac's incredible story has an even further unbelievable footnote—as Doug discovered and recently disclosed to us.*

You just ran a story of mine about Mac, Tom Waite's rare English setter. I ended the story with the footnote that Mac was killed by a train.

New information has surfaced that affirms the amazing life of Mac. The train engineer contacted Tom Waite a few weeks after Mac was killed and told him he saw Mac on point on the tracks, pointing a group of Chukar partridge that hang out near Waite's training grounds. The engineer blew his horn - but Mac was deaf. He stayed on point until the train was almost on top of him, and then jumped out of the way. The train engineer thought Mac was OK, but Mac didn't jump quite soon enough. Waite said Mac's only wound was a nick on his head, suffered at the last second as he jumped away.

What an interesting end to a most remarkable bird dog.

Doug Stamm

## Friends of a Different Class

The deer doesn't always have to be the star of a great deer hunting memory. I was befriended by a ruffed grouse last fall, and every time we'd see each other he'd get a little closer and little friendlier. He'd either be by my side or no more than a few steps behind me from the time I arrived at my hunting property until the time I left for home.

One day I was bowhunting out of a tree stand near our usual meeting place and within minutes he was at the base of my tree.



He stayed on the ground under my stand making a lot of cover noise. But by the end of that hunt, he had flown up onto my tree stand platform and stayed with me until it was time to leave for home. After that I started referring to him as my “hunting buddy.”

Just a week later my little hunting buddy became my ex-hunting buddy. I was hunting out of the same stand that “we” had hunted the week prior. It wasn't very long before he joined me in the stand. About 15 minutes later I stood up and picked up my bow - as it was near the time when the deer usually start moving. He almost immediately jumped up onto my recently vacated seat.

I pulled my camera out of my safety vest pocket and took a couple of pictures of him. When I looked up next, I saw that two deer - a mature doe and a fawn - had just crossed my shooting lane at about 25 yards. Now I had no shot - dang!

I remained hopeful that the deer might work their way back, near enough for me to take a shot. Sure enough, in just 10 minutes they were working their way closer - shooter doe in front and just out of range, but closing. I held my bow vertically in front of me and attached my release to the string loop. 10 more yards and the big doe would be in range.

That was when my ex-hunting buddy jumped off the seat, and onto the lower limb of my bow. Now the grouse is sitting on my lower bow limb between the limb and the cables and pecking like crazy at my oak leaf camo hand warmer. I'm frantic at this point - trying to quietly and carefully shake my bow to get the bird to fly off, without spooking the deer. He just won't go! Finally, after tipping my bow almost 90 degrees, the bird jumps back down onto the tree stand platform and lands on my arrow quiver - producing a sound rivaling the rattles of a 20-year-old minivan. Needless to say, the big doe ran off, but only about 15 yards.

I still had a chance - if only this bird would behave! Several minutes later the doe was almost back in range, I was ready, holding my bow vertically in front of me, release on the loop - ready to go. Just one more step... when the grouse flies up and lands on my knocked arrow!

It was all over. The grouse, balancing precariously on the arrow, was making all kinds of noise. There he sat - perched on my arrow posing like a Hollywood starlet! I took some pictures, because what the heck, I can't hunt with him around.

So I'll have to give up on one of my best deer stands - “Stand #5” belongs to my ex-hunting buddy now. Though it's been a good stand, I'll never get a deer out of it with that bird around.

John Hammer,  
Middlesex, NY



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## Moving Forward

National and Personal Perspectives

by Mike Zagata, Executive Director/CEO

### 2008 Summary of Accomplishments

The year 2008 was one of change for RGS. We listened to chapter requests for the means to raise money to use on local projects by implementing a new program for chapters to share in the proceeds of their banquet. A total of 21 chapters met or exceeded their 15% growth goal, and raised nearly \$26,000 for local projects in 2008. For 2009, the growth target has been set at 10% - making it even easier for chapters to reach net money for projects after a successful banquet! Proceeds from events held pre-banquet will count toward net banquet revenue, and up to \$2,500 from any event held after a successful banquet may be kept for local projects. (That means if you have a post-banquet raffle featuring 3 guns, you can keep up to \$7,500 of the proceeds, or \$2,500 for each gun, for your chapter habitat projects!)

RGS recently added two additional CAT machines, equipped with cutting implements for habitat management, and now has three units working in the East. We also have plans to secure at least two more units for the Midwest in the near future.

Your Board of Directors initiated a capital campaign called RUFF (Restore Upland Forests' Future) to raise the 5 million dollars required to fully endow the regional biologists. To date about 1.9 million dollars have been pledged. If you would like to make a donation, there will be a form in your membership renewal packet or you may donate through our website. The R. K. Mellon Foundation funded a land purchase whereby the Western PA Conservancy generously gave RGS the right to harvest timber appraised at 5 million dollars on 2,300 acres of land in Pennsylvania and actively create prime grouse habitat. The first timber sale has been let for \$127,000 on 85 acres, proceeds will benefit the RUFF Campaign.

Regional directors now issue a quarterly newsletter, which will help make everyone aware of both national and regional news. Their newsletters complement the biologist FAN letter. All these newsletters will be posted on our website.

RGS has an increased presence in Washington, and this is just beginning to pay dividends. In 2008 Congress passed a Farm Bill friendlier to our interests, and the President signed an Executive Order requesting federal land-management agencies to support hunting on the lands they manage. This past October a conference about this order was held. Dan Dessecker, Director of Conservation Policy for RGS, has reported on conference results in this issue.

A new membership drive, *Tail Feathers*, is also underway for 2009. You can read about the drive, as well as our brand new doubles program in the upcoming Summer issue!

2008 was a very good year, but RGS - as did our wildlife conservation counterparts - experienced a decline in revenue. It isn't surprising, given the doom and gloom fostered by the media. Yet a strong team of regional directors, dedicated biologists and committed office staff have poised us for a strong year in 2009. Your continued support is an essential part of our success!

### A Personal Journey

Last spring Scotty Searle, a long-time member of our Board of Directors, had an English setter bitch with a litter of pups sired by a Bob West's dog. Bob is our contact with Punna - a very supportive

corporate sponsor. Scotty asked me for help in finding homes for the pups, and offered to donate the proceeds from their sale to RGS.

When photos of the new pups arrived - I was hooked. Although I am a Gordon setter devotee, two of the pups really caught my fancy, and before long a deal was struck for "Scout," the largest male of the litter.

When he was seven weeks old, I flew to Chicago to bring Scout home. He spent the next two weeks with me in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania - getting to know the office staff and sleeping in my apartment at night. When we drove to my home in upstate New York he met my two 88-pound male Gordons, and yes - he was intimidated! Brier, the dominant male, wanted it that way. Time passed and Scout adjusted. At 5 months, it was time for school. I had just read an article about the Chenango Valley Kennels. Vinny Guglielmo, the owner, also came highly recommended by a trusted friend. It was time.

I dropped Scout off, and every third weekend I would stop on my way home to visit. It was hard to leave without him. Vinny did a great job, and two months later I picked him up and spent a day getting re-acquainted. The "family" then headed for the RGS' National Grouse and Woodcock hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. It was a remarkable few days - Scout honed his skill on grouse and woodcock hunting and my wife, Beth, shot her first grouse over him - after nearly 22 years of trying!

Several days later Scout and I headed up to the inaugural Northeast Sponsors' Hunt at Weatherby's Lodge in Grand Lake Stream, Maine. RGS raised some much-needed funds, and we had the chance to become acquainted with enthusiastic grouse hunters well-positioned to help RGS grow in the Northeast.

Scout - now 7½ months old - continued in his education. After the hunt, I had a chance to take a few days to hunt grouse and woodcock and talk RGS with Art Wheaton, in Forest City, Maine. Art, an RGS field editor, is a steadfast devotee of the *Old Pats Society*. As a retired vice president with Remington Arms and president of the Parker Gun Collector's Association, he has a unique understanding of marketing and growing membership. Yet his most praiseworthy accomplishment - at least in those few days - was how he helped it all come together for Scout. Art's composure and patience in dealing with his young setter helped me build my own young dog's confidence. Watching the give and take of Art with our young dogs was truly enjoyable. It was the culmination of several days work when - Scout pointed a woodcock, I flushed the bird, Art made the shot and Scout hunted "dead" and retrieved the bird to my hand. That moment moved me deeply.

My stay also happened to coincide with the *Old Pats Society* annual gathering in Maine. The Society's membership consists largely of retired folks sharing an affiliation with Remington and a passion for grouse and woodcock hunting. They are committed to assuring future generations will also have the chance to share that passion. Their willingness to share their unique knowledge of the firearms business and marketing experience with us is very much appreciated. An impending early winter storm back home took me away all too quickly...duty calls! 🐾

MIKE



FIELD-TESTED  
FIELD-PROVEN



Cabela's Kangaroo Boots

Field Trainer

Columbia Upland Jacket

TRUST OUR GEAR



Your next step could trigger the first flash of the day. At Cabela's, we live for these moments. And the gear we use must live up to our expectations. We back all the products we sell with a 100-percent satisfaction guarantee to make sure they live up to yours.

TOP-OF-THE-LINE BRANDS

at bottom-line prices

*Cabela's*

WORLD'S FOREMOST OUTFITTER

Shop Online Request a Catalog Find a Store

[www.cabelas.com](http://www.cabelas.com) ■ 800.761.0066

© 2003



# PURELY DOGS

## Working and Hunting with Older Dogs

by Bob West



Photo by N. Anisfeld

Frequent rests are essential when one is aging gracefully – just ask 13-year-old Chesapeake Bay retriever Cooper.

**W**hat about the question of working with older dogs? There's no way around it - linked to this phenomena of time flying by is the *corresponding increase in our dog's age*. Eventually we're all going to be faced with caring for, and working with, older dogs. However, just because our dog is showing signs of age doesn't mean it's all over, with special attention there can be good, productive seasons ahead.

The special attention I mention is really nothing new or different, only a renewed awareness and sensitivity of normal concerns relating to health care, feeding, exercise and training of any hunting dog. So let's see how we might help the ol' duffer through another season.

### What's old?

The term "geriatric" is used to identify individuals who have entered a certain community requiring special care, and has somewhat ambiguous parameters because there are so many systems and contributing factors.

The saying, "You're as old as you feel," pretty well holds true for dogs.

One dog may be termed "geriatric" at 5 years, while a litter mate may not until 8 years or older, depending on the individual. Years alone don't determine this status; genetics, environment, past health care, work, stress, injuries and many other factors contribute to a dog being classed as geriatric.

Having said that, there are charts that bracket when we might ex-

pect old Bowser to start his slide based on size and age: medium dogs (21 to 50 lb) in 9 to 11 years, and large dogs (51 to 90 lb) in 7 to 10 years. I'm sure these averages were gathered from the general population, but should hold pretty true for gun dogs.

To give you a rough idea, at present the general dog population is estimated at over 51 million, and studies show as many as 30% of these dogs are over 10 years old. This means that statistically speaking, based on age, there are over 15 million crotchety old farts grumbling around kennels and homes across the country. Maybe a good day of hunting is just what they need to get 'em back on track!

### Proper care

Hopefully we've taken good care of our dogs throughout their life, not only health care, but also by providing proper exercise, housing, and nutrition. This being the case we've assured ourselves of top performance in the short term, while better positioning our dog for a healthier and longer life. Studies at Nestle Purina PetCare have concluded that dogs keep in correct body condition through out their life live an average of 1.8 years longer and experience better daily health compared to overweight peers.

Start with a trip to your veterinarian. Ask that your dog be checked over, letting them know you are planning on beginning exercisc and

PURELY DOGS *continued on page 12*



GEAR THE WAY YOU'D DESIGN IT.™

*Clay Thompson & Queen*  
SportDOG Brand Sales Manager



The UplandHunter™ 1850 Remote Trainer/Beeper Combo

BORN AND PERFECTED IN OUR  
**1850 ACRE OFFICE.**

SPORTDOG.COM

later actual hunting. They'll give your dog a good going over, alert you to findings, provide a general opinion of your dog's condition, and bring vaccinations and parasite control up to date.

Get started on a good, complete and balanced dog food, formulated for hardworking dogs, like Purina Pro Plan. Feed your dog to maintain optimal body condition (not too heavy or too thin). The amount necessary to achieve this goal will vary based on the individual, the activity and the weather - not their age. So remember, even if you're using a good product, as activity increases and colder weather comes along you have to feed a little more each day to keep the available energy level and calories at their proper levels.

Begin an exercise program. At first walk a little each evening and progress to extended runs in field areas. Do some water work, it's great exercise especially during hot weather. Use your head, but continue to make the work harder and go for longer times to build the dog's stamina and overall toughness.

Brief yourself on signs of fatigue and stress, with older dogs you have to be especially alert. Desire and prey drive don't fade with age, so in a sense we have to protect the old ones from themselves. The earlier you can spot problems and force the dog to take it easy or stop and rest, the better off you are. Stay alert, watch tail action and body animation, use common sense and you'll be fine.

Alternate time on the ground with other dogs, older dogs need a good deal of rest. So break it up. Hunt with a friend and alternate with his dogs, or others of your own. If you just have one dog, pace yourself and base activity on that individual's ability.

While traveling pay special attention to the old dogs, be sure they're provided dry, draft free compartments with good padding so they travel comfortable and well rested. Stop often, I know it sounds crazy but veterinarians and other health care folks say dogs should be allowed some exercise and an opportunity to relieve themselves every hour or so - many recommend we stop at least every two hours.

Keep a good supply of fresh clean water available at all times. At home and in the kennel allow free access to water; while in the field always carry a container of fresh water with you so you give the old duffer a little shot every ten minutes or so.

After hunting, check them over particularly well for burrs, weed seeds and stickers, especially in long coated breeds. Older dog often don't do a very good job of cleaning themselves and burrs can irritate or even break the skin allowing for infection and further complications.

When you arrive in a new area that you plan to hunt, take the time to find a veterinarian's office and jot down the phone numbers for day-time and emergencies. Hopefully you won't have to use them, but if you do the time saved will be worthwhile.



Photo by N. Anstfeld

Golden retriever Whiskey has seen and done a lot over the years - enough to know that it always pays to keep an eye on things

Older dogs retrieving ducks from cold water should have a place to get in out of the wind between retrieves. Having an old blanket or one of the new neoprene vests is a good idea.

Old dogs can be aggravated or even injured by young, over zealous or playful pups, so this has to be a consideration when matching braces to hunt as teams.

If your dog tends to get stiff or sore after a day in the field you may also want to talk to your veterinarian about using agents that may help him deal with this problem. Something as simple as adding some fish oil capsules to his diet - or in more severe cases giving a mild anti-inflammatory like Rimadyl - may really help turn back the hands of time and ensure that you both enjoy your days in the field.

As I said at the beginning, when working older dogs we're faced with the same concerns as hunting with younger ones, but we do have to be far more alert and considerate of their needs.

Looking back it is easy to realize the importance proper health care, exercise and nutrition have on our hunting companion's longevity. Simply put, with proper care, exercise, and nutrition our dog can not only work longer each day, but they can live longer, healthier, and more productive lives.

So head for the field, but take your time and enjoy each day with your old friend. Remember, the old ones know very well why they're out there and usually are masters at finding and handling birds. Have fun; the most gratifying, memorable hunt of your life may very well have yet to come. 🐾

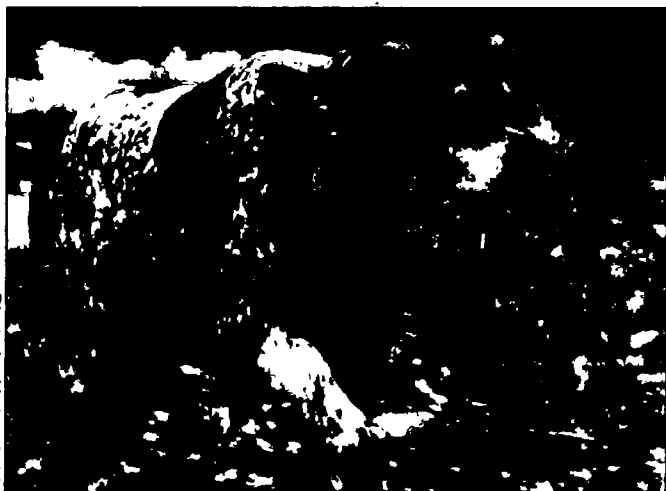


Photo by N. Anstfeld

Harley is a 12-year-old German shorthair as eager in the woods as any young pup.

# Get on Target

with Orvis

Custom-Fitted and  
Fine Consignment  
Shotguns.

2-15-9 #6-6-115  
Mourning Doves Killed \_\_\_\_\_  
Turkeys Killed \_\_\_\_\_

were nearly perfect...  
specially Luok; He...  
for a change and...  
through a lot of...  
bar that far spr...  
didn't get any...

## Custom-Fit and Consignment Shotguns

*Make your days afield more memorable than ever.*

Make your days of hunting and shooting more successful, enjoyable, and memorable. A gun custom-fitted to your specific build helps you mount, swing, and get on target with greater consistency. That consistency results in more hit birds and clays and more fun afield. Choose from our selection of custom styles and models of Caesar Guerini and Arrieta shotguns—our gunsmiths of 29 years will custom fit your gun to your specifications, so you can enjoy the benefits of a custom-fit shotgun for years. You'll find that the same care and expertise put into our

custom-fit shotguns also goes into selecting our fine-grade consignment shotguns, offered to you only after close inspection and pricing advice by our master gunsmiths. Thousands of fine sportsmen receive Orvis mailings and visit our Orvis stores and website to browse our selection, so your shotgun is sure to get the attention and the price it deserves. For help with your gun selection please, contact John Rano at The Orvis Gun Department at 802-362-2580, e-mail him at [ranoj@orvis.com](mailto:ranoj@orvis.com), or visit [www.orvis.com/customshotguns](http://www.orvis.com/customshotguns)



A few weeks ago my wife, AJC, and I were enjoying a weekend at camp. After dinner I started a fire in the fireplace while she put a deep-dish apple pie in the oven for dessert. She curled up on the couch and I got comfortable in my favorite chair preparing to settle into a book I had been eager to read for weeks.

I had completed three chapters when JC announced the pie was ready. After a big slice, I refreshed my glass of Jack Daniel's, tossed a couple logs on the fire and returned to my reading.

Later I was awakened by the cold nose of Brandy, my golden retriever, nuzzling my hand in announcement that she needed to go out. I glanced toward the couch where JC had been, hoping I could sweet talk her into taking Brandy out, but discovered it was empty. Small wonder, it was two in the morning. Sleepily I went to the closet, fumbled in the dark for a jacket and pulled out my old small-game coat.

It was a beautiful chilly moonlit night. As we walked toward the meadow I put my hands in my coat pockets to warm them and felt the jagged edges of a couple of spent shotgun shells and something soft. I pulled the shells from my pocket and discovered several grouse feathers stuffed in-

# OUR FIRST DOUBLE

by H. "Bumper" Bauer



Photos by H. Bauer

side the shells.

I had saved them as a memento when Brandy and I got our first double of grouse many years before, and like most grouse hunters, when I replaced the thorn-tattered coat I hadn't had the heart to discard it. To some it may have been only an old worn coat, but to me it was priceless memories.

As I sat on the bench at the edge of the moonlit meadow watching Brandy running back and forth in the tall grass, I glanced toward the carpet of brightly lit stars above me and let my memories carry me back to that special day so many years ago.

Two days before the Saturday opening of grouse season my pup Brandy had completed her training at Poorman's Kennels in Ligonier, Pennsylvania and Saturday morning at 5:30 a.m. we were in the truck heading for Yellow Creek State Park in Indiana county, Pennsylvania. Both of us were filled with eagerness of what the day might bring. Brandy, doing the best she could to contain her excitement, was lying on the seat next to me with her head on my lap, snoring.

Prior to his passing my Grandfather gave me his favorite grouse gun, a sweet little Browning Citori Lightning 20-gauge over-and-under with an English stock. Having a fine shotgun and good bird dog is every bird hunter's dream, and I was no different. I prayed



that our trip together today would be something special, one that would bond her and I together. At that point I had no idea how special a day this would turn out to be for both of us.

I had chosen Yellow Creek because I was familiar with the land and knew it held a good population of grouse. The prior deer season I had found an isolated hollow which had a small stream running through it, bordered on one side by hemlock and on the other by grapevines, where I felt reasonably certain Brandy and I would have the place to ourselves. That would be a plus, this being her first time out. When we arrived I was pleasantly surprised to find no other vehicles in the vicinity. There had been a heavy frost in the area during the night, now it was beginning to feel like hunting season to me.

It was starting to approach daylight as I slipped Brandy's work collar on her and began the trek toward the hollow. She put her nose to the ground the moment we left the truck and was acting more birdy with each step taken. I was impressed already; unlike the playful pup I had taken to be trained, she was displaying traits of a seasoned retriever whose attention is firmly centered on the task at hand. The trainer had told me I would be surprised in the difference in her and so far he was right on the money.

It was the kind of morning outdoor writers write about, and grouse hunters dream about. The light morning breezes were crisp and cold. The floor of the forest was littered with brightly colored leaves that crunched softly as we passed over them. The soft rays of the morning sun were only beginning to find their way through the tall hardwood trees, and were causing small pockets of silvery fog to rise from the spots they were warming.

As we neared the hollow I slid two yellow shells into the Browning and stood listening to the sounds of the woods as it woke to another day. Before moving on I took a deep breath of the cool air letting it fill my lungs with the nearly intoxicating, spicy wine scent coming from the frost covered grapes above the creek. These things that were now stimulating my senses made me think about what an old grouse-hunting pal of mine had told me on a day such as this, "If God had created anything any better, he kept it for himself." I could not have agreed with him more.

We moved on, dropped over a bench, and wound our way slowly through the tall oaks toward the creek to begin our hunt. We had only entered the outer edge of the hemlocks when I heard a deep whoosh, whoosh of wings as three turkeys departed their roost in a tall hemlock in front of me. I laughed, because as sudden as it had come, it startled Brandy as much as it had me. It caused me to jump and she had sat down as quickly as if I had commanded her to do so, then snapped her head skyward searching for the cause of the sound.

After composing myself a moment, I made a mental note of where we had seen the turkeys for future reference then we got back to the business at hand - moving forward deeper into the

hemlocks. I had not given it much thought but suddenly my prime concern became, should Brandy do her part by locating the grouse, would I be able to deliver mine by hitting them - because any grouse hunter knows - when dealing with grouse they ALWAYS do the unexpected. The last thing I wanted on our first day out was to get the "look" from her if I missed.

I had been thinking about it while walking along and had failed to realize Brandy was stopped, frozen in position, until I was almost on top of her. Sensing my approach she began inching her way forward. I quickly glanced for an open spot in the trees where I thought the bird may appear, and had just located it, when I heard a whirr of wings, promptly followed

by the sound of another I was up waiting on the open spot as the grouse appeared and watched a puff of feathers indicating a hit as I shot. The void became instantly filled with another grouse, then a second puff of feathers, as I touched off the second shot.

As the smoke cleared I watched the feathers now floating to the ground and could not believe what had just taken place. My mind quickly relived the past few seconds. Yes, there had been two grouse and yes, I had seen a puff of feathers indicating each hit. Then I saw a grouse lying on the ground several yards in front of me, but could not see Brandy. As I leaned over to pick the bird up,

I saw her trotting toward me with the second grouse in her mouth. She came to the heel position and sat down next to me. As she dropped the bird into my hand I swear to this day that she was smiling, I know I was.


I admired the striking colors on the feathers of the pair of birds I was now holding in my hands and before placing them into my coat I said a thank you to my creator for this special blessing he had bestowed this day on a man and his dog.

Brandy and I had done it, we reached a pinnacle many grouse hunters spend their whole lives striving for. We had achieved a double, and it had been done our first time out together. There had been no witness to this other than myself, my creator and a mute dog; but it mattered little to me. We knew.


After making a fuss over my dog I put the birds into my jacket, turned and started the walk back to the truck. On the way back Brandy would work her way close to me, sniff the back of my jacket then look up at me as if to say, "Hey, we did it didn't we?"

The bond formed that morning continues today. Neither of us moves as fast, but were always on the quest for another double. Though I hate to admit it, over time - because of some of my badly behaved shots - Brandy has perfected the "look." They can't all be doubles, or as in my case even singles, but that's what makes grouse hunting so special.

When we returned from the meadow I put the shells and feathers in an old wooden cigar box on the mantle above the fireplace, along with other cherished mementos of past hunts, and we turned in for the night. 🐾



**"As the smoke cleared I watched the feathers now floating to the ground and could not believe what had just taken place. My mind quickly relived the past few seconds. Yes, there had been two grouse and yes, I had seen a puff of feathers indicating each hit."**





## Introducing the RGS Canada Board of Directors

by Jeff Helsdon

The Ruffed Grouse Society of Canada hopes to be in full flight in 2009 with the new Canadian board of directors in place. Gary McWilliams, RGS Canadian Coordinator, was aiming for the first meeting of the new board in January. He sees the formation of the board as a new beginning to RGS Canada and a step towards the goal of the whole organization working together as one large entity.

The six new directors come from three areas of the country where RGS is present and bring different skills. "They all have contacts and expertise in different areas," McWilliams said. "I'm hoping to call on those different things to help make RGS Canada more visible."

McWilliams is also hoping the directors will lend a hand in getting two or three new chapters off the ground in 2009.

A list of the board of directors, each accompanied by a short biography, follows

### Jean Brisset des Nos – Quebec City



The present chairman of the Quebec City chapter, Jean Brisset des Nos has been a part of the chapter the past 11 years. He has been chairman the past six years.

He is a long-time grouse hunter, pursuing the birds through Quebec's woods since he was 15. Although he originally hunted hares and grouse, he has been hunting woodcock and grouse since he had his first bird dog in 1972. Brisset des Nos

has owned German shorthairs, Brittanys and now hunts with wire-haired pointing griffons.

Brisset des Nos comes to the RGS board with a long history of being involved in outdoor groups. He founded the Federation of Point Dog Clubs of Quebec in 1974 and has been a NAVDA member since 1973. Besides dog clubs, Brisset des Nos is on the board of the Quebec Anglers and Hunters Federation (Federation des Chasseurs et Pecheurs du Québec) and the Wildlife Quebec Foundation (Fondation de la faune du Québec).

He has been an advocate of forming a national board of directors for RGS Canada with representation from the Maritimes, Quebec and Ontario. Brisset des Nos wanted to be part of such a board when it got off the ground. His goal is to see RGS grow in Quebec.

Professionally, Brisset des Nos is a lawyer specializing in natural resources law. He has written a book on mining law and teaches forestry law at Laval University.

### John Brown – Fredericton, New Brunswick



John Brown has been a member of the Fredericton chapter committee for five years. He was attracted to it a unique way. "I'm drawn to association with things that struggle along – like underdogs," he said. "I attended many DU functions and I thought they were well established. The first Ruffed Grouse Society banquet I went to in Fredericton, I think there were 25 people there."

That was more than 10 years ago and now Brown is hoping he can help raise the profile of RGS nationally by joining the board. He wants to raise awareness of what RGS does for

conservation. Brown would also like some big businesses in the forestry industry to become involved in habitat improvement for ruffed grouse and woodcock.

Growing up, he became interested in hunting after he was taken under the wing of a friend of his grandmother's. He loved hunting and fishing and although he isn't an active hunter, he still goes to deer camp for the social aspect. Brown wants to pass that passion onto today's youth, including his own grandchildren.

"Nothing gives me more pleasure than to introduce new people to this way of life and leisure," he said. "Spreading the word about harvesting, preservation and conservation is a good thing."

Brown owns a ServiceMaster cleaning franchise in Fredericton with a son and friend, their company employs 165 people. He is an avid golfer and also has an interest in vintage trucks and performance cars.

### Mike Gillespie – Barrie, Ontario



Mike Gillespie saw joining the RGS board of directors as a way of giving back after a lifetime of bird hunting. Due to retire in four years, he saw RGS as such a vehicle. "I was looking for something to take up my time once I retired," he said. "My family has a history of giving back."

Gillespie started hunting younger than most. "My parents had pictures of me as an infant in a backpack on a hunting trip," he said. Today,

grouse, woodcock and pheasants are his main quarry. On his trips afield he is accompanied by his English setter.

Gillespie hopes to raise RGS's profile in Canada and get its message out. "There's a perception that old growth forests are the way to go," he said. "Species like grouse and woodcock need new growth forest, and the only way people will know that is if we put the word out, and hopefully in Ontario I can help do that."

Although he is now employed full-time by Canadian Pacific Railway, Gillespie has worked part-time at Ellwood Epps Sporting Goods. This Orillia business is a popular stop for hunters headed north on hunting trips and Gillespie developed many contacts while working there.

### Jim Gillespie – Quispamsis, New Brunswick



Jim Gillespie is not presently a member of the Fredericton committee, but has attended a number of the RGS dinners in the New Brunswick capital. He has a long history as a conservation volunteer and believes great things are possible for RGS.

"I watched what Ducks Unlimited has been able to do for ducks, the salmon people for salmon and I thought we could do the same for grouse and woodcock," he said. His main goal with joining the committee is to organize grouse hunters and try to improve habitat for the species.

Gillespie rated woodcock hunting as his first love, and he grew up having bird dogs all his life. His past conservation involvement



involved his second and third loves, trout and salmon fishing, respectively. The long list of organizations he's been involved with include: the Hammond River Angling Association, New Brunswick Salmon Council and the Atlantic Salmon Federation. Gillespie served two terms as a Canadian commissioner on the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization, which is a United Nations affiliate. He is also the founding chairman of the New Brunswick Wildlife Trust Fund, which is now a \$7 million fund, to create wildlife habitat.

Gillespie sees possibilities for the trust fund to help RGS. "There is a substantial amount of money available through the trust fund we haven't taken advantage of," he said. "The amount of habitat has decreased through building and suburbs growing."

Professionally, Gillespie is retired from Canadian Pacific Railway after a career that took him through 27 different positions.

### Dan Mansell – Peterborough, Ontario



Mansell's association with the Ruffed Grouse Society of Canada goes back to the earliest days of the group in the country. In the 1970s, he was working for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources in Midhurst and traveled to the United States to meet with RGS representatives there. Following the meeting, he helped get the first dinner off the ground in Toronto.

Business pressures forced him to drop out once RGS was going. Although he had left RGS Canada, grouse hunting was still one of Mansell's favorite activities. Concerned with declining grouse numbers, he joined the board of directors to try and help the problem.

A biologist by training, Mansell served several roles within the ministry before his retirement. During that tenure, he counted on

a network of ground and woodcock hunters in the field to help him monitor populations. There was also a separate woodcock wing survey done at the time. Now, the wing survey has been lumped in with the waterfowl wing survey and little, if any, additional monitoring is taking place.

"Because there's no work going on, we don't understand what's holding the numbers down," he said.

Mansell has kept his own records where he hunts and he has seen a downward trend in grouse population. "My feeling is the key to all this is habitat and there needs to be some interest in it by the provincial agencies," he said.

A bird hunter since he was 16, Mansell started out life as a setter man. He now has German shorthairs.

### Daniel Parent – Quebec City



A grouse hunter since he was 10, Parent has been involved with the Quebec City RGS chapter for the past four years.

Parent hopes RGS can work with the government to improve grouse habitat. He also sees the value of creating more places to hunt on public land "That's the toughest part - to find land to hunt on," he said. "It's getting tougher every year."

When asked to join the board of directors, he jumped at the chance. He has several things he would like to accomplish. "If we can increase the (grouse) population and make people aware it's a good thing to hunt, then it's a good start for the kids," Parent said. "It's also a good activity to do as a family."

Parent worked for IBM for 30 years, and retired two years ago. Since retiring he has started his own consulting company. 🐾

## Russell Moccasin...Proud RGS Corporate Sponsor

Russell Moccasin Company is proud to be a corporate sponsor of RGS. Russell has been making fine custom fitted hunting boots by hand from the finest leathers available for more than 110 years. Legions of satisfied customers can attest to Russell's quality, fit and comfort.

The Signature South 40 Birdshooter, far right, is the finest upland bird hunting boot made...waterproofed leather, triple vamp construction for all day comfort and support and light as a feather. Judy's Boot, (below, center) is a more lady-like boot made with buttery soft heirloom French Veal leather... lightweight with exceptional water resistance. A significant portion of the proceeds from both boots goes to RGS to help support vital grouse habitat.

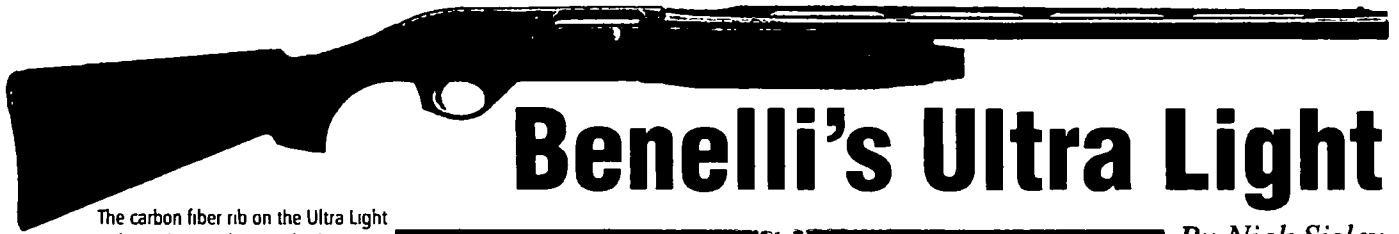
For ordering instructions and measuring form see the Russell Moccasin website, [www.russellmoccasin.com](http://www.russellmoccasin.com), click on Order Form and Fitting Instructions



285 S. W. Franklin • PO Box 309 • Berlin, WI 54923  
920-361-2252 • Fax: 920-361-3274  
[www.russellmoccasin.com](http://www.russellmoccasin.com)



Russell offers two of its most popular models...the Signature South 40 Birdshooter and the lady's Judy's Boot in special RGS-brand versions



The carbon fiber rib on the Ultra Light reduces the weight even further

# Benelli's Ultra Light

By Nick Sisley

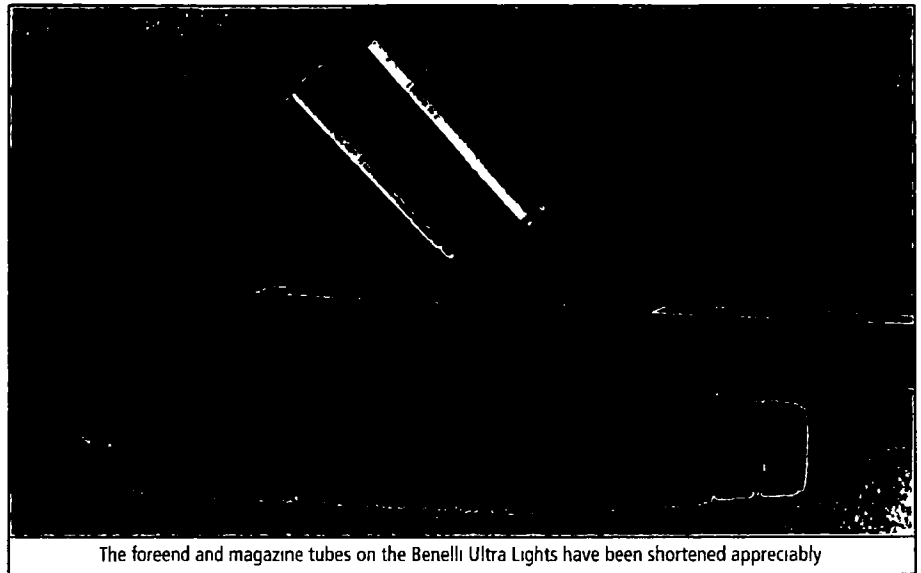
In the last issue of this magazine I wrote an article called "The Light Shotgun." In it I admitted that not every grouse hunter is a fan of very light shotguns, but that many are. So far the response has been positive – feedback from members who tend to favor light shotguns for grouse and woodcock hunting. So with this issue we are starting a new series – picking one light bird gun, telling you all we know about it – and thus hopefully broadening your knowledge of light grouse and woodcock guns in general.

For this issue we have selected Benelli's Ultra Light semi-auto. A 12-gauge version was introduced in 2007, and a 20-gauge rendition saw the light of day about 18 months later. The 12 bore weighs in at 6 pounds, the 20 is a mere 5.2 pounds. Benelli's other shotguns are light but far from this light. How did they trim so many ounces?

Benelli uses very light but strong aluminum alloy for the Ultra Light receivers, so that's one weight-saving factor. Perhaps the biggest weight saver is the engineering change to a very short foreend and magazine tube. The mag tube is so short it will only hold two shotshells. But for 99 percent of the grouse and woodcock shooting situations I've been involved in, you don't even need two shells in the magazine. When it's time for a third shot the grouse is long gone or behind too much intervening vegetation. Two shots are almost always enough – one in the chamber and one in the magazine – so the Benelli Ultra Light shotguns have all you'll ever need with a two-shell magazine max.

A steel rib atop the barrel doesn't weigh much – but a carbon fiber rib weighs even less – and that's the material Benelli has selected to save even more weight. Further, that carbon rib is the "stepped" type. This stepped rib is rather high, which is not a bad thing for most grouse-shooting situations. That's because we often encounter a "rising" bird, and this is particularly true with woodcock. The higher rib, plus maybe not having our face as tightly to the stock as we should, will typically result in a shotgun that shoots slightly higher than where we are "looking." With a higher pattern that could be a built-in lead for a rising bird.

All Benelli autoloaders use an operating system they call Inertia Driven™. These Ultra Lights do have more recoil than semi-autos that are gas operated, so neither the 12- nor 20-gauge Ultra Light will be very comfortable to shoot for more than one or two rounds of clay target work, but the same



The foreend and magazine tubes on the Benelli Ultra Lights have been shortened appreciably

is true for an equally light side-by-side, over-and-under or pump gun. So realize up front that these types of light bird guns are not for shooting 100 or so clay birds. The Inertia Driven system is, however, very reliable. You have to shoot some very light shells for these guns not to function. (If you are a re-loader realize that for semi-autos the shells should be full-length resized, otherwise the shell may not feed all the way into the chamber.)

Speaking of chambers, both the 12- and 20-gauge Ultra Lights have 3-inchers, though you'll never catch me shooting a 3-inch load out of either. Other, heavier shotguns are made for the big shells, plus 3-inch Magnums really have no place in grouse and woodcock shooting.

The walnut on these guns is treated with a process that Benelli calls WeatherCoat™. As the name implies, this finish is very protective, but, more importantly, the process also brings out the walnut grain significantly, adding to the beauty of the wood. The finish is oil-like – not glossy at all – which should please shotgun traditionalists.

The recoil pad is special, with anything but traditional looks. All the edges are rounded, reducing the possibility of the butt stock hanging up on clothing, when perhaps the only grouse of the day offers a good shot. Further, this pad is contoured so that it fits our shoulder pocket in such a way that 100 percent of the pad is touching that shoulder area. Because this pad touches more of the shoulder area than traditional flat or curved pads, felt recoil is reduced a bit. The pad is

also made of a soft, recoil-absorbing gel-like material.

This one also comes with screw chokes, though only improved cylinder, modified and full. After market I'd suggest buying a cylinder screw in for the Ultra Light. Usually we need all the "spread" we can get in grouse and woodcock gunning opportunities, especially the latter. Like the barrel, the screw chokes go through a deep-freeze process that rearranges the metal's granular structure, which Benelli claims adds strength. The company calls this their Crio treatment.

Stock dimensions are 14½" x 1½" x 2¼". There's a metal mid-bead on the rib, and a red semi-glow sight out near the muzzle. The aforementioned foreend measures only 8¾" – plus the mag screw cap. The fore-end style is with finger grooves, and there's nice checkering, probably laser cut, on both the foreend and both sides of the pistol grip. Barrels are 24-inches, and that shorter barrel looks best because of the shorter foreend. The 12-gauge Ultra Light can also be had with a 26-inch barrel.

The bottom line is that you can easily train yourself to carry either of these guns at the ready position for hours on end – so you'll be ready when one of those grouse shooting opportunities presents itself. Finally, both these guns have good looks, so you'll be proud to carry them into any bird cover. 🐦

Nick Sisley can be contacted at [nicksisley@hotmail.com](mailto:nicksisley@hotmail.com).

▶ ESCAPE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION ◀

*You seek out. You lock in. And you capture what you came for. With a Peregrine XP,  
an unparalleled tradition of engineering innovation is at your fingertips. And  
the entire natural world is yours for the taking.*

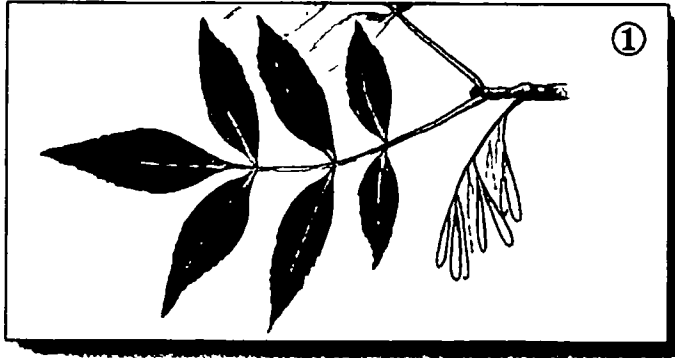
**STEINER** ▼  
GERMANY



# JUNIOR RGS BRANCHING OUT

Every good hunter knows a lot about the great outdoors, and that includes trees! One of the easiest ways to identify trees is by their leaves. After you've completed the puzzle below, you'll be able to identify five different trees that can grow in young forests. Can you find examples of each tree in your neck of the woods?

Draw lines to match each tree with the correct leaves and interesting fact. (Answers at the bottom of the page.)



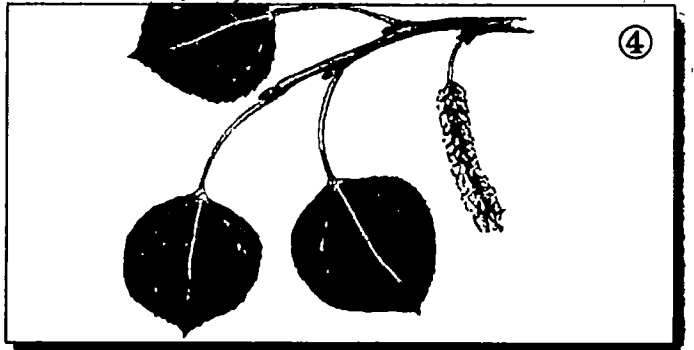
**AMERICAN BEECH**  
Leaves of this tree emerge in late spring and change from bright green to a golden bronze in the fall.

**PAPER BIRCH**  
This tree has a very distinctive smooth, white bark.

**GREEN ASH**  
This tree has a "compound" leaf, which means that each leaf is actually made up of a bunch of blades growing from the same stem.

**QUAKING ASPEN**  
This tree, which is the most widely distributed tree in North America, has leaves that tremble in the wind.

**NORTHERN RED OAK**  
This tree has bristle-tipped leaves that turn red in the fall.



Answers:

1. Green Ash

2. Northern Red Oak

3. American Beech

4. Quaking Aspen

5. Paper Birch

Illustrations reprinted with permission by the Arbor Day Foundation. Tree facts taken from [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org).

# 2nd Annual Youth Poster and Essay Contest

It's that time of year again – sharpen your pencils and dig those crayons out! We want to hear from YOU. Send us your essay or poster and you could win some great prizes. Read directions for each contest below.

Learning about the world around us is important. Everyone needs to work together to make it a better place – for people and all the animals we share it with. When you compete in our contest, you will be making your voice heard. Go ahead – you can make a difference!

## Essay Contest

Deadline: May 31, 2009

Age: 12 and up

Topic: What person has taught you the most about the outdoors?

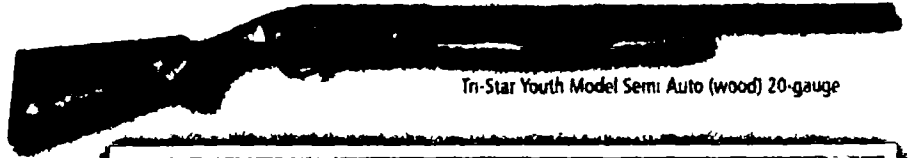
Length: 350 words

First-place winner receives:

Tri-Star Youth Model Semi-Auto (wood) 20-gauge.

(Awarding of shotgun dependent upon winner meeting all legal requirements.)

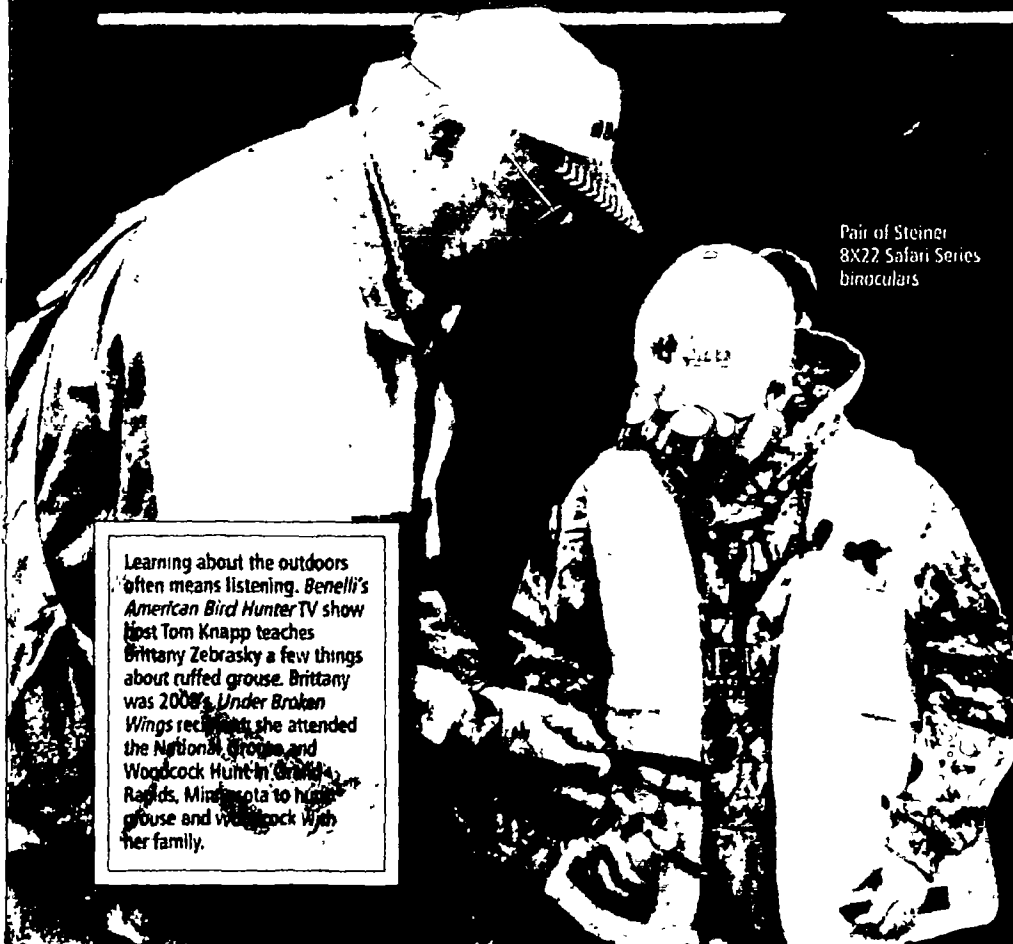
RGS 1-year membership



Tri-Star Youth Model Semi Auto (wood) 20-gauge



Brittany and her brother Corbin listen to shooting tips from Andy Duffy (left), a champion shooter and instructor. Duffy was on hand during the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt last October to offer lessons to attendees.



Pair of Steiner 8X22 Safari Series binoculars

Learning about the outdoors often means listening. Benelli's American Bird Hunter TV show host Tom Knapp teaches Brittany Zebrasky a few things about ruffed grouse. Brittany was 2008's Under Broken Wings recipient. She attended the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota to hunt grouse and woodcock with her family.

## Poster Contest

Deadline: May 31, 2009

Age: 6-11

Topic: Show some of your favorite outdoor activities.

Size: 11" X 17" poster

First-place winner receives:

Pair of Steiner 8X22

Safari Series binoculars

RGS Junior 1-year membership

All entries must include a return address to qualify. Send to:  
Editor, Ruffed Grouse Society,  
451 McCormick Road,  
Coraopolis, PA 15108.

E-mail to:  
[editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org).

Winning entries will appear in our 2009 fall issue, and posted on our website:  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

# Celebrating 15 Years of Woodland Wildlife Education The Wisconsin Coverts Project

By Jamie Nack, Wisconsin Coverts Project Coordinator

For 15 years, the Wisconsin Coverts Project has reached out to private landowners interested in improving their woodlands for wildlife. Since 1994 374 participants, representing 337 properties, have attended one of Wisconsin's 15 workshops. These participants, or "Coverts Cooperators," own - or are responsible for managing - 158,305 acres of private land in Wisconsin. Based on follow-up surveys, these Coverts Cooperators have in turn reached out to at least 7,100 additional landowners in the state, accounting for an additional estimated 276,000 acres affected in Wisconsin. (These results only take into account the efforts of Cooperators in the first year following their attendance at a workshop.) In total, the Wisconsin Coverts project has influenced the management of over 434,000 acres of private land, which is quite an accomplishment!

Wisconsin has 16 million acres of forest, more than half of which is owned by non-industrial private landowners. According to a recent U.S. Forest Service study, 54% of these private landowners have not initiated any type of land management programs on their properties - that's over 8 1/2 million acres of Wisconsin forestland! It is essential that programs and information be made available to these landowners to help them manage their land to meet their individual goals, and to maintain the overall health of the land and the wildlife that resides on it.

## Coverts History

In 1983, the Ruffed Grouse Society received a grant to research methods of educating the millions of private forest landowners about wildlife management on their land. One of the resulting projects was the Coverts idea, developed jointly by the Extension Services in Con-

necticut and Vermont. The program eventually expanded to 14 states in the East and Midwest. It was so well received that it was awarded a 1997 National Natural Resources & Environmental Management award, as a National NREM Flagship for the Cooperative Extension Service. Today, some of these states no longer offer a Coverts program, and others have reshaped the existing program into something new, for example the Vermont Coverts, Inc.

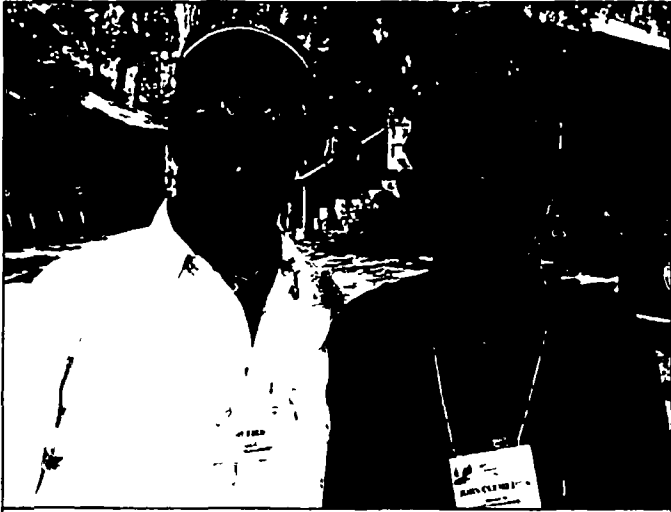
## How It Works

In Wisconsin, the workshops are organized by the Extension Wildlife staff in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. The project name "Covert," pronounced "kuh-vert," is a 14th century English word to describe a dense thicket that provides shelter for wildlife. There are two primary goals of the Coverts Project. The first is to demonstrate various forest habitat management practices to private, non-industrial forest landowners who wish to increase the numbers and types of wildlife on their property using proven scientific methods. The second goal is to develop a corps of volunteers (Coverts Cooperators) that encourage and help other landowners in their community to manage their land in a biologically sound manner.

Workshop participants are given a well rounded perspective, one in which management for wildlife habitat is important, and is compatible with other goals such as recreation, aesthetics, and timber production. This is largely accomplished through classroom presentations and field trips in an intensive 3-day workshop at various locales around the state. Forest and wildlife professionals from a variety of agencies and organizations share their expertise with par-



Coverts participants in a field workshop. Photo by Jamie Nack.



John Clemetsen (right) and Thomas Dew III are Wisconsin Coverts Cooperators and members of the T Stanton Armour RGS chapter of Chicago. The two are helping to coordinate a second Coverts workshop in 2009. Photo by Drake Senn



Scott Craven, Extension Wildlife Specialist, discusses small mammal identification and management. Photo by Jim LaLuzerne

Participants also leave with a large resource binder full of relevant publications and contacts to use after the workshop.

## Workshop Logistics

The curriculum for the Wisconsin Coverts Project includes a combination of classroom presentations and field tours. Wildlife and forestry professionals from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology at University of Wisconsin in Madison, the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS), and other organizations and agencies provide science-based information to help guide sound management.

Topics covered during the three day workshop include principles of wildlife management; how to conduct a successful timber harvest; how to identify and control invasive plants; small mammal, songbird, reptile and amphibian identification and management; how to deal with nuisance wildlife; how to inventory and monitor wildlife on your land; and many more.

Gary Zimmer, Sally B. Searle Senior Regional Biologist for RGS, plays a vital role in the success of the Wisconsin Coverts Project by helping to secure funding for the program, promoting upcoming workshops and speaking at the events. Zimmer provides detailed information on early-successional forest management for ruffed grouse, woodcock, and the numerous other wildlife species that benefit from this habitat. "These workshops highlight the role the landowners have as stewards of their land, and they quickly find out that doing nothing on their property may not have favorable consequences over the long term," states Zimmer. "The Ruffed Grouse Society is proud to be a part of this important program."

Participants also receive information on how to develop a written wildlife management plan for their land. They are encouraged to involve the future heirs of their property to maintain continuity in management. The last portion of the workshop focuses on outreach. Cooperators receive tips on working with the media, organizing a field day, and coordinating management efforts with their neighbors. At the completion of the workshop, participants become "Coverts Cooperators," and in doing so they agree to motivate and assist landowners in their home

counties to achieve their woodland management goals.

## 15 Years of Lasting Impressions

Coverts Cooperators have used the information they learned by putting ideas into practice on their land; sharing the concepts with family, friends, and other landowners; helping others obtain management assistance from professionals; conducting a workshop or

WISCONSIN COVERTS *continued on next page*



**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

# EMBROIDERED APPAREL

**Bob Allen  
Vented Mesh-Back  
Shooting Shirt**

**\$41.00**

RGS-142K



**1.800.550.2698 • WWW.SHOPRGS.COM**

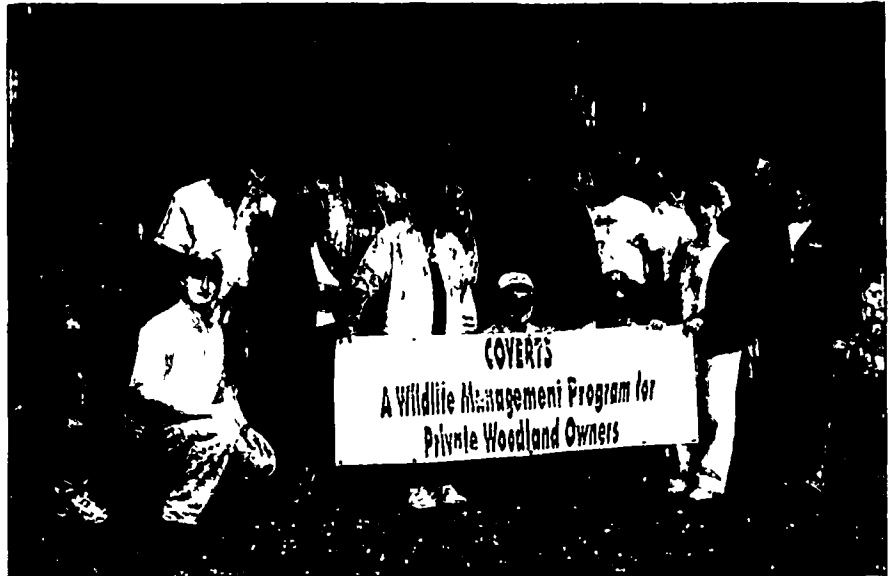
gathering on their land to demonstrate forest and/or wildlife management practices; being members of local planning commissions, town boards, and committees working on issues impacting our natural resources; and writing articles about land stewardship for local newspapers or magazines.

Participating in Coverts gives landowners the knowledge and confidence they need to be able to manage their land. Cooperators report a wide range of active management activities on their properties including: timber harvesting, creating brush piles, planting trees and shrubs, adding artificial nesting structures, establishing food plots, managing and restoring wetland and grassland habitat, and even inventorying and monitoring wildlife.

Stacey Steers, a 2005 Wisconsin Coverts Cooperator, has used the information he learned during the Coverts workshop to help him better manage his property. But he didn't stop there, he has been helping his neighbors reach their goals as well. Steers says, "The Coverts project is an exceptionally educational program. I have never attended a better organized, more informational workshop. The various experts that are brought in to give seminars truly are adept in their fields. Habitat management is one of the best ways to help all wildlife species that reside in an area, and the Coverts Project will get you thinking about everything from salamanders to ruffed grouse to black bears, and how each may interact with the other. Sharing the knowledge with neighbors and friends is another great concept promoted by Coverts. Habitat management doesn't have to stop at a property line, and neighbors working together can make a big difference. I currently help two of my neighbors manage their forest land to control invasive species and encourage natural re-growth, which in turn, helps control invasive species on my property. I wish I had heard about the Coverts Project years earlier so I would have had more knowledge to apply to my own management projects. I'd highly encourage anyone with property to attend."

### Wisconsin Coverts Project Sponsors

The Coverts Project would not be possible without the support of sponsors. Since its inception major workshop sponsors have included the Ruffed Grouse Society, Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, and the University of Wisconsin Extension. In recent years, significant support has been received from the Louisiana Pacific Corporation as well as funding through grants and donations from past Coverts participants. The



Participants of the 2003 Wisconsin Coverts Project Workshop Photo by Jamie Nack

Wisconsin Coverts Project is always looking for additional sponsors so efforts can be expanded. The positive feedback from participants and presenters suggests that this program will keep building in Wisconsin. Coverts has a sound philosophy behind it, landowners have done much to enhance and protect wildlife habitat while benefiting from the resources on their land. They have been excellent ambassadors of forest and wildlife habitat management.

### 2009 Wisconsin Coverts Project Workshops

Two workshops are being planned for 2009. The traditional Wisconsin workshop will be held August 13-16 at Kemp Natural Resources Station in Woodruff, Wisconsin. Any Wisconsin woodland owner is eligible to apply. The second workshop will be at the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation in Dundee, IL August 27-30. The second workshop has been made possible thanks to a donation from the T. Stanton Armour Chicagoland RGS Chapter and the efforts of John Clemetsen and Thomas Dew, III (Wisconsin Coverts Cooperators and RGS chapter members). "Our chapter is pleased to be an integral part of the Illinois workshop that will target absentee landowners who own land in Wisconsin, but reside in Illinois," states Thomas Dew.

Each workshop is limited to 25 participants. For more information on the Wisconsin Coverts Project visit: [http://forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu/wl\\_extension/wicovertsproject.html](http://forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu/wl_extension/wicovertsproject.html), or contact Jamie Nack, Wisconsin Coverts Project Coordinator at [jlack@wisc.edu](mailto:jlack@wisc.edu). Applications due June 15, 2009.

Ruffed Grouse Society  
 Limited Edition Prints  
 often called the 20th century's most important bird, is an internationally recognized star of wildlife art.  
 Ruffed grouse society  
 Photo from a wide area

Sugarloaf Smooth Bores  
 New & Used Shotguns  
 Buying and selling collector quality shotguns from American manufacturers including Browning, Fox, Parker, and Ithaca. Large selection of hard to find pieces. Guns shown by appointment only. Contact Dave Sizemore at:  
 606-780-2329  
[www.sugarloafsmoothbores.com](http://www.sugarloafsmoothbores.com)



# Some Natural Resources Help Energize the World, Others Need Our Energies to Help Improve Their World

A leading producer of coal and natural gas, CONSOL Energy also maintains a corporate policy of developing or donating surplus property for wildlife enhancement, recreational use and conservation.

This is acreage with incredible potential as fish and wildlife habitat. And CONSOL Energy is exploring innovative ways to improve the food and cover that will benefit a variety of wildlife throughout its various operating areas. Sites range from forested areas, through farmlands, to sagebrush prairie.

A part of CONSOL Energy's effort involves partnering with leading wildlife and conservation groups, such as the Ruffed Grouse Society, the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. CONSOL Energy is committed to environmental stewardship, sustainable forestry programs and related initiatives.

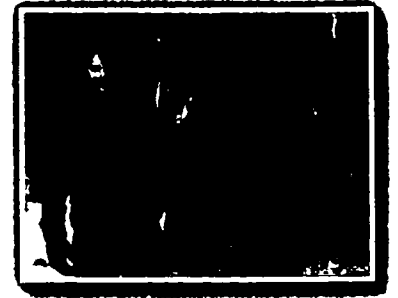


**CONSOL ENERGY**

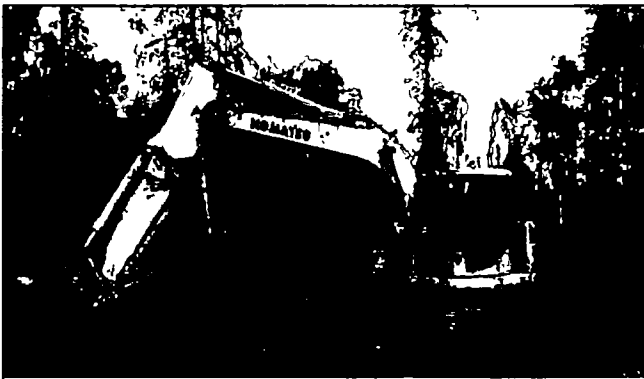
CONSOL Energy – using its energies to give wildlife a boost.  
*Responsible coal-mining benefits the land and all those who make it their home.*

# South Central Alaska RGS

## A Well-Rounded Approach to Conservation



2008 Pheasant Hunt Classic participants.



This RGS funded scarification project was completed in order to regenerate early-successional stages of hardwood forest. The work was done on Zero Lake Road in the Houston Timber Sale Area (HTSA) located in the Mat-su area

The South Central Alaska RGS Chapter in Anchorage, Alaska covers a lot of territory. Their habitat work and projects vary widely. "We have many causes – and it's always possible to add more. We're open to having people spread out and do things besides habitat enhancement and direct grouse-related programs. If you know someone working for a particular cause – it is easier to work with them [to make a difference]," explains Karen Steen, a longtime RGS member who handles most of the chapter's paperwork and record-keeping.

Many of the chapter members have taken ownership of an event or project that they organize, and grow from year to year. The result is an ever-changing range of chapter activities from habitat rehabilitation projects to concentrated efforts to influence current wildlife management initiatives in the state. (A summary of projects in Alaska is included in this issue's Biologist Report. Summary on page 44.)

One of the longest running projects the chapter helps to fund is in the Matanuska Valley - also known as the Mat-su - and is located about 25 miles north, northeast of Anchorage. 2008 marked the 7th year of financial support from the chapter for aspen habitat management efforts on the Mat-su Moose Range. A total of more than \$155,000 have been contributed by the chapter over the years, and this effort is beginning to have a real impact on habitat in the area. The young-forest habitat being fostered looks promising for the local ruffed grouse population. "The aspen habitat management project on the Mat-Su Moose Range is one of the finest examples anywhere in the country of a long-term commitment to improving habitat conditions for ruffed grouse," said Dan Dessecker, Director of Conservation Policy for the Ruffed Grouse Society. "RGS members in Alaska can be proud of their accomplishments."

This year the chapter also got involved with something a little less traditional when they helped to oppose a recent initiative put on the state ballot. Though the initiative was about wolf control, it had the potential to impact the future of wildlife management as a whole. "Although the wolf was the subject, we were fighting the principles upon which the initiative was based. You have to manage wild populations based on biology and not emotion – as was the case in this proposal," Steen explained. They were able to defeat the initiative, thus illustrating the importance for successful conservation efforts to be supported by legislation.

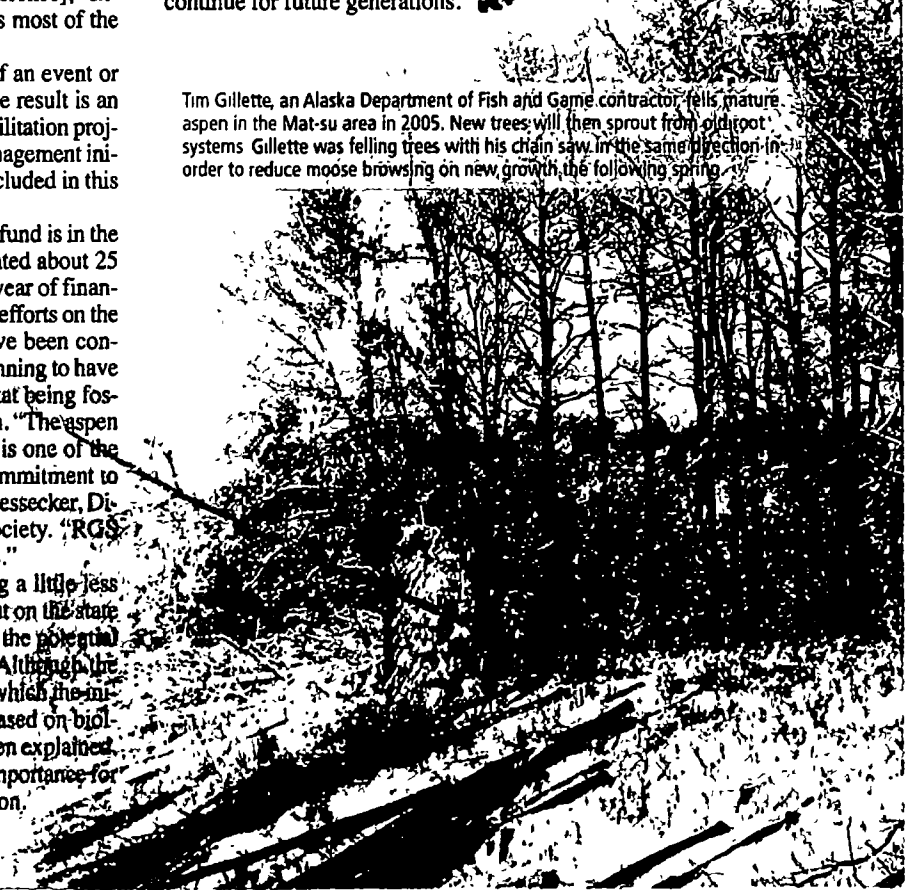
One of the reasons the South Central Alaska chapter is able to work on so many projects is that they draw upon the wealth of local experts within the chapter, which includes a game biologist and forestry employee. However, as things change and people inevitably move on, the chapter faces another challenge. "We need to bring new people into the program. We have to make sure we have people to continue. It's been 15 years [for some of our members.]" Steen says.

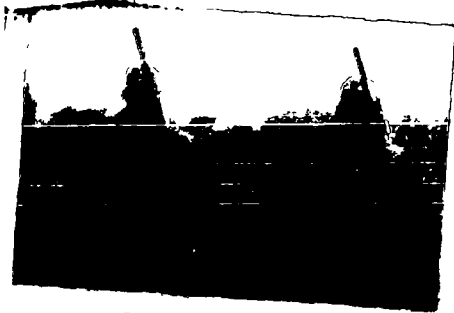
Another project the chapter has been exploring is their support of the Under Broken Wings (UBW) program. UBW has sponsored a disadvantaged youth's participation at the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Minnesota for the past three years. Dr. Joe Chandler, an RGS Board member and one of the founders of UBW, helped to organize a pheasant hunt last fall to raise money for the program. (For more information on UBW, see the article in this issue.)

The Pheasant Hunt Classic was held in November, 2008 and gave many youth a chance to shoot a bird. Not only did the event expose youth to hunting, but it also raised just over \$5000 –largely due to the event sponsors. "This type of event is easy to organize, and the kids love it!" Chandler says. He also stresses that passing the hunting tradition on to the next generation is critical for the survival of the sport.

The concern for future generations is a sentiment echoed by many RGS volunteers and members – not only in the Anchorage chapter. Steen speaks to the heart of the issue when she says simply, "I support wildlife management because I'm a hunter and I want to see these opportunities continue for future generations."

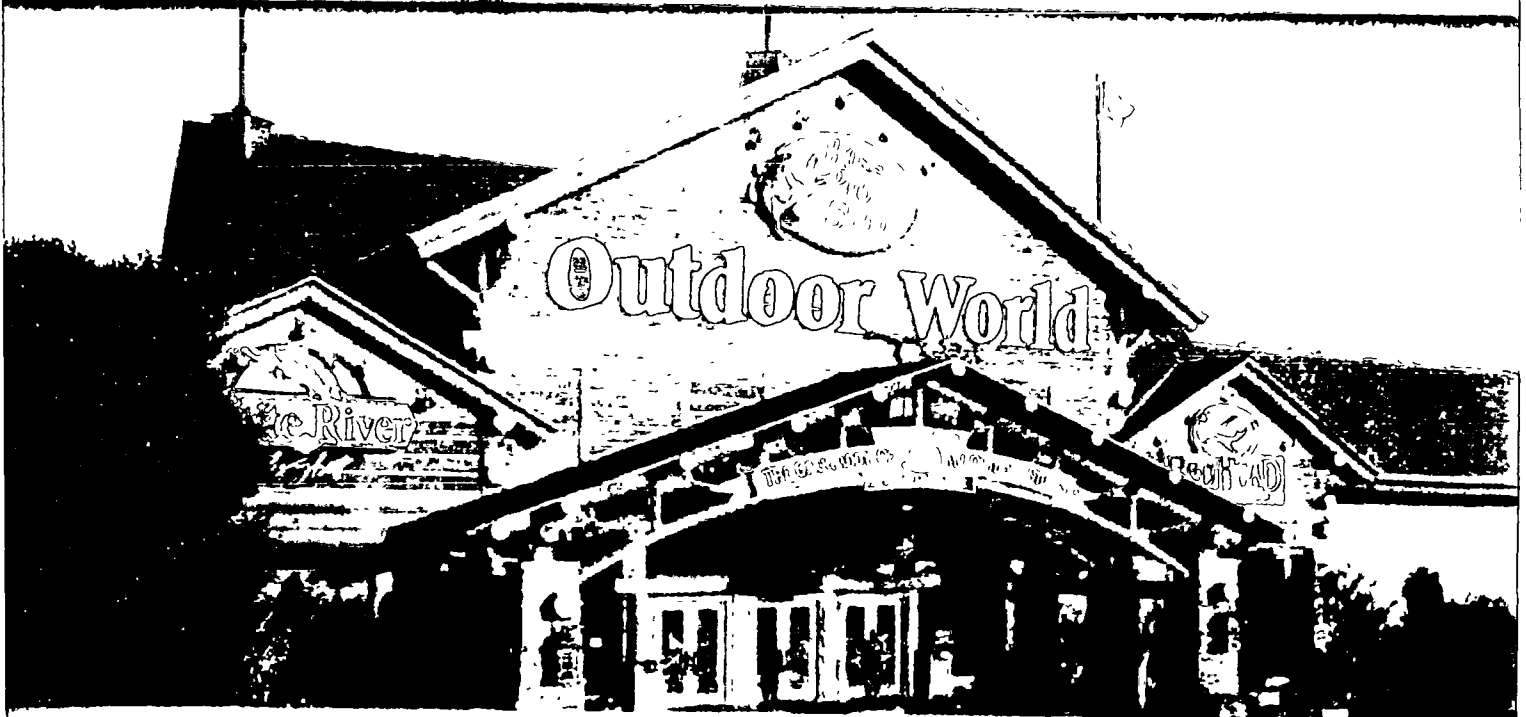
Tim Gillette, an Alaska Department of Fish and Game contractor, fells mature aspen in the Mat-su area in 2005. New trees will then sprout from old root systems. Gillette was felling trees with his chain saw in the same direction in order to reduce moose browsing on new growth the following spring.





*Welcome*  
**FISHERMEN,  
 HUNTERS,  
 AND  
 OTHER  
 LIARS.**

Welcome, outdoorsmen! We built it just for you. It's true. Your local Bass Pro Shops® store is the only one of its kind. Sure, you'll discover in all our stores the same Low Price Guarantee, expert sales associates, and the best selection of outdoor products around. But the specific gear you'll find is unique to each location, because we understand that the Kansas grasslands are very different from Ohio hardwoods. And that's no lie.



Shop online at  
[basspro.com](http://basspro.com)

For a FREE catalog  
 1-800-BASSPRO

For an adventure in itself  
 Visit Our Stores Nationwide

BP-31312

Very much  
great shots  
weather. The

... about dogs.

Rule number one in the Hunting Tales Primer says you must include sensory details. Make sure your audience – mostly likely other hunters who have experienced the exact same thing you have but let you tell your story so they can tell theirs, thereby gaining the advantage in proving that their trophy's bigger than your trophy, so to speak – can really “experience” your tale. Given how important smell is to hunters, their bird dogs and their lunch, it's surprising that so few stories focus on olfactory sensations. To that end .

Six of us plus German wirehaired pointer Max were sardined into a float plane, taxiing down the Naknek River in King Salmon, Alaska, about to take off for ptarmigan covers to the south. Above the musty smell of midweek hunting clothes rose another scent “Scent” is wrong. It was a stench.

“Oh, Max Stunk-O,” gasped one of the passengers. “What did you eat?”

“Rotten, foul.”

**“NEVER HAD A  
SMELL SO VILE  
BEEN LOCKED  
INTO A SPACE SO  
SMALL OCCUPIED  
BY HUNTERS  
SO MANY.”**

Max, of course, was oblivious. Eager for the hunt, visions of coveys rising off the tundra, our canine toxic waste dump wagged and wagged, nuzzling into whatever lap he could wriggle. We gagged and gagged, fists clenched to our faces, sucking small gulps of air only when consciousness started to dim. Never had a smell so vile been locked into a space so small occupied by hunters so many.

“No way!” cried pilot Dan. This, of course, was an appropriate judgment call, since none of us was particularly eager to fly under the guidance of a man rendered blind by noxious fumes.

Dan turned the plane around and taxied back to the dock as quickly as the aircraft and river currents would allow. Flinging the door open, he simultaneously leapt out, tied down the plane, yanked Max dockward and apologized to his nauseated guests. A hose and bottle of liquid Joy (never better named than for that moment) were produced, and Max got the full dockside spa treatment.

As the sud's foamed in and the hose pounded water out, gray slime ran down the dog's legs. Oozing like oil, reeking like rancid butter over Limburger cheese – bear poop, recently rolled in, pungent bear poop – spread across the dock.

We took to the sky 15 minutes later, dubbing the morning's event the “First Official Bear Poop Gate Return” in aviation history. Max just smiled. We were going hunting.

Short tales are good, too, brevity being the soul of wit (unless you're a politician trying to convince taxpayers that a million dollar bond issue is needed to set up a relief fund for wayward llamas).

Try this one... Idaho chukar hunt

... late-day sunshine

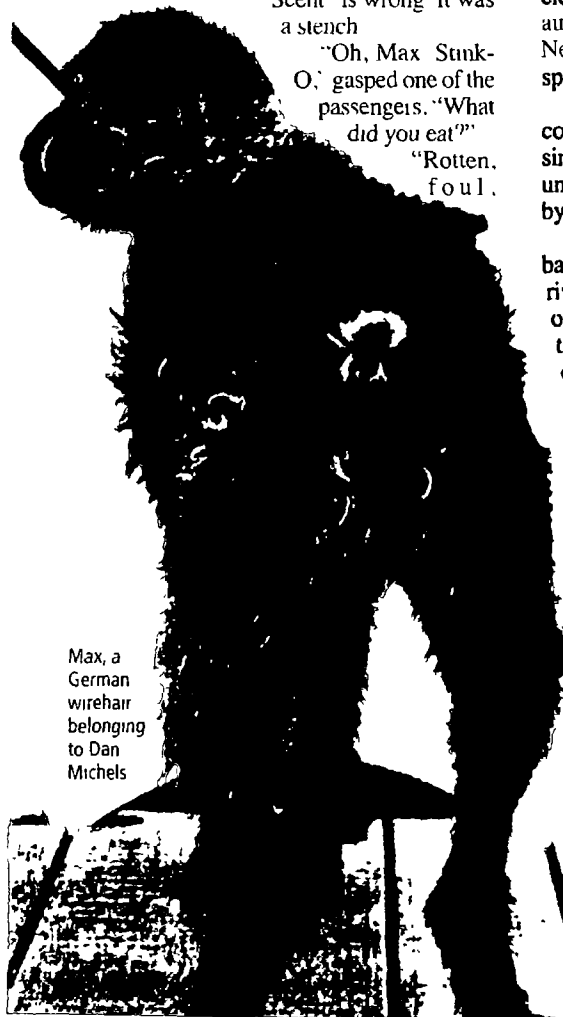
... night plotting revenge on their human counterparts whose opposable thumbs operate e-collar buttons. With little doggie flashlights hidden under their little doggie pillows, all the Buddys and Rugers and Gunners of the world wait until lights out, then pull out database spreadsheets for midnight analyses. Constructing schematics that rival the space shuttle's wiring diagram, they work up human humiliation plans sophisticated enough to boggle the mind of a Rhodes Scholar. My younger German shorthair is one such fiend.

We were grouse hunting in eight inches of fresh snow. Rimfire had his year-round four-pawed drive. I lumbered on snowshoes. Perceiving my disadvantage, he bolted after a wild flush, probably figuring his speed and grace would astonish the bird to the point of surrender. Breaking open my over-under, I whistled him back. That sounds simple unless you've ever tried to recall a small thermonuclear device launched from a fighter jet at 37,000 feet.

After honking and blowing on the whistle for the nine minutes and 42 seconds customary to the command-and-response sequence he and I agreed upon after several years' embarrassment at training clinics, Rimfire appeared. He hurled toward me at approximately 800 mph. Six feet away, he put on the brakes and skidded on the slick snow, smashing to a halt with one foot jammed under my right snowshoe.

This caused him to howl and lurch upwards. That caused him to smack his head full throttle against my gun, which, in turn, caused the unfired shell to jam itself under the ejector unit. In the meantime, I performed a double-prone-back-gainer high dive maneuver while completing a quadruple inside axel toe loop guaranteed to make Olympic skating history.

That's pretty much the end of the story. After he was done laughing, Rimfire at least had the good manners to give me a condescending yet somewhat sympathetic tongue slurping while I sat rumpward in the snow wondering which would happen first – me getting the shell free or him having the lump on his head stop growing. I know which I was rooting for.



Max, a German wirehair belonging to Dan Michels



Smith & Wesson set out to develop a shotgun that not only measured up to our heritage, reputation and loyal customers – but one that would also make history, both personally and in a grander sense. One that would rest in your hands as an elegant and trusted hunting partner, worthy of being handed down for generations to come. This fine shotgun's Heirloom Warranty™ is proof of our confidence in the gun by not only warranting the shotgun for the life of the original owner, but also the life of the person they declare to be the heir of this fine product.

And so the Elite Series™ came into being from the workbenches of our experts and some of the world's finest artisans. Every facet of each gun's creation is quite literally hand-fitted, hand-carved, hand-engraved and hand-assembled to exacting detail as a matter of personal pride.



*Elite Series*™



Smith & Wesson  
smith-wesson.com

NASDAQ: SWHC

**LP Building Products** are made using wood from third-party certified wood procurement systems and certified forests.

The green attributes built into LP products are recognized in green building certification programs across North America.

Join LP in protecting and developing Ruffed Grouse habitat.

Contact LP about forest land and ruffed grouse habitat management options in the lake states.



For land management help, contact  
Larry Heathman  
906.542.7321  
larry.heathman@lpcorp.com



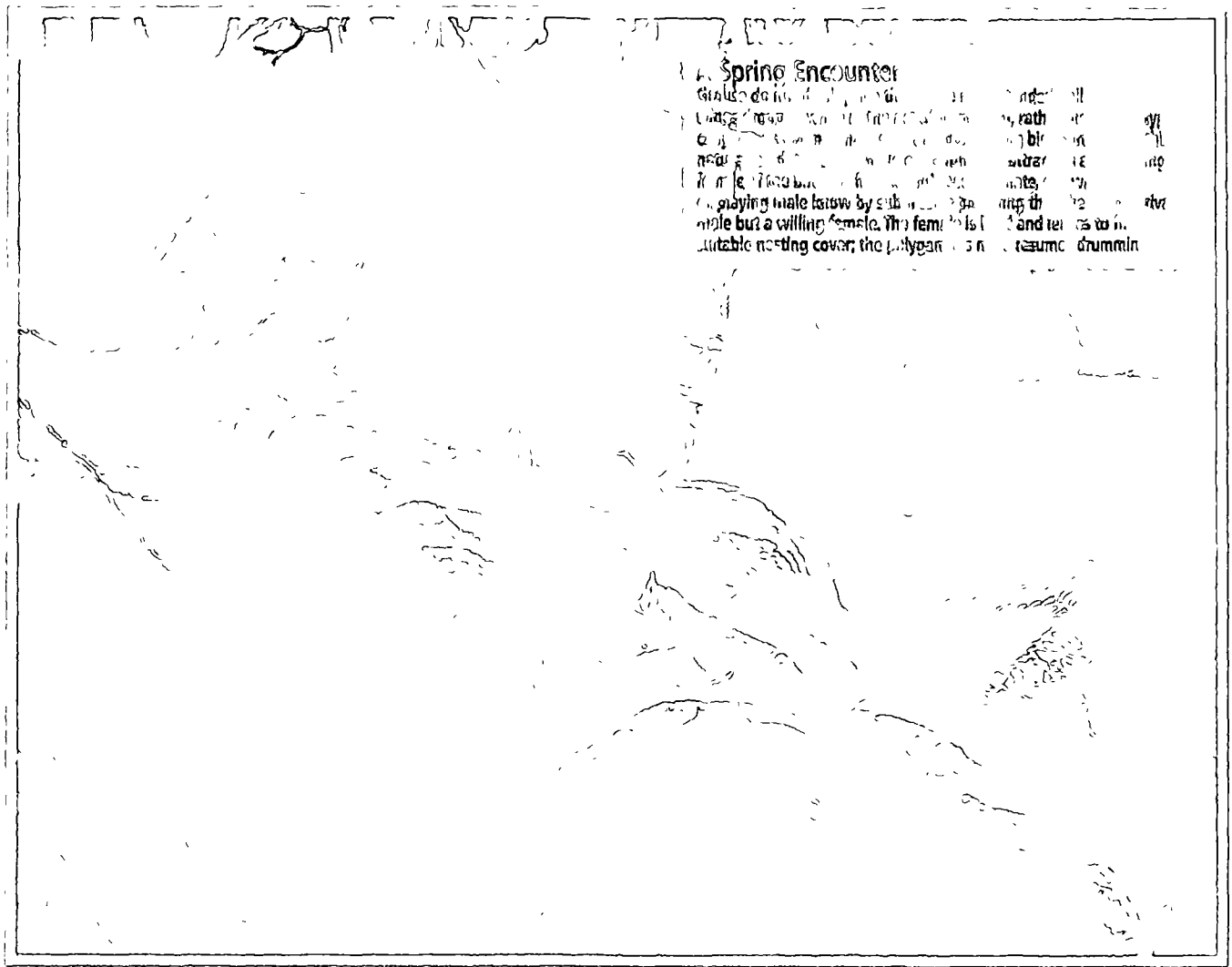
LP SolidStart Engineered Wood Products

There's Lumber.  
And Then, There's Better.

LP<sup>®</sup> SolidStart<sup>®</sup> Engineered Wood Products are designed to outperform traditional lumber. They offer superior strength, durability and consistency—with no knots, splits or voids. They're available in longer lengths than lumber as well. That means more design flexibility, faster installation and no need for culling. Plus, all are backed by a Lifetime Limited Warranty. LP SolidStart Engineered Wood Products. Better than lumber.

**LP SOLIDSTART<sup>®</sup>**  
ENGINEERED WOOD PRODUCTS

LSL | LVL | I-Joists | Rim Board | LPCorp.com | **WOODWORKERS**



### Spring Encounter

A ruffed grouse is seen in a forest setting. The grouse is shown in profile, facing right, with its characteristic ruff feathers around its neck. The background features a dense forest with various trees and foliage, rendered with fine lines and cross-hatching for texture and shading. The drawing is framed by a simple black border.

Artwork by Christopher Smith

*"Seasons of Grouse in the Midwest" came full circle in our most recent issue of RGS, Winter 2008. In 2009 we move to the eastern part of the country. As we follow the ruffed grouse through the seasons, regional variations in habitat and climate will become apparent, as well as the particular survival challenges a grouse faces in the eastern region. The illustrator for our centerfold this year is Christopher Smith, a wildlife artist from Interlochen, Michigan. The text of this centerfold first appeared in the New Hampshire Wildlife Federation Newsletter in 2005.*

## Spring in the East

Many outdoor enthusiasts think of spring in primarily visual terms: grass greening, leaves emerging, flowers blooming, tax forms covered in red ink; we humans are clearly a sight-oriented lot. But to many hunters and other birding enthusiasts, spring also brings with it a symphony of desirable sound waves which can foretell the potential for success afield in the coming fall. Along with airy trills and warbles of songbirds setting up territories and sharp percussions of red-bellied, pileated, hairy and downy woodpeckers, early morning in the eastern US typically resounds with the muffled timpani drumming of ruffed grouse.

Ruffed grouse - or too many of us "paa'trich" - are a keystone species of gamebird in eastern forests. The presence of ruffed grouse serves as a good indicator of beneficial habitat diversity for just about every other bird and mammal in our forests. In short, if you've got ruffed grouse around, you've likely got habitat conditions that will readily support some, if not all, of the needs of most other forest wildlife.

Over the course of the year, ruffed grouse need, and move around in, several distinctly different habitat types that serve critical functions in their life history. Ultimately, the availability of these habitat components and diversity dictates their ability to reproduce and survive.

## Drumming Logistics

In the spring ruffed grouse males actively seek out areas in which to establish a breeding territory and attract hens for mating. This territoriality is sparked each April by a combination of day-length and other environmental factors. The most noteworthy feature of the male ruffed grouse's breeding display is the "drumming" he performs to announce his presence in the forest to attract hens, as well as warn other males away from his established territory.

On any given early morning from about April 10th to June 1st, you can hear the deep, low-frequency "thump, thump, thumping" of ruffed grouse resounding across the countryside. While many people think these sounds are made by the male beating his wings against his breast feathers, what is really happening is more of a miniature "sonic booming" than a physical slapping of wings on feathers.

By cupping and sharply snapping both wings forward, a small, low-pressure vacuum is created in the airspace around the grouse. When surrounding air rushes in to fill that vacuum, the result is a deep, resonant "thump." As the grouse increases the frequency of these wingbeats from slow to fast during any one "drum roll," the thumps start running together to the point where they are often described as sounding like an old, single-cylinder diesel tractor engine coming to life.

Of course, hen grouse and humans aren't the only ones to hear this drumming, which can carry across the landscape for over half a mile when the wind is right. Hungry grouse predators also have their ears open for this morning dinner bell, and the drumming habitat selected by the male grouse is key to preventing a drumming grouse from becoming a quick meal at sunrise.

## Three Factors of a Drumming Location

There are three key components necessary in high-quality ruffed grouse drumming habitat. First, it must provide

This series of sketches explains the logistics of the stroke, which - after a backstroke (see 2) - moves forward and inward toward the body (3), and upward (most likely for sound projection) all at the same time (4-6), before returning to the beginning of the stroke position (7).







**Deep Woods Drummer**

A male grouse drums in his activity center for territorial display and to attract females. Each drum begins with several singular beats, then commences with between 40 and 50 beats in roughly 10 seconds. Photoperiod, or the length of daylight, is the main trigger for drumming. Most drumming occurs primarily in the spring, although males will drum throughout the year. Grouse will drum a fair amount in Autumn, usually in relation to establishing territory. Fall drummers can be young birds just learning how to drum and instinctively responding to the urges of a "proper length" photoperiod, or older males who have lived there for several years and are reasserting territorial claims.



**Pileated woodpecker**

Pileated woodpeckers are one of many non-game species that benefit from the management of grouse

**Barred Owl**

Owls, such as the Great Horned and Barred Owls, are also adept at killing grouse. Excellent binocular vision, keen hearing, and patience equal success for these predators. Owls also possess rather specialized feathers on the leading edge of their wings that contribute a sound-dampening effect to their flight, allowing for a virtually silent approach as they glide toward unsuspecting prey.

**Northern Goshawk**

The Northern Goshawk is an aggressive accipiter built for woodland hunting and a particularly efficient grouse predator. They hunt beneath the forest canopy and use their longer tails for maneuvering in dense cover at high speeds. With long talons and a hooked beak designed for ripping flesh and bones, goshawks are quite effective at catching and devouring grouse.

a dense, impenetrable canopy of tree tops to protect the male from predators such as hawks, owls. This means the site must be made up of mostly very young trees, and that the canopy must be tangled and twiggy enough to not allow winged predators to fly through it easily, if at all.

Another key element in this habitat is having an open enough understory at ground level to allow drumming grouse to see mammalian predators - such as bobcats, foxes, domestic cats, or fisher - before they're close enough to strike. In most of the eastern US, this required combination of dense canopy and more open understory is typically present in areas of 8 to 10-year-old young hardwood forest re-growth. This habitat usually occurs after a timber harvest or as old farm fields revert to woodland.

One last, important aspect of good drumming habitat is its ability to help the males' drumming be heard across the landscape. This is aided by the presence of some type of elevated structure or small topographic feature that serves as a drumming "stage." Typically, the trunks of fallen trees are favored - however any natural elevation will do, such as a large stone, old stone wall, or dirt mound.

**What Drumming Counts Mean to Hunters**

Now, given the variables of weather, temperature, wind, habitat conditions and population sex-ratios in a given area on a given day, there's no real correlation between how many grouse you hear drumming in the spring, and the number of females that will ultimately nest in that area or how many chicks will be produced. However, scientific study over time has found a fairly good relationship between how many grouse are heard drumming in the spring and hunter harvest of grouse the subsequent fall: the more drumming heard across the landscape, the greater the fall harvest will be. So if you're a grouse hunter, you can at least get some idea of what the coming season may hold by doing some audio sampling in April and May.

## The Benefits of Sound Forest Management

Northeastern hardwood forests are generally comprised of maples, beech, birches, oaks, aspen and some conifers, which together provide the habitats ruffed grouse and many other forest wildlife species prefer. Although grouse are generally more numerous in aspen dominated forests of the northern mid-western states, they're likewise common in our northeast hardwood forests, so long as suitable habitat exists.

Vigorous hardwood regeneration habitat between one and 15 years old provides the most critical habitat, brood rearing cover - for ruffed grouse as well as American woodcock, yellow-breasted chats, blue-winged warblers, eastern towhees, eastern cottontail rabbits and many songbirds and mammals. Unfortunately, many of these species are declining throughout the Northeast as our forests continue to grow older and young forest cover becomes more uncommon.

Because the regeneration of many native hardwood species requires substantial sunlight, active forest management is required to maintain the progression of reproduction and growth required to build a foundation for the more mature forest cover required by ruffed grouse for drumming and nesting habitat. Thus, as a by product of active, well-balanced forest management, all the important habitats for grouse and many other wildlife species will be created.

Old  
Growth  
Forest  
Habitat



Young  
Forest  
Habitat



Dutchman's Britches (*Dicentra cucullaria*)

A small wildflower native to the same areas of the country and same habitat as Trillia, Dutchman's Britches have blossoms that resemble trousers hanging upside down to dry. Like Trillia this wildflower needs full sun to bloom, but it also needs the leaf cover and rich soil of a mature forest. As a result, its annual cycle is carried out in the spring before the trees fully leaf and shade out the plant.



Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*)

A common plant in the Northeastern and Upper Great Lakes forests from April to June, Trillia are an ordinary sight in mixed upland and deciduous forests - a habitat where grouse are often found. Some color variations are red, and are called by the common name "wake robins."

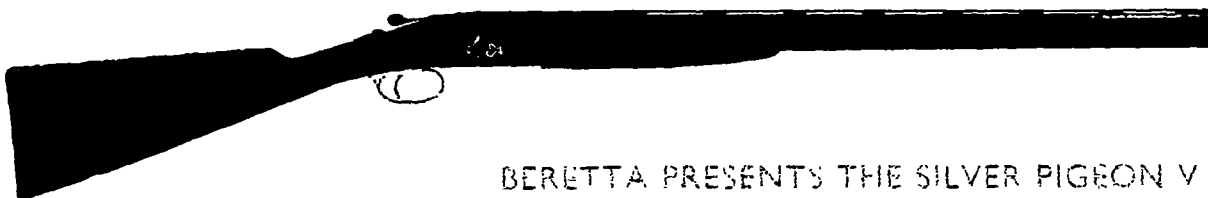
## Coming Summer 2009

Once hen grouse hone in on a male's breeding territory, they breed and leave the site in search of high quality nesting habitats. This habitat is markedly different from the required drumming habitat of the male. In the next issue, we'll examine nesting habitat and how it can make - or break - the success hens have in laying and incubating a clutch of eggs.

Until then head out early some morning to listen for these woodland drummers, as they add their part to the soundscape of spring in the East.

ONE LOOK AND YOU KNOW IT'S BERETTA.  
ONE TOUCH AND YOU KNOW IT'S THE BEST.

THE UPLAND SPORTSMAN COLLECTION:  
687 SILVER PIGEON V, \$3,575 • MEN'S UPLAND CORDURA® JACKET, \$195



### BERETTA PRESENTS THE SILVER PIGEON V

500 years of Italian craftsmanship yield flawless reliability and refinement in Beretta's Silver Pigeon V. Imitated but never equaled, the Silver Pigeon series is the world's finest collection of over-and-under shotguns, unrivaled in fit and feel. As one of its most distinctive members, the durable Silver Pigeon V includes 12- and 20-gauge models as well as 28-gauge and .410-bore shotguns. Each offers appropriate weight and a properly scaled frame for exceptional balance, instinctive pointability, and handling. Available in pistol and English grip versions, with color-cased frames and gold-filled game bird inlays, it's truly a masterwork. See it, and an extensive selection of upland clothing and accessories, at your Beretta dealer.

SHOP 24 HOURS A DAY AT [WWW.SHOPBERETTA.COM](http://WWW.SHOPBERETTA.COM)

FOR A FREE GUN LOCK, CATALOG OR INFORMATION ON BERETTA FIREARMS,  
SPORT CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES OR TO LOCATE A DEALER NEAR YOU,  
VISIT [WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM](http://WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM) 800.636.3420.



[InsureYourGunRights.com](http://InsureYourGunRights.com)



# BERETTA

500 YEARS. ONE PASSION.

[WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM](http://WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM)

# HOME COVERS CALLING

Spotlighting the Doings of RGS People on the Ground

## LL BEAN

Carole Dyer (far right) a member of the Burton L. Spiller RGS Chapter of Augusta, Maine fields questions about ruffed grouse during an RGS event held at the LL Bean Hunting and Fishing Store in Freeport, Maine last November. Also pictured is Kelsey Sullivan, (second from right) the Upland and Migratory Bird Specialist for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Sullivan gave a presentation on ruffed grouse and was available for questions afterward.

RGS held scheduled events every Saturday in November at the LL Bean store, and memberships to the Society continued to be sold at store registers in the month of December. A total of more than 120 new RGS memberships were purchased.



In November 2008 the Southern Appalachian Chapter of RGS in Asheville, North Carolina received a \$5,000 grant from the SportDog Brand Conservation Fund. The chapter will use the matching funds to work with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission on an expansive habitat project on the Cold Mountain Game Lands in Haywood County.

Habitat chairs Steve Evans and Steve Henson are leading the fundraising effort and have raised over \$15,000 for the project - including the funds procured from this grant.



The Merrimack Valley RGS Chapter of New Hampshire hosted a hunt last October at the Bosebuck Mountain Camps in western Maine. There were 38 hunters in attendance, and all enjoyed the beautiful locale and bountiful food provided by hosts Wendy and Mike Yates. Young forests on paper

company woodlands in Oxford county provided excellent habitat for grouse and woodcock, and hunting opportunities were plentiful.



Bob West, Nestle Purina Director of Breeder Marketing and Sporting Dog efforts, has been a longtime supporter of RGS and was recently awarded a plaque of appreciation for his continued and outstanding contributions to the Society. The award was presented by the Board of Directors and RGS staff to West during the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota last October. Purina has been a dedicated corporate sponsor of RGS for many years. West, who has been running and judging bird dogs for over 30 years, is active in NAVHDA and is a regular contributor to RGS.



RGS Senior Regional Biologist Mark Banker (r) presents a plaque to Greg Socha of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy during the December meeting of the RGS Board of Directors. RGS awarded the plaque to Greg as a token of appreciation for his work in orchestrating a timber-harvest agreement between RGS and the Conservancy. The R.K. Mellon Foundation funded a land purchase for the Conservancy, who in turn gave the rights to harvest timber in a manner consistent with creating grouse habitat to RGS.



The Ohio Hills RGS Chapter of Lancaster, Ohio held their 4th annual Fun Shoot on September 13, 2008. Pictured are: (back row, l to r) Terry Borah, Sr., Steve Buckley and Lyndon Danison. (front row, l to r) Tom Barnett, Rob Borah (1st place shooter) and Terry Borah, Jr.



Mike Tilley, Southeastern Michigan chapter chairman, congratulates Steve Graebner (l) from Warren, Michigan on his ten years of volunteer service. Steve accepted his award during the Detroit, Michigan RGS banquet last September.



Keith Charters (l) from Traverse City, Michigan received a Sportsman of the Year award at the Detroit, Michigan RGS banquet in September, 2008. Also pictured are Southeastern Michigan Chapter Chairman Mike Tilley (center) and RGS Regional Director Doug Doherty.



(l to r) Gary MacQuillen, Danny Howell and Mike Giles of the Appalachian Highlands RGS Chapter in Virginia man the RGS booth at the Inaugural Hunting and Fishing Expo in Abingdon, Virginia in late September.



Last September during the Hunting and Fishing Expo in Abington, Virginia, RGS raffled a print donated by Mark and Lisa Tester. The winner of the print, "Deep Woods Encounter" was David Henry of Washington County, Virginia. David is pictured here with his children, Layton and Hannah.

HOME COVERS CALLING *continued on next page*

# Pennsylvania Wilds Upland Bird Hunt

## November 6 - 7, 2009

Thousands of acres of public hunting land in the Pennsylvania Wilds are open to the public for the first time. Only 100,000 permits will be sold for an upland bird hunt on 100,000 acres of public land in the Pennsylvania Wilds. The hunt is open to all hunters and is a great opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and hunt for upland birds. The hunt is open to all hunters and is a great opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and hunt for upland birds.

The hunt is open to all hunters and is a great opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and hunt for upland birds. The hunt is open to all hunters and is a great opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and hunt for upland birds.

The hunt is open to all hunters and is a great opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and hunt for upland birds. The hunt is open to all hunters and is a great opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and hunt for upland birds.

**Need a gift for the Bird Hunter  
in your life?  
We Can Help!**

**www.classicusc.com**  
 Call for a free catalog and more information.  
 Call Toll-Free: 877.818.0983  
**Ruffed Grouse Society Member**  
 Classic Upland Supply Co. LLC

**2008 National Banquet Sponsor Raffle Winners Announced**

For 2008 RGS unveiled a new banquet sponsor reward program. Banquet sponsors had the option of choosing a ticket for an exclusive drawing with seven winners. Following are the seven winning sponsors:

1. Bruce Visniski from Muskegon, Michigan won a Caesar Guerini Forum Grade over-and-under shotgun
2. Paul Zelisko from Lake Forest, Illinois won a Kimber shotgun.
3. Shannon Staiger from Fairbanks, Alaska won a Kimber shotgun.
4. Dave Miles from Norton Shores, Michigan won a Caesar Guerini Magnus over-and-under shotgun
5. Terry Saylor from Canal Winchester, Ohio won a choice of any pair of Steiner binoculars, MSRP \$1,600 or less.
6. Damian Croyle from Hamilton, New York won a choice of any pair of Steiner binoculars, MSRP \$1,600 or less
7. John E. Charewicz from Plover, Wisconsin won a \$1000.00 Cabela's gift certificate

The 2009 National Banquet Sponsor Raffle will be held in January of 2010. To become a banquet sponsor, and receive your chance at winning one of our exclusive prizes, visit [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org) today to find a banquet near you.



The RGS National Banquet Sponsor Raffle had seven winners from across the country – two of the seven winners were sponsors of the West Michigan Lakeshore RGS Chapter banquet. Bruce Visniski (right) from Muskegon, Michigan won first place and took home a Caesar Guerini Forum. Dave Miles (left) from Norton Shores, Michigan won a Caesar Guerini Magnus for taking fourth place. Also pictured is Regional Director Doug Doherty who presented the winners with their shotguns at a recent chapter meeting.



The Jim Foote RGS Chapter in Gaylord, Michigan hosted a Gun Dog of the Year trial in September. Participants were invited from around the state to compete. Pictured (l to r) are judges David Lloyd and Ken Moss, Rick Heller (standing in for Fritz Heller, 4th place); Scott Steele, 3rd place; Chris Ritter, 2nd place; and Paul Fisher, 1st place. This year's Gun Dog of the Year is "Rip," and his name will be engraved on the silver cup held by Fisher.

*Shoot with the Best*

**10 gauge 2 7/8" & 12 gauge 2" Shells Available!**

**RST**  
FRIENDSVILLE, PA

**PAPER HULLS AVAILABLE**  
12, 16 AND 20 GAUGE

RST manufactures PREMIUM 2" and BEST GRADE 2" x 2" shotgun shells. Whether enjoying the soft recoil for clay targets or the superior patterning on upland game, RST shot shells will give you **THE BEST PERFORMANCE MONEY CAN BUY.**

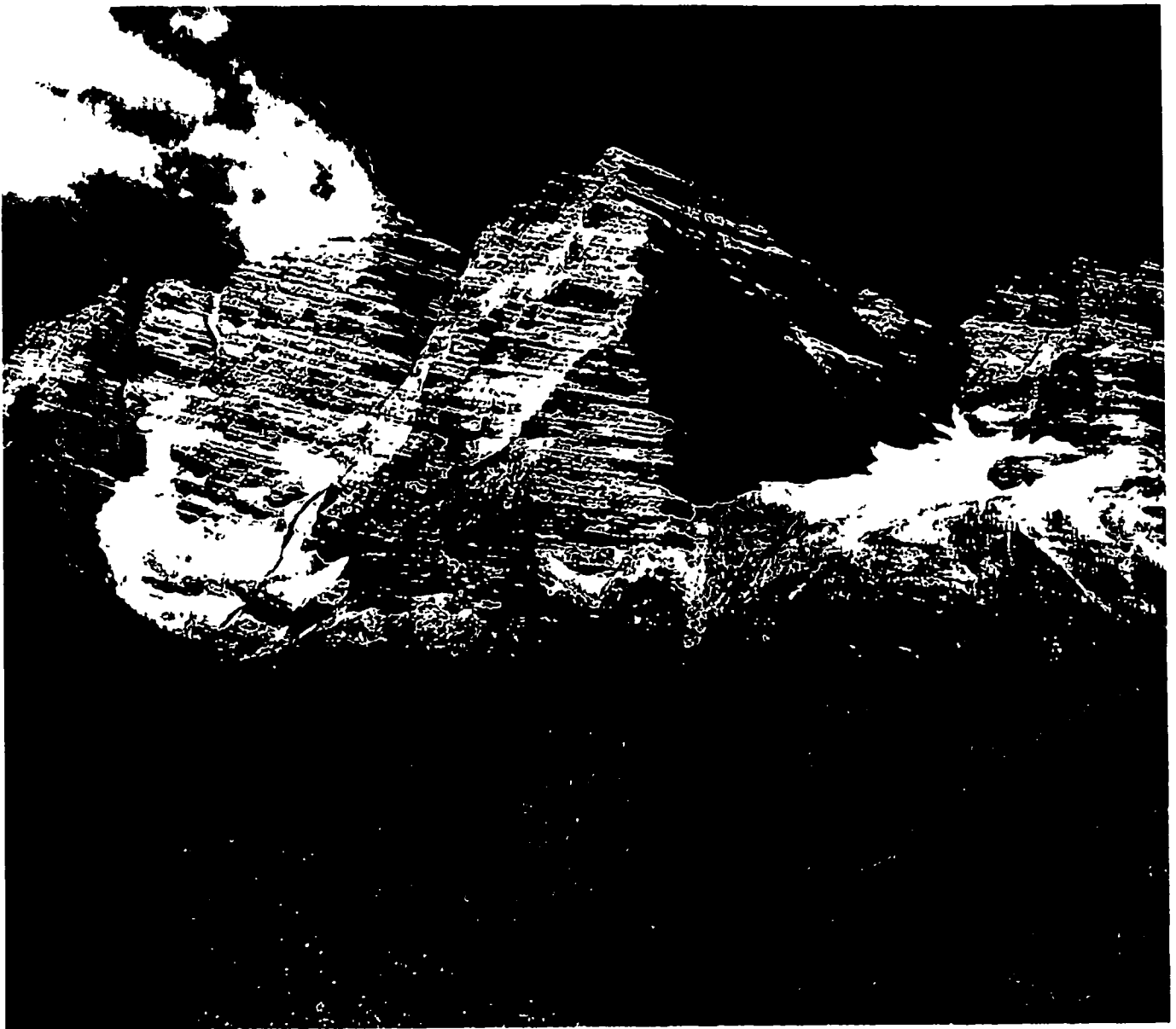
**570-553-1651 • [WWW.RSTSHELLS.COM](http://WWW.RSTSHELLS.COM)**

**Chukar Partridge and  
Sooting Clays  
Challenge**

May 17-18, 2009  
Little Mermaid Hunt Club  
Sardis, Minnesota

Warmup for the fall hunting season with a two day chukar hunt and one day clay target fun. Entry fee: \$125 per single hunter, \$200 per pair. Includes 1000 rounds of chukar and 200 rounds of sooting clays. Includes a 1000 round chukar and 200 rounds of sooting clays. Includes a 1000 round chukar and 200 rounds of sooting clays.

For information contact:  
**Steve Johnson**  
(218) 894-3872  
[info@lmermaid.com](mailto:info@lmermaid.com)



## **At Boise, we've made sustainability a win-win proposition.**

With more than 40 years of experience, Boise takes a balanced approach to successfully managing the environment and our bottom line. Our line of premium recycled papers, sold under the ASPEN™ brand, range from 30 to 100% post-consumer recycled fiber. The ASPEN line is available in multiuse and technology office papers as well as envelope, printing and imaging grades. It's just part of our focus on combining superior marketplace performance with responsible corporate citizenship. And proof of our worldwide commitment to preserving natural resources and improving technology for a greener tomorrow.

BOISE and ASPEN are trademarks of  
Boise Cascade, L.L.C., or its affiliates.

**BOISE®**

# Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge:

Dedicated to Providing Excellent Habitat for American Woodcock

By Cathy Genthner

## ■ Conservation in the Present

The salty Atlantic infuses Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, perched on nearly 29,000 acres in Downeast Maine and including over 18 miles of rocky shoreline on the tidal waters of Cobscook Bay, with the smell and sound of the ocean. Moosehorn, located in Maine's Washington County - also known as "The Sunrise County" - is the easternmost national refuge in the Atlantic Flyway, a migration route that traverses the east coast of North America.

"Over the years there has been a lot of research done on how to provide habitat for woodcock: what their preferences are, life history, survival rates, habitat use, and chronology of breeding season. There has been a good amount of that work done here over the years," said Andrew Weik, a biologist at Moosehorn. "The biggest threat woodcock face today is loss of habitat and habitat degradation. The temporary losses are forest maturation - the habitat getting too old. The permanent loss is any sort of development, whether it is residential or commercial."

## ■ The History of Moosehorn



In 1937, the refuge was purchased with Duck Stamp funds to provide a management and research area for declining populations of the American woodcock, as well as to provide a breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife. The refuge was established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had a summer home on Campobello Island in Canada, less than 20 miles away from the refuge. As a result, Franklin was familiar with the landscape, waters and wildlife in the area. From 1883 - when Franklin was one year old - until he was stricken by polio in 1921, he spent most of his summers on the rugged and beautiful island, taking part in hiking, swimming, boating and bird watching.

During the early part of the 20th century there was fear that American woodcock were coming under severe pressure from habitat loss and over-hunting. A wide range survey conducted in 1966 revealed that woodcock in the eastern region were declining at a rate of just under three percent a year. In an effort to stop this decline, a small-scale study was started in 1976 at Moosehorn to develop



Moosehorn Refuge Biologist Andrew Weik takes a woodcock out of a mist net. The woodcock was caught in the midst of his spectacular courtship display.

## ■ Conservation Success

and test strategies that could be used by small landowners to improve their lands for woodcock. The study, funded in part by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the University of Maine, was later expanded to develop techniques that could be used in commercial forest harvesting operations. Dan McAuley, a research biologist with the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, based in Laurel, Maryland with an office in Orono, Maine, was working in Moosehorn in the late 1970's as a biologist.

Those strategies to improve woodcock habitat at Moosehorn, as well as on private lands, consisted of managing small clear cuts and controlled burns, which created clearings, alder thickets and young forests in close proximity to each area. Woodcock need clearings for roosting and courtship, dense alder thickets for foraging for earthworms and young hardwood forests for nesting and brooding. These areas provide the diverse habitat needed by the woodcock, and also benefit grouse, deer and bear. Biologists band woodcock from late spring through early fall to determine the birds' general health and population. Through the conservation efforts of biologists and others, Moosehorn has experienced a slow but steady improvement in the woodcock population.

"The population had been declining and right now during the last ten years, the population has stabilized," said McAuley. "Moosehorn really is the only wildlife refuge set up specifically for woodcock."

The Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge consists of two units. The Baring Unit covers 20,027 acres and is located off U.S. Route one, southwest of Calais, and features seven miles of shoreline on Meddybemps Lake. The 8,871-acre Edmunds Unit borders the tidal waters of Cobscook Bay near Dennysville where 24-foot tidal fluctuations are a daily occurrence on Maine's rocky coast. The Native

"At that time, the woodcock population had been declining at about two or three percent a year. Greg Sepik, then a graduate student, initiated a habitat management program on the refuge designed for managing small woodlots and things that the average woodlot owner could do to provide young forest habitat. What he was really doing was following the guidelines of Gordon Gullion, known as 'Mr. Ruffed Grouse', a researcher in Minnesota who was designing habitat for grouse."

Sepik wrote about his work in the 1981 publication, *A Landowners Guide to Woodcock Management in the Northeast*, along with fellow authors Ray B. Owen, Jr. and Malcom W. Coulter, both from the University of Maine.



Americans named this bay "boiling tides" because of the extreme fluctuations. The highly glaciated refuge consists of rolling hills, large ledge outcrops, streams, lakes, bogs, marshes and infamous blueberry barrens.

The refuge has a diverse forest of maple, aspen, fir, spruce, birch and white pines. By the early next summer, two new self-guided interpretive trails should be completed where people can view firsthand the habitat and conservation work being done on the refuge. These two new trails are in addition to the Woodcock and Raven Trails that are presently on the refuge, along with two observation decks. There are 64.5 miles of dirt roads that are closed to traffic but open to hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding and snowshoeing. Anglers can fish in the refuge during the summer and winter. Fish species include brook trout, small mouth bass and pickerel. Hunting is allowed in the refuge, although hunters must obtain a free hunting license from the refuge and hunt with non-toxic shot.

"The times I have been hunting there, I've seen plenty of woodcock. The better hunting opportunities are on the Edmunds Unit. We do occasionally take sports there. There is plenty of good habitat management there," said Jeff McEvoy, a registered Maine Guide and owner of Weatherby's Lodge on Grand Lake Stream. "This past year, I've seen more grouse than I have in the past six years."

Fellow registered Maine Guide Charles Driza of Leen's Lodge, also on Grand Lake Stream, agreed. "Generally speaking, it is good hunting. Moosehorn has some beautifully managed land. It is manicured for birds with very good second growth cover and clear cuts," said Driza. "This year, the hunting was fair to good at Moosehorn and the grouse population is up a little. The woodcock had a good hatch this year but didn't appear to be in strong numbers."

Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, along with the Ruffed Grouse Society, were among 21 recipients recognized in April 2008 for excellence in conservation work by the Secretary of the Interior, Dirk Kempthorne. The conservation work - such as restoring and protecting habitat along with education - comprises the heart of the Northern Forest Woodcock Initiative in New England and New York.

"We've been recognized by the Department of the Interior for work on getting things moving a long as far as increasing habitat for woodcock and other young forest birds. There is a lot of overlap (in the habitat) between woodcock and grouse," said Weik. "Our work has led to the creation of methods on how to manage woodlots for woodcock."

As far as management, woodcock prefer younger forests of aspen and alder, where their primary food source - earthworms - are plentiful. Woodcock also need a high density of saplings for overhead protection from predators. What woodcock need for habitat seems to be in conflict, at least in part, with the Maine Forest Practices Act of 1989. The law was designed to limit the size of clear cuts as a way to conserve the beauty of Maine's landscape and old growth forests. However, older forests don't provide woodcock with an optimal habitat.

"New England is still 85 percent forest but most of it is mature forest. The problem is getting people to understand that cutting [trees] is not a bad thing," said McAuley. "We used to have the large family farms and now the land is being subdivided. The cutting for commercial operations has ended and there is less cover for woodcock with mature forest development."

## ■ Looking to the Future

Moosehorn has started work on a comprehensive conservation plan (CCP), which should be released by July 2009. The plan will establish management goals and objectives for all refuge programs over the next 15 years. Wildlife, habitat, land protection, wilderness management, and visitor services programs will all be evaluated during the planning process. The local staff at Moosehorn and headquarters in Baring, Maine will lead the effort, along with assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and the Native American Tribal governments in Maine. Moosehorn is also seeking input from anyone who may have suggestions for the future success of the refuge.

"Maine is one of the bright spots in the northeast where we still have an active forest industry and woodcock are doing alright," said McAuley. "Moosehorn is out of the way for a lot of people. The goal is to set up demonstration areas using the successful woodcock management principles at Moosehorn and [apply] them in other parts of the country. I am hopeful that things will start getting better for the woodcock." ❖❖

### Additional Resources:

Email Moosehorn at [northeastplanning@fws.gov](mailto:northeastplanning@fws.gov), or visit their website at [www.fws.gov/northeast/moosehorn](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/moosehorn).

A Landowners Guide to Woodcock Management in the Northeast can be found at: [www.fws.gov/migratory-birds/reports/SpecialTopics/ne\\_woodcock.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/migratory-birds/reports/SpecialTopics/ne_woodcock.pdf)

Visit [www.friendsofmoosehorn.org](http://www.friendsofmoosehorn.org) to find out how you can help today.



**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

# LOGOED MERCHANDISE

## Boyt Signature Series Case with Accessory Pocket

**\$101.00**  
RGS-GC2IWC



Features RGS Logo Foil Embossed on  
Leather Patch on the Reverse Side

**1-800-550-2698 • [www.SHOPRGS.COM](http://www.SHOPRGS.COM)**

# NIRGS News

## ■ Spruce Grouse Conservation Plan Published

After more than three years of work, the Continental Conservation Plan for Spruce Grouse has been released. Partners collaborating on the project include the Resident Game Bird Working Group of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, the Wildlife Management Institute and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Spruce Grouse can be found in short-nedded conifer forests in Alaska, New England, the Upper Great Lakes states and the northern states in the western United States. Though they show steady population numbers in some areas, they are in decline in the southern reaches of their range. A copy of the Plan is available at [www.foolhen.org](http://www.foolhen.org).

## ■ National Forest Law BLOG Created

An online log on national forest law was created by Ryan Woody of Matthiesen, Wickert & Lehrer, S.C. To read current developments in the ever-changing landscape of National Forest laws and regulations, visit [www.nationalforestlawblog.com](http://www.nationalforestlawblog.com).

## ■ RGS Receives Grant for Missouri Habitat Work

RGS recently received a total of \$20,000 to continue the River Hills Forest Habitat Project in central Missouri. The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDOC) contributed \$12,000 under the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative. The remaining \$8,000 has been provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Private Lands Program. Matching funds and in-kind services are being provided by RGS, Audubon Missouri and others.


The River Hills Project has promoted the regeneration of oak and hickory forest habitat since 2003. Mike Zagata, RGS Executive Director and CEO, recently stated, "RGS is pleased to be able to continue work with a variety of partners to support the River Hills Project. The dedicated efforts of Missouri RGS chapter members have been the key to success in this project."

## ■ New Iowa Program Promotes Ruffed Grouse Habitat

If you are a landowner in northeast Iowa, you have an opportunity to be a part of a new program to help early successional forest species on your land. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a new Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that aims to promote the young-forest habitat so essential to ruffed grouse and many other species.

The State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) is an Early Successional Habitat program, and it's purpose is to develop CRP habitat to provide food, nesting and cover needs by numerous bird species currently experiencing a nationwide population decline.

Greg Schmitt, a Department of Natural Resources Private Lands Biologist for northeast Iowa, says, "If anyone wants to plant trees on their marginal cropland and get paid to do it – this program is perfect for them. With the signup incentive, the cost share rates, and annual payment on poorer crop ground – it pencils out very well for a landowner's bottom dollar." For more information contact Greg Schmitt at 563.422.6201, your district forester or your local FSA office.



**Shelter Cloth Hunting Coat**  
A mid-weight hunting coat with plenty of carrying capacity — including a nylon-lined, five-entry-point game bag, and numerous gear pockets. Engineered for upland hunting, this water-repellent/wind-resistant coat is designed for comfort and action. Made in USA.

**FILSON®**  
Since 1897

Free Catalog 800-624-0201 [www.filson.com](http://www.filson.com)



FEDERAL  
PREMIUM  
AMMUNITION



# THIS DO WE Chase And Fetch All Day.

It's a beautiful day in the woods. A man in a white lab coat with a stethoscope around his neck stands in a forest. A dog is jumping towards him. In the background, a hunter is silhouetted against the trees, holding a rifle. The scene is a mix of nature and human activity.



PROUD SPONSOR OF  
RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY  
HABITAT PROJECTS



www.federalpremium.com  
©2007 FEDERAL PREMIUM

Count's



# RGS Biological Program: The 2008 Annual Report Summary

In 2008 our biologists continued to be a crucial voice for RGS in the media, an expert resource for our members, and successful fundraisers for habitat work. In addition to strengthening existing cooperative habitat efforts and seeking new ones, the biologists also conducted numerous on-site land consultations with private land-owners throughout the country, and provided their expertise at RGS events. A few of their most critical accomplishments at the national and state levels are listed below. This list is a brief summary – for more complete list of work completed by the biologists in 2008, please visit [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

## National/Regional Level Activities

### Media

Represented RGS at meetings for industry leaders, including the Forest Service, Lake States Resource Alliance, Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association and many others.

Provided biological expertise at the 2008 SHOT show and the RGS National Grouse and Woodcock hunt.

Participated in media interviews, press releases, magazine articles, television and radio interviews.

### Habitat Funds Raised

Raised \$197,000 for habitat work, \$127,000 for biologist employment, and \$31,397 in general operating funds.\*

\* Please note these project totals do not include habitat funds for projects occurring in Alaska.

### Membership Interaction

Completed maps for each state detailing every RGS project from 1985 to present. These maps will be available at banquets and on the website.

Produced regional quarterly email newsletters which are available on the website.

Compiled 2008 regional grouse forecasts, which were posted on the website this summer.

Helped staff numerous chapter banquets and events throughout their regions, providing biological expertise and presentations where needed.

## Alaska

Professional Wildlife Management Fight Wolf Initiative \$2,500. Outdoor Heritage Foundation, Rabbit Creek Youth League, supporting children who can't otherwise afford to shoot.

Grouse Ridge Rangers Youth Shooting League, \$5,028

Holliston Area Scarification Project 51 acres, \$7,060.

Mat-Su Moose Range Rehabilitation ('08-'09), 56 acres, \$25,200.

Funding to send representative to White House Wildlife Conference, \$1,000

Two habitat enhancement projects at the Nenana Ridge Ruffed Grouse Project Area are underway.

Extensive efforts made to improve wildlife management and hunting opportunities on Alaskan lands through government legislation and officials.

## Connecticut

Attended Sportsmen's Legislative Caucus with Hartford Chapter members.

Met with Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner in regards to possible habitat project.

## Georgia

Conducted a grouse drumming survey in partnership with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Commented on various habitat projects on the Chattahoochee National Forest

## Illinois

Assisted with development of 2009 Coverts Landowner Workshop for Illinois residents with land holdings in Wisconsin.

## Indiana

Provided volunteers with data and presentations to support their work with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, regarding the revitalization of the grouse management program

Reviewed and commented on the state forest management proposal

## Iowa

Spoke at two private landowner workshops coordinated by the Department of Natural Resources.

Coordinated support for three ongoing habitat projects.

Participated in meetings with Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

## Kentucky

Submitted a grant proposal to potentially support habitat projects.

Coordinated a habitat seminar for a group of landowners with state biologists

## Maine

Meetings with Wildlife Management Institute employees, a Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine employee, and Natural Resource Conservation Service officials to explore possibilities of future cooperative efforts with each.

Explored several areas, including Baskahegan Lumber land, Moosehorn NWR, Stud Mill Road and Grand Lake Stream region, to investigate options for habitat improvement.

Conducted numerous individual private landowner visits to provide technical expertise on habitat management for ruffed grouse and woodcock.

## Maryland

Completed a 10-acre alder management project at Indian Springs Wildlife Management Area.

Provided seminar on grouse and woodcock management to the Oakland Rotary Club.

## Massachusetts

Provided written and oral comments on the Western Connecticut River, Northern Berkshire and Southern Berkshire District Forest Resource Management Plans to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Stewardship Council.

Submitted a grant request resulting in \$17,500 obtained for Central Massachusetts Comprehensive Habitat Program to implement joint habitat projects on four state forests. Grant for additional funding to implement second phase of work completed.

Conducted numerous individual private landowner visits to provide technical expertise on habitat management for ruffed grouse and woodcock.

Cooperated with Massachusetts Wildlife to conduct two routes of the annual ruffed grouse drumming survey.

Attended many meetings with officials regarding habitat work and projects, including the Department of Conservation and Resources, the National Resources Conservation Service, Harvard Forest Director of Education Programs, the Lieutenant Governor at Forest Industry and the Massachusetts Forest Landowners Association.

## Michigan

Represented RGS on Michigan Bird Conservation Initiative Council, Western UP Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Advisory Council and UP DNR Habitat Work Group.

Attended meetings with Forest Service and DNR.

Provided RGS input for 13 Forest Service forest management projects and two DNR projects.

Secured a grant for habitat work that helped fund five projects.

Coordinated RGS involvement in four ongoing habitat related projects and one research project.

Conducted two on-site habitat consultations on over 10,000 acres.

Submitted a grant proposal for to acquire habitat management equipment in the state.

## Minnesota

Reviewed and commented on three governmental forest management proposals.

Provided input on Sustainable Forestry Initiative and assisted with two low income housing projects built solely with state forestry products.

Coordinated and planned construction of historic signage for Mille Lacs Wildlife Management Area recognizing Gordon Gullion's research efforts and RGS input.

Evaluated twelve Wildlife Management Area's in the Grand Rapids area for potential use of a roller chopper for creation of grouse and woodcock habitat.

Promoted RGS and grouse hunting in several articles including: Outdoor News, Duluth News Tribune, St Paul Pioneer Press, and the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

Organized meeting of Department of Natural Resources research staff, University of Minnesota faculty, retired grouse researchers, chapter personnel, and RGS staff to speculate on grouse recruitment levels.

Provided consultation services to six private landowners interested in managing for grouse.

Received \$15,000 grant to complete woodcock habitat in Grand Rapids region.

Received \$10,000 grant from Federal Cartridge for RGS billboard campaign.

Coordinated efforts with the Nature Conservancy on the sale of Minnesota forestlands and impacts to wildlife resources and hunting heritage.

## Missouri

Secured \$5,000 in grant support for the ongoing River Hills Project.

Participate in a private landowner school, shop and conducted one private land consultation.

Attended two meetings with Missouri Department of Conservation personnel and reviewed existing Management Area Project.

## New Hampshire

Attended New Hampshire Wildlife Federation annual meeting.

Conducted numerous individual private landowner visits to provide technical expertise on habitat management for ruffed grouse and woodcock.

Provided support and advocacy for Fish & Game Grouse Wing and Tail Data Survey.

Attended the meeting of Forest Resources Association to meet with commercial forest interests about their potential to partner on programs.

Co-developed, funded and implemented Management Area Project at 2200-acre Freedom Town Forest.

Administered RGS equipment usage on private and public land projects.

## New Jersey

Coordinated with CAT to provide volunteers, state agencies, and non government organizations with training on the use of RGS heavy equipment.

Completed 10-acre aspen regeneration project at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area with CAT and tree shear using all-volunteer labor.

Met with the Division of Fish and Wildlife and volunteers about woodcock project at Manalawkin Wildlife Management Area.

## New York

Provided information on state habitat projects to outdoor writers.

Toured six sites with Natural Resources Conservation Service personnel and private landowners to make recommendations for projects and increase RGS involvement on public/private lands.

Conducted numerous individual private landowner visits to provide technical expertise on habitat management for ruffed grouse and woodcock.

Worked with US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners Program for additional funding for Cornell Maple Lab Management Area Project and other options in the state.

Provided Cornell Maple Lab personnel with information on baseline data collection for ruffed grouse, woodcock and song-bird data preliminary to timber management activities scheduled for winter.

## North Carolina

Met with the supervisor of the 4 national forests to discuss cooperative work.

Helped coordinate funding and visited the Jerry Smathers Memorial Project at Cold Mountain State Game Lands near Canton. Commented on Forest Service projects.

## Ohio

Toured Consol Energy lands in eastern Ohio and discussed options for increasing grouse habitat and access for hunters.

Developed, implemented, and completed \$80,000 cost share

agreement with Wayne National Forest to manage 400 acres of mine reclamation sites with heavy equipment.

Visited and advised private landowner on grouse management resulting in 30 acres of aspen management.

Met with Forest Service, Ohio Division of Wildlife and Division of Forestry and RGS volunteers from Cincinnati about projects on Wayne National Forest and Shawnee State Forest.

## Pennsylvania

Met with Game Commission on many occasions about habitat projects on state game lands.

Coordinated closely with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program on equipment use throughout the state.

Met with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and USFWS about woodcock projects on state parks.

Coordinated with Penn State Students and DCNR to present the 3rd Annual Woodcock Festival at Bald Eagle State Park.

Worked with DCNR, Game Commission, and other conservation organizations to complete old field habitat project at Nescopeck State Park using CAT equipment.

Worked with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy to finalize timber rights acquisition in Somerset County and worked with consultants to complete the first timber sale under the RGS timber rights agreement.

Met with Corps of Engineers at Raystown Lake about ongoing habitat projects.

Worked with Mackin Engineering to complete the Woodcock Habitat Initiative pilot project at State Game Lands 39 and complete final report for National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant.

## Rhode Island

Assisted at a Coverts training session.

Meeting with State Forester and Department of Environmental Management Wildlife Director in regards to possible habitat projects.

## Tennessee

Submitted a grant proposal for funding Southern Appalachians habitat projects.

Helped fund a University of Tennessee publication on managing herbaceous openings and trails for wildlife.

## Vermont

Obtained \$10,000 grant for habitat work on Green Mountain National Forest.

Accepted appointment to Fish and Wildlife Commissioner's Panel on Wanton Waste regulation development.

Attended special Vermont Traditions Coalition meeting with Agency of Natural Resources Secretary regarding the Groton State Forest Plan. Assisted with making the majority of state forest land available for active habitat management in the draft of the plan.

Attended numerous meetings on various habitat work with the Fish and Wildlife Department, Green Mountain National Forest and Vermont Traditions Coalition and the US Forest Service.

Conducted numerous individual private landowner visits to provide technical expertise and CAT work on habitat management for ruffed grouse and woodcock.

## Virginia

Developed a position statement regarding wilderness on the George Washington National Forest for the RGS website and provided volunteers with a fact sheet to help with public input.

Attended Forest Service public meeting regarding George Washington Forest plan revision.

## West Virginia

Met with Forest Service and state biologists about cooperative project on the Monongahela National Forest.

Conducted CAT training on private lands site, and began work on a 72-acre alder and aspen regeneration project.

Worked with Department of Natural Resources to obtain federal data for woodcock survey.

## Wisconsin

Represented RGS on Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative Council.

Attended numerous meetings with county, state, and federal agency personnel as well as non-governmental organizations.

Provided input to 17 Forest Service forest management projects and two Department of Natural Resources projects.

Audited and spoke at the Wisconsin Coverts Project and obtained funding support for the program.

Conducted field reviews of four existing - or - proposed Management Area Projects, coordinated RGS involvement in three ongoing habitat-related projects and conducted three private lands on-site habitat consultations.

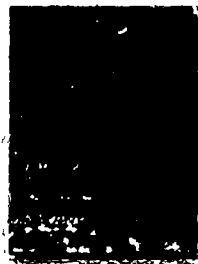
Completed annual ruffed grouse drumming and breeding bird surveys in partnership with federal and state agencies.

## Canada

Frequent communication regarding forest management with RGS Canada staff, ministry officials, private landowners and land-trust representatives in Canada.

RGS biologists are: Mark Banker, Southern Appalachians; Russell Sewell, Minnesota; Gary Zimmer, Western Great Lakes. The Michigan and New England regions are currently vacant.

## Looking to Complete Your Collection?



Back issues of *RGS* are now available. At a cost of \$5.00 per issue, plus an additional \$2.00 for shipping, you can catch up on issues you may have missed over the last five years. *No guarantee all issues are available, stock will be sold on a first request first serve basis.*

Write to [editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org) to place your order.

# RGS STAFF CHANGES



## New Staff, Dave "Swede" Johnson

The Ruffed Grouse Society recently added David "Swede" Johnson to staff. Johnson is new regional director of Wisconsin, the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Twin Cities, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois.

As a life-long resident of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Johnson is a woodcock and ruffed grouse enthusiast. At 21 he acquired his first bird dog, and since then has hunted behind a variety of setters. He has guided grouse and woodcock hunters in his area on occasion for the past ten years. Johnson has also been an active member of his local RGS chapter in Ironwood, Michigan for over twenty years.

In addition to taking hunting and fishing trips to Argentina, New Zealand, and Ireland, Johnson is a dedicated cyclist and skier. He competes in a few races throughout the year and in general enjoys being in the outdoors participating in a great variety of active pursuits.

His prior work history is as diverse as his interests, and includes work in a copper mine and refinery, bartending, and nearly thirty years in the hospitality industry. He has owned two restaurants and built a hotel. Johnson is currently in the process of building a home - one of his largest endeavors to date.

"RGS mission - to create grouse and woodcock habitat - is crucial to the future of upland hunting. I'm looking forward to working with chapters to grow existing banquets, in order to better aid RGS in this endeavor," Johnson recently commented.

**WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!**



TM

Since 1988

## Collar Clinic

Trusted by Dog Trainers Worldwide

The Best Selection In e-Collars and Electronic Dog Training Equipment

NEW and RECONDITIONED Dog Training Collars, Accessories, Repair Services, Tracking Systems, GPS, Bark Collars and Containment Systems

Free Color Catalog  
800-430-2010

[www.collarclinic.com](http://www.collarclinic.com)

Trade-Ins Welcome

1517 Northern Star Drive Traverse City MI 49686

TODAY.

TOMORROW?



## NEW DIGITAL MODELS

### New ESP Series 3 Digital

Our top-of-the-line model. The most advanced digital technology on the market produces the ultimate in smooth, natural CD-quality ambient sound. Multi-memory programming allows you to instantly select different modes for specific sound environments.

## NEW COLORS

Black  
Field Green  
Safety Orange

ELECTRONIC SHOOTERS PROTECTION

We guarantee the fit and function of all ESP products for one full year from date of purchase. Plus, we will refund your entire purchase price within the first 30 days if for any reason you are not completely satisfied. You'll find our service to be friendly, personal, and utterly professional at all times.

—Jack Homa, President

15290 Gadsden Ct  
Brighton • CO 80603  
[espamerica.com](http://espamerica.com)

# Hiding Favorite Coverts

By G. N. Allen

## Is a bag over the head still good enough?

There used to be a time when a casual bird-hunting acquaintance could be taken to your favorite covert, and a bag over his or her head was enough to ensure the location would remain a secret. I'm afraid those days are over.

Recently, I had a new friend arrive at our hunting camp for his first ever weekend of partridge hunting. I'd only known this fellow for a few short months - but he owned a young bird dog and had a couple of nice guns - so I assumed he must be all right. Usually I am loath to share my favorite bird hunting locations, but as he was coming from an urban environment, I figured I'd get him disoriented by driving in circles for a while, and then just take him hunting. I felt pretty sure he'd never find his way back to my favorite spots, which have taken me years and miles of walking to find.

After all, logging roads all look alike to the uninitiated.

But as we were getting our hunting gear on, he showed me a new GPS in a fancy holder on his belt. I poked a little fun at it, saying my trusty \$12 compass was all I ever needed and that his batteries would let him down one day. That's when he pointed to his other hip, and the second leather sheath that held four extra AA batteries.

Now this guy is a bit younger and certainly more technically savvy than I am, but when he showed me the gadget's tracking ability I could see the writing on the wall. Everywhere we went that day would be recorded, and even a child could trace our tracks. So much for my plan to hide the location of my favorite coverts.

Off we went, hunting in some of the toughest conditions imaginable. It rained - no, poured - and it was cold. The grouse were few and far between, and skittish when we found them. Neither of us shot anything, and we certainly heard a lot more flushes than we saw. Late in the afternoon, soaked through and cold to the bone, we quit hunting for the day.

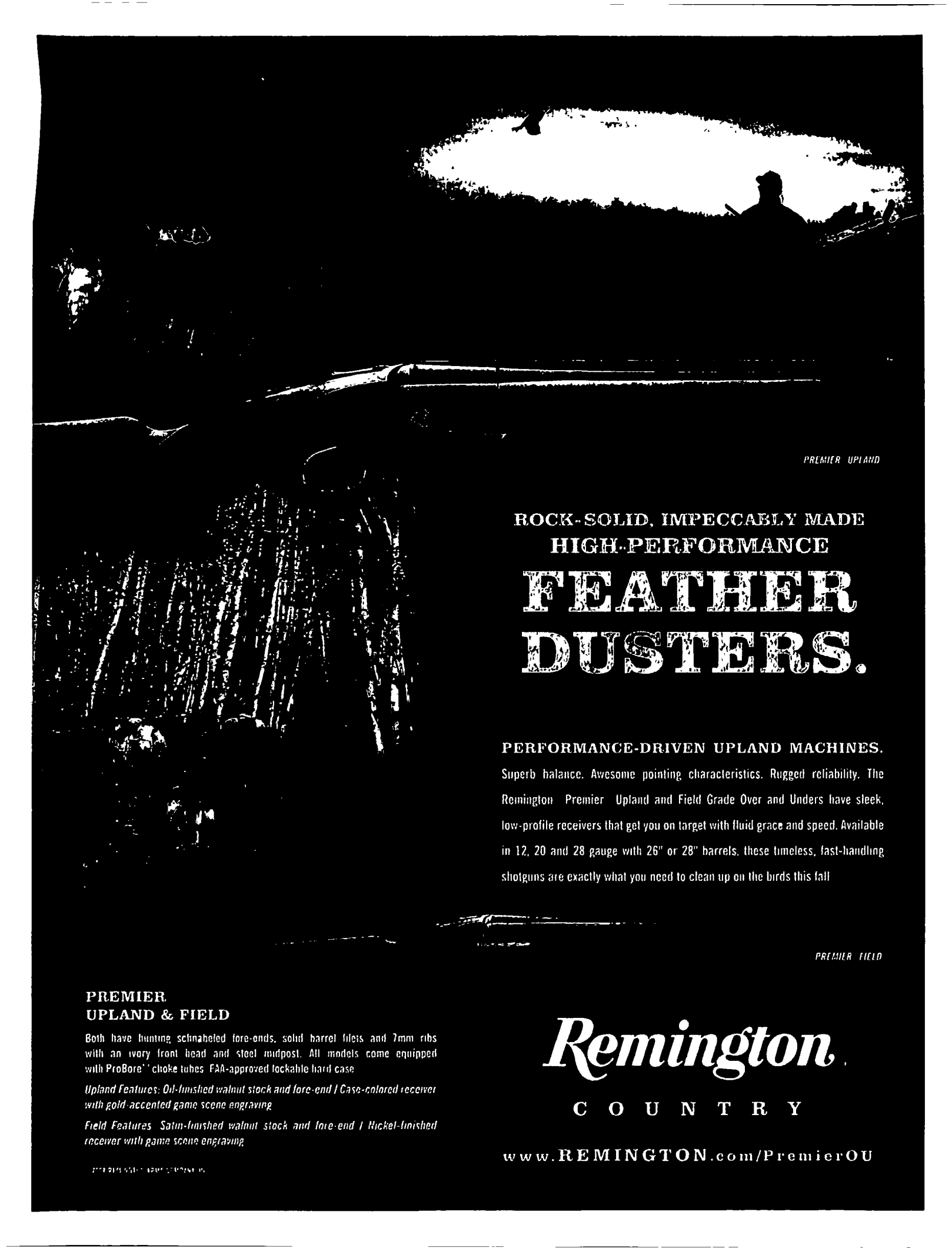
The next morning we hunted again, but under drier conditions. Woodcock were our primary objective and we hunted alder thickets and damp stream bottoms. Between the alder patches shoulder-high meadow grass made the walking difficult, so we traipsed along where the moose, deer, and bears had trampled the weeds down. The game trails zigzagged all over the place, and I had to pay close attention to keep from getting disoriented. We found several woodcock and had some fun. The dogs did great.

On our way back to the truck, as we walked up from the stream bottom to drier ground, my friend shouted, "Oh no! My GPS is gone. I lost it!"

With just a small breath of relief, I realized there may be gods who protect our favorite bird coverts after all. 🐦







PREMIER UPLAND

ROCK-SOLID, IMPECCABLY MADE  
HIGH-PERFORMANCE

# FEATHER DUSTERS.

PERFORMANCE-DRIVEN UPLAND MACHINES.

Superb balance. Awesome pointing characteristics. Rugged reliability. The Remington Premier Upland and Field Grade Over and Unders have sleek, low-profile receivers that get you on target with fluid grace and speed. Available in 12, 20 and 28 gauge with 26" or 28" barrels, these timeless, fast-handling shotguns are exactly what you need to clean up on the birds this fall.

PREMIER FIELD

## PREMIER UPLAND & FIELD

Both have hunting sclinabeled fore-ends, solid barrel flutes and 7mm ribs with an ivory front bead and steel midpost. All models come equipped with ProBore™ choke tubes. FAA-approved lockable hard case.

*Upland Features: Oil-finished walnut stock and fore-end / Case-colored receiver with gold-accented game scene engraving.*

*Field Features: Satin-finished walnut stock and fore-end / Nickel-finished receiver with game scene engraving.*

# Remington

C O U N T R Y

[www.REMINGTON.com/PremierOU](http://www.REMINGTON.com/PremierOU)

# La Bécasse

## A Michigan Eatery With a French Twist

The French consider woodcock a great delicacy. In fact, the correct preparation of the dish is nothing less than an art form. Frenchman Guillaume Hazael-Massieux is no exception. "This bird is highly praised by hunters in France. There is a whole ceremony when you eat it – you put your head pretty much in the dish and cover it with linen so no flavor can escape," he explains with relish.

His own recipe for woodcock (la bécasse) is a spin-off of traditional French recipes, and perhaps a little better suited to American preferences. In France they roast the entire bird (innards included) over the fire, and the drippings are collected to serve on toast. Guillaume confesses, "This method of cooking is not that exciting to me – nor to most Americans!" Regardless of the method of preparing the bird, however, Guillaume stresses that the most important consideration is never to over-cook the meat. Woodcock meat is best eaten rare to medium rare. His challenge to all hunters is "if you're not afraid [to hunt] in the woods, don't

be afraid of eating your woodcock rare!"

Guillaume was born in Paris and raised in the French West Indies on the island of Guadeloupe. As a boy of 15, Guillaume entered training to become a chef. In ten years he had earned two French national cooking degrees, a BA in biology, and spent three intensive years at the Paul Bocuse chef school in Lyon. (The biology degree was in deference to his father – who wanted Guillaume to have the necessary tools to succeed in case he wished to change his path in life.)

After a required year spent in the French military, Guillaume immigrated to the United States. He met his wife, Brooke, shortly thereafter. After working as a chef in various capacities for different companies – he had the opportunity in 2005 to purchase the restaurant, *La Bécasse*, in Burdickville, Michigan.

Today Guillaume and his wife run the restaurant together – Brooke's background in Human Resources enables her to handle the business end of things. Guillaume, naturally, handles the menu – which features French country cuisine. (Regrettably, woodcock isn't on the menu because of FDA restrictions.) The restaurant seats about 50 people, and was originally opened in the 70's as a chicken diner called *Woodcock's*. In the late 70's it was transformed into the French *La Bécasse* by then owners Peachy and John Rentenbach. When Guillaume and Brooke took over the name still fit, and they kept it.

The first time Guillaume hunted woodcock was two years ago with one of his staff members. During the course of that first afternoon, the man's Brittany impressed him. "It's really quite amazing," he says of the experience. He now tries to get out once or twice during the season every year, but still considers himself more a fisherman.

He prepares prosciutto, sausages and gravlox for the restaurant. His own gravlox recipe has varied influences – he uses classical Scandinavian curing methods, adds some French spices and serves it with horseradish, which is a German flavor. This dish is best served with a shot of Aquavie. "It wakes up your mind."

Guillaume explains with earnest conviction.

The Frenchman's love for cooking is evident in his words, and he credits his mother for inspiring it. "She owned a restaurant for a few years and she was an amazing cook – it started there [for me]. I still use some of her recipes – but I won't be giving those ones away!" he admits with a laugh.

Guillaume's 6-year-old daughter, Margot, is also displaying a familial interest in the kitchen. She enjoys fixing breakfast and watching her father work in the restaurant. Recently she wandered into the kitchen and spotted her father curing duck legs. "What are those, Dad?" she asked. After he explained, she was quick to inquire. "Well, did you hurt the ducks when you took their legs?" "No," he replied carefully, "they were already dead when I took their legs off." After a pause Margot replied, "Well, I will try it then." "I was proud of her [at that moment]" Guillaume says.

Visit [www.restaurantlabecasse.com](http://www.restaurantlabecasse.com)  
to contact Chef Guillaume.



## Seared Woodcock

Serves six

6 woodcock  
1 onion  
1 carrot  
2 fl ounces olive oil  
¼ c tomato paste  
½ c white wine  
salt & pepper to taste  
2 fl ounces port wine  
8 servings truffle butter  
2 chopped shallots  
1 c duck fat  
6 thick bread slices

Clean birds. Set boneless breasts aside, liver and intestines aside and bones aside.

Chop and sauté the remaining portion and sauté in olive oil along with the carrot and onion.

Add white wine and reduce mixture. Add tomato paste, cover with water. Simmer for one hour, then strain mixture. Save liquid stock and set aside. Discard bones.

Cut small rounds of bread slices with a cookie cutter. Spread duck fat on circles and toast in oven. Once toasted, set aside in warmer.

Chop liver and intestines, sauté in pan with olive oil. Deglaze with port wine.

Add stock and slowly reduce until the sauce begins to thicken. Strain into a different pan.

Whip truffle butter into sauce on low heat, set aside and keep warm.

Season the woodcock breasts with salt and pepper, sear them in a hot pan for 20 sec on both sides (They should be rare to medium-rare.)

Place toast on plate, top with breasts and spoon sauce over plate.

## French Gravlox

Serves eight

1 salmon fillet  
2 ounces sugar  
4 ounces Brittany sea salt  
3 fl ounces olive oil  
0.4-lb of basil  
½ can green peppercorns  
salt & pepper to taste  
8 toast points

**Garnish with:**  
mixed greens, horseradish, chopped onions, capers and crushed black pepper.

Skin salmon fillet. To cure, coat it with a mixture of salt and sugar. Cover with cheesecloth then foil. Put a weight on it and refrigerate for 24-48 hours.

Blend basil, green peppercorn, salt, pepper and olive oil in blender. Uncover fillet and rub it with this mixture. Cover again. Refrigerate and let cure for an additional 24 hours.

Slice salmon to order and make four rosettes on each plate. Serve on toast with horseradish on a bed of mixed greens. Garnish with onions, capers and black pepper.



French Gravlox

Seared Woodcock

Chef Guillaume  
Hazaël-Massieux

# Rising to the Challenge

## Bringing the Great Outdoors to Disadvantaged Youth

by Anna Stubna

**B**rittany Zebrasky is, in many ways, a typical teenager. When I told her I was joining her small entourage for a day of hunting during the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota last October she did a quick fist pump and said, "Awesome - girl power!" Her smile was infectious, and I found myself grinning back.

When spending time with Brittany, her parents and her brother, it's easy to forget the difficult challenges they face as a family. When Brittany was just five years old she was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. Since then she has endured numerous surgeries to treat the cancer and relieve the symptoms of her illness. Yet despite the hardships of her life, Brittany herself is bubbly young woman with an enthusiasm for hunting – an interest she shares with her parents and brother.

Brittany's participation in the National Hunt was funded by the Under Broken Wings (UBW) program. She is the third participant in as many years to attend the hunt at the invitation of UBW. Jerry Snetsinger, the driving force behind the organization, believes that the event is "about letting these kids experience things we take for granted. It's a tear-jerker when you get out in the woods with them. To watch them shoot their first bird and see them light up when the dogs get out of the kennel – it's very moving."

Brittany's hunt began with a winding early morning ride through acres and acres of golden aspen foliage in Minnesota. It was cold for early October, and most of the leaves were still clinging to the trees. It was a perfect fall day – brisk and sunny.

When the lead car in the caravan screeched to a halt we were all a little startled. Moments later Brittany and Jim Hayett – a member of the RGS board of directors and one of the founders of UBW – disembarked and disappeared into the woods. They were following a grouse they had spotted from the road.

Those of us left behind waited restlessly – and we didn't have to wait long. A single shot echoed from the trees, followed by complete silence. "The best part that will always stay in my heart was the moment I yelled, "shoot" to Brittany as the grouse took off and made a sharp left turn in the only open part of the forest. Still not sure that she downed the bird, we sent in the Shorthairs. Our prayers were answered. Knotty retrieved [Brittany's] first grouse!" an enthusiastic Hayett remembers.

Those of us waiting on the road heard a



UBW founders (from left) are Jim Hayett from Wisconsin, Dr. Joe Chandler from Alaska and Jerry Snetsinger from Minnesota. Hayett and Chandler are currently serving on the RGS board of directors.

youthful shout – "Dad – I got one! DAD!" Everyone broke into wide smiles, and Brittany's father, Christian, made his way into the trees to find his daughter.

Brittany emerged from the woods a few minutes later – ruffed grouse in hand. As she posed for a few pictures, it was difficult to tell who was the most excited: Brittany or the three founding members of UBW: Hayett, Snetsinger and Dr. Joe Chandler. The three men had a palpable air of relief. Ruffed grouse and woodcock are unpredictable – and having located a cooperative grouse for their young charge so early in the day was a blessing.

We loaded back up and headed to our final destination. Brittany and her family hunted with Hayett and Tom Knapp. Knapp - Benelli's American Birdhunter TV show host - was on-site to obtain footage for a future show. The show, featuring UBW and Brittany, aired on the Outdoor Channel on February 9, 2009.

After two days of hunting, Brittany and her team had harvested enough grouse and woodcock to score 54 points, and take second place in the Division III National Hunt competition.

Hayett was deeply moved by his experience with Brittany, "I was very fortunate to find this year's UBW child. Brigid O'Donoghue, founder of United Sportsman Special Alliance, helped me find Brittany. Incredibly, Brittany and her family reside in the little town of Hartland, Wisconsin. That's where I also live and work! Now I can keep in close contact with Britt for as long as we can."

During the National Hunt banquet 11 different donors each pledged \$1,000 to purchase an RGS Life Sponsorship for Brittany. She received a Kimber Valier Grade II 20-



Brittany Zebrasky is all smiles as she displays her first ruffed grouse, which she harvested while participating in the annual UBW event, held in conjunction with the RGS National Hunt in Minnesota. Her apparel was part of a generous donation by Cabela's to make sure she was properly outfitted.

gauge side-by-side shotgun as part of her Life Sponsorship. An UBW vest was also auctioned off during the festivities. This item, in addition to a mystery raffle held in concert with RGS, raised \$2,500.00 for UBW that evening.

Mike Zagata, UBW board member and CEO of RGS, said "The UBW program is really what it's all about. RGS and the UBW board work to involve youth in a sport we are passionate about and working with kids like Brittany is all the reward one could ever expect."

The enthusiastic response and generosity inspired by Brittany in attendees of the hunt were remarkable to witness. Snetsinger, at least, understands the reaction completely. "Sometimes, you just have to give something back," he says simply. To learn more about UBW visit [www.underbrokenwings.com](http://www.underbrokenwings.com)

# Ruffed Grouse Society Plays Leadership Role in Historic White House Conference

The White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy was held on October 1-3 in Reno, Nevada. Not since 1908, when President Theodore Roosevelt convened a Governor's Conference on Conservation, have wildlife conservation and hunting been elevated to this level of importance by the federal government. The conference was coordinated by the White House and the Sporting Conservation Council. Established in 2006, the 12 member Council, a fully sanctioned Federal Advisory Committee, is charged with providing advice to the Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior on issues related to wildlife conservation and sport hunting. The Ruffed Grouse Society has held a seat on the Council since its inception. Over 500 people from across the nation attended the Conference, including representatives from RGIS Chapters in Alaska and Massachusetts. Key officials in attendance included Vice President Cheney, Department of Agriculture Secretary Shaefter, Department of the Interior Secretary Kempthorne and Council on Environmental Quality Chair Connaughton.

The conference was one result of Executive Order 13443, which was signed by President Bush in August, 2007. This Order directs federal agencies to work in concert with the Council, state fish and wildlife agencies and the public to "facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat" in a manner that respects state authority of resident wildlife and the property rights of private landowners. During his remarks, Vice-President Cheney recognized hunters for their dedication and conservation ethic. "Sportsmen tend to be the best informed and most determined advocates for sensible wildlife and habitat conservation" said Cheney. "You don't just talk about the issues that matter – you back it up with money, with time, and with effort. You've proven that the people who are closest to the land are usually the ones who do the most for the land. Our whole nation benefits from the wisdom, the daily work, and the common sense of the American sportsman."

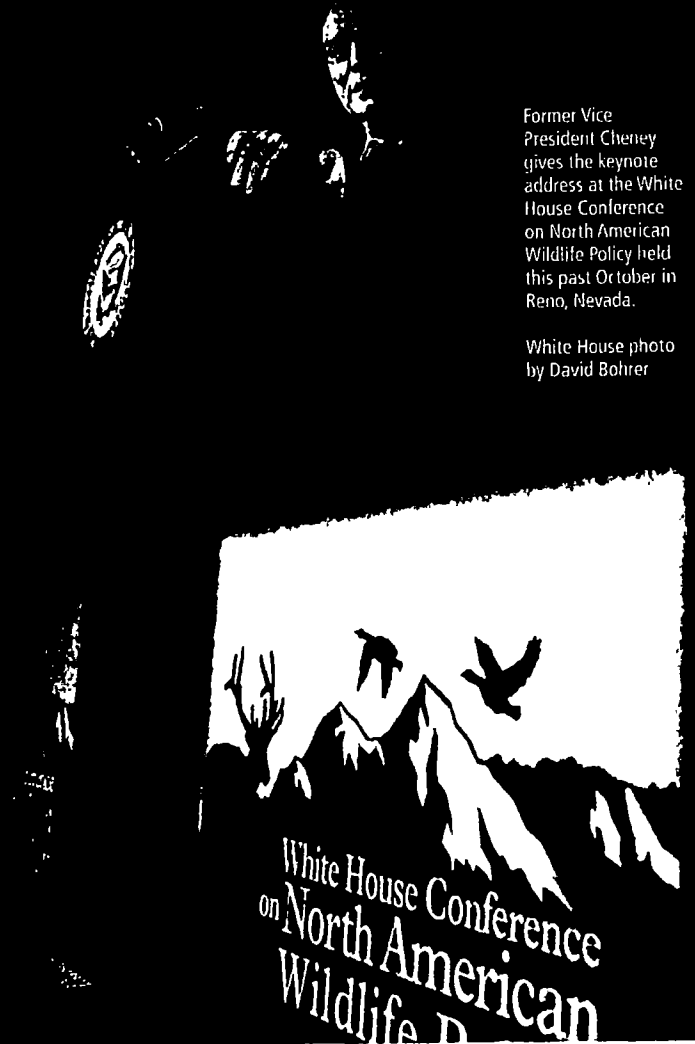
The next and perhaps most important step in promoting the goals of the President's Executive Order is the completion of a comprehensive 10-year Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Plan. Over the past 13 months, the White House and the Council have worked with a diverse cross-section of federal, state, local and tribal government officials, members of Congress and their staffs, conservation organizations and the other vested interests from the private sector to identify and assess key wildlife conservation issues for the 21st Century. Throughout 2008, the Council assembled numerous working groups at various forums across the country to develop a series of policy recommendations to address these key issues and implement the Order. These policy recommendations were further examined at the conference, refined and forwarded to the White House for incorporation into a near-term Action Plan. This Action Plan outlines recommendations that could be moved forward during the final days of the Bush Administration. Those recommendations that require a longer time horizon and/or legislative action will be transmitted by the White House to the incoming Obama Administration and the leaders of the 111th Congress.

The importance of viewing the Action Plan as a living document, not merely as a product of the Bush Administration, was emphasized by CEQ Chair Connaughton. "The 10 year action plan that we're working on together is not merely a 10 year plan, it is the foundation for a 100 year outcome. And so as we sprint to the finish, our finish is the hand off of the baton to the next administration, to the next Congress, to the next set of governors, to the next set of state offi-

cial, to the next set of leaders of your organizations, one of whom could well be my son, your daughter," Connaughton stated.

Dan Dessecker, Director of Conservation Policy for the Ruffed Grouse Society, chaired the various sessions across the nation addressing the issue of Wildlife Habitat Conservation and drafted the policy paper and resulting recommendations. Recommendations that address specific areas of interest to RGIS members and our broader constituency include: a) the establishment of incentives to utilize woody biomass from public and private lands to produce cellulosic ethanol and meet the habitat goals required to sustain wildlife dependent upon young forest habitats; b) coordinate with state fish and wildlife agencies and tribal governments to identify baseline data and game species habitat and population goals so that progress can be monitored; c) enhance incentives to encourage landowners to enroll or re-enroll their lands in the Conservation Reserve Program and to allow public access to these lands.

The Sporting Conservation Council and the other leaders of the wildlife conservation community will meet with the Obama Administration early in its tenure to ensure that the tireless work of so many in moving sport hunting forward on the national stage is not lost in the maze of other priorities. Ruffed Grouse Society members, and the interests of those animals we pursue with such passion each fall, have been well represented to date as this historic opportunity has unfolded – and we aim to keep it that way.



Former Vice President Cheney gives the keynote address at the White House Conference on North American Wildlife Policy held this past October in Reno, Nevada.

White House photo by David Bohrer

# Savoring Sporting Prose

To read or not to read: that is the question. Paul Quinnett claimed not to be a reader. In fact he said, "any meaningful intellectual or emotional exchange between the author and me was purely incidental." I never claimed to be a reader either except - like many things with age - I have developed a great fondness for the written word. It helps us understand why we do what we do. In this case, sporting prose helps define our world, heightens the sense of quality versus quantity, provides historical perspective on the early players, and better explains how the game should be played. Reading changes the youthful perspective driving us to limit out, to a gentler, greater understanding of the value every aspect of the sport has.

In Emerson's *Nature* there's a line to be remembered, "In the woods, we return to reason and faith." What a thought to ponder! And John Keats said, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever: it's loveliness increases, it will never pass into nothingness..." So be it with our guns, our dogs, our favorite gear and our rich experi-

ences afield with friends and comrades. Without realizing it at the time, I ask, did you savor every moment to the fullest?

Tovar Cerulli, in his article *Life and Death* said, "I hunt for a complex web of reasons: to learn about myself and the place I inhabit, to be nourished by the land and participate in its rhythms, to answer a call for which I have no name." To broaden our appreciation of this grand sport of grouse and woodcock hunting, to understand better how it was yesterday, how the rules and ethics have been established, and how the changing abundance of game has subtly changed the rules of acceptable behavior, a library of sporting prose must be examined, digested and then read again.

My recommended reading does not encompass all that is written on the subject by any means, but will hopefully provide a baseline of reference. I am not a collector of first editions. No matter the date of publication, I enjoy the written word, and I include many recent publications in my library. I have confined

"If it were not for these writers and their words to us, it would just be another day in the woods without the lore, the legend and the legacy."



most of this list to the sport of grouse and woodcock hunting - but there is much to learn from taking a broader approach. To enjoy or relish the written prose thoroughly one must include writings about other game, dogs, and guns. There is even a place for appreciation of fine sporting art - but that is a subject for another time.

A great place for grounding in early literature is George Bird Evans. *The Ruffed Grouse Book* (1977) and *The Woodcock Book* (1977). In these works Evans selects from the likes of Frank Forester, Charles Hallock, John C. Phillips, H.P. Sheldon, William Schaldach, John Alden Knight, Archibald Rutledge, Ben Ames Williams, and others to provide the reader with a perspective beginning in the late 1700's. After these classics, work your way through the rest of his works, including *The Upland Shooting Life* (1971), *Troubles with Bird Dogs* (1975), *The Bird Dog Book* (1979), *The Upland Gunner's Book* (1979), *An Affair With Grouse* (1982), *Troubles with Bird Dogs* (1985), *Grouse Along the Tramroad* (1986), and *A Dog, A Gun and Time Enough* (1987).

Early on readers should also bask in William Harnden Foster's *New England Grouse Shooting*. It is a prize of prose and pen and ink illustrations by the author. A few more must-reads include *Grouse and Grouse Hunting and Timberdoodle!* (1974) by Frank Woolner, *Grouse Magic, Grouse & Woodcock* (1981), and *Hunting the Ruffed Grouse* (1970) by Nick Sisley, and Tom Huggler's, *A Fall of Woodcock* (1997).

No list would be complete without the poet laureate of grouse hunting himself, Burt Spiller. His *Grouse Feathers, More Grouse Feathers* and *Grouse Feathers Again* are critical volumes to include. *The Book of the American Woodcock* (1967) by William G. Sheldon, John Alden Knight's, *Woodcock* (1944), *The Whispering Wings of Autumn* (1982) by Gene Hill and Steve Smith, *Woodcock Shooting* by Steve Smith and *Woodcock Shooting* (1908) by Edmund W. Davis are all wonderful reference sources for an aspiring grouse scholar.

Corey Ford's *The Road to Tinkhamtown* is arguably the greatest short story ever written. His escapades of the Lower Forty Shooting, Angling and Inside Straight Club are captivating.

Charles Fergus' *The Upland Equation* (1995), and *A Hunter's Book of Days* (2005) are nicely written. And if you want a quick trip through some quotes from days gone by, try his book *The Quotable Hunter* (1995)

I have taken literary license to include three short story specialists Ed Smith, Jack Mitchell and Gene Hill. They have a knack for capturing a seemingly insignificant event, or treasured gun, rod, or dog and helping us to understand the value that comes with enjoying every moment of life.

I have some personal, regional, attachment for the non-grouse or woodcock stories of Edmund Ware Smith. *Upriver and Down, A Treasury of the Maine Woods, The One-Eyed Poacher of Priveledge, and Further Adventures of the One-Eyed Poacher* are some of my favorites.

Then, I must put in a plug for my old, now deceased, friend and colleague, Jack Douglas Mitchell. He wrote the back page for *The American Rifleman Magazine*, and his works have been compiled in two little prizes, *The Back Page* (1982) and *More Back Page*

(1990). Jack's humor always makes me laugh - and without humor reading is dull.

One's library is never complete without Gene Hill and his many wonderful contributions including *Mostly Tailfeathers* (1975), *A Listening Walk* (1985), *Hill Country* (1997), *Tears and Laughter* (1980) and *Passing A Good Time: with Guns, Dogs, Fly Rods and Other Joys* (1996). An excerpt from *Tears & Laughter* leaves the reader with the following advice, "Every partridge hunter should have an end-of-the-day covert - a cool place to sit and listen and a spot for a drink and swim for the dog. It's a nice quiet place to dress a bird, if you have one, if not - why, no matter at all. You can sit a minute or two and sort things out, watch a worry or so wash away in the stream, and discover that the end of one hunt is the beginning of another." Again and again Hill takes you there. Those little short stories leave you with a message, a chuckle and some deep sentiment from someone who identifies with the little and seemingly unimportant things. We sorely miss him!

One of the wonderful asides gleaned from sporting literature are the illustrations by some of America's best sporting artists; Lynn Bogue Hunt, Aiden Lassell Ripley, Milton C. Weiler and a host of others. Today illustrations are usually replaced by photographs. Although practical, photos rarely match the depth and character of their hand-drawn predecessors.

So here ends my primer for those wanting to dig deeper into the traditions of our sport, and find that special romance from the pages of the past and present. If it were not for these writers and their words to us, it would just be another day in the woods without the lore, the legend and the legacy. Every hit and miss have become far more vivid to me now, after I have taken the time to ponder the musings of many writers on the subject. ❁

RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



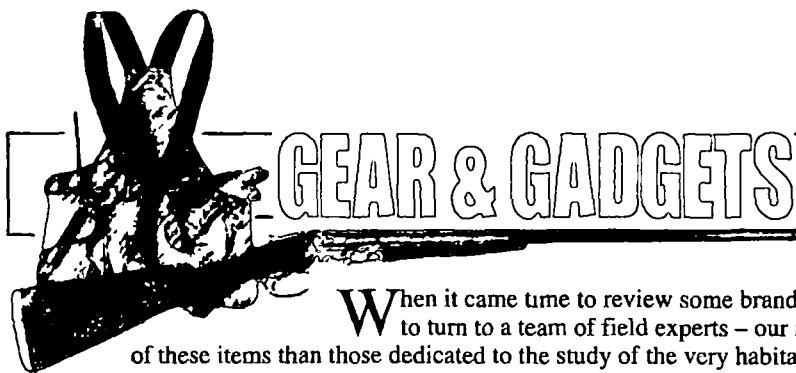
## EMBROIDERED APPAREL

**Bob Allen  
High Prairie  
Hunting Shirt**

**\$35.00**  
RGS-HU127



**1-800-550-2698** [WWW.SHOPRGS.COM](http://WWW.SHOPRGS.COM)



## New Product Reviews

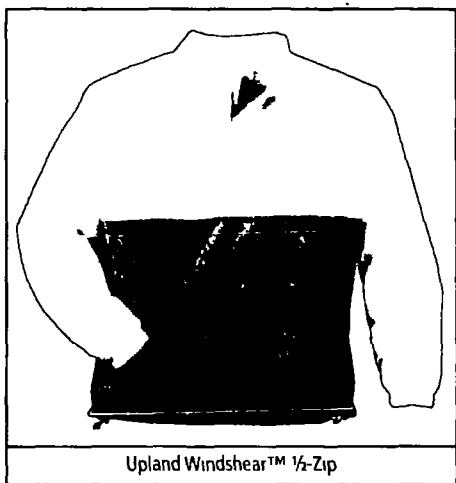
When it came time to review some brand new field products from Cabela's, it seemed only natural to turn to a team of field experts – our regional biologists. After all, there can be no better judges of these items than those dedicated to the study of the very habitat these products were designed to withstand.

### □ Cabela's Upland WindShear™ ½-Zip

Size: M to 3XL

Price: \$49.99 - \$54.99

A ruffed grouse hunting season in the Upper Midwest seemed like the perfect challenge for Cabela's new Upland WindShear™. Initially, I had my doubts that the light garment could handle the thickets of the Northwoods and survive countless tussles with berry bushes, hawthorns and conifer branches



Upland WindShear™ ½-Zip

The special WindShear™ fabric performed well, and after two months of frequent use, still looks like new. It worked as advertised, blocking out the wind and allowing perspiration to escape; keeping me dry and comfortable during my hunts. I used the jacket alone on warmer days and added a vest over it when temperatures dropped. The fabric was water resistant and performed well shedding light rain. Once out of the elements the jacket dried quickly.

Two deep zippered pockets are present on the lower front of the jacket and are designed to hold a lot of hunting supplies or keep your hands warm. An additional small breast pocket would have been useful to contain my dog collar control, or keep maps handy.

The color of the jacket is tan on the lower half and blaze orange on the upper half. It was clearly visible to hunting partners - besides being sharp looking, something my dogs didn't seem to appreciate. Cabela's also offers a full blaze version. My model was a medium – which is my normal shirt size – and I had enough room to comfortably wear a sweatshirt under it.

The jacket is a pullover with a half zipper down the front, which allows you to regulate the amount of heat that leaves the body. Its light weight fabric is soft to the touch and provides outstanding freedom of movement to mount and smoothly swing a gun. The sleeves are hemmed and fit comfortably to the wrist - keeping warmth in and rain, bugs or twigs out. Two hem drawcords are provided at the waist to help seal out the elements.

This jacket would be a fine addition to any bird hunter's closet.

Gary Zimmer  
Senior Regional Biologist  
Western Great Lakes

### □ Cabela's Infinity™ Field Vest

Size: M to 3XL

Price: \$69.99 - \$79.99

I began my partnership with the Cabela's Infinity™ Field Vest at the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. I immediately liked the vest because it had lots of pockets, but few bells and whistles.

I mostly tortured it on bird hunts in Pennsylvania. It proved extremely durable in dense and thorny cover. The large vertical openings in the front, however, funneled thousands of tiny twigs and leaves from the brush into the pouch. This was annoying - if not quite a fire hazard. I would suggest a ridged little flap over these openings to thwart debris collection.

The game pouch was big and easily accessed. It proved waterproof by collecting a gallon of water in a driving rainstorm, which poured out when I threw the vest in my truck. But if I was carrying water for me or my dog, which I often do, I wouldn't want the water to run down the back of my legs if it leaked, which it often does. I would not want blood from harvested game to leak through either.

I was lukewarm on the snap front pockets because they feel less secure than zippers to me. (I have a habit of slipping shells into the pockets and ignoring the elastic shell holders.) Nonetheless, snaps can be secured one-handed, unlike most zippers, and there is little that can go wrong with them. I have wrestled with many snagged, bent or toothless zippers.

Amazingly, this vest comes with a flap on the back of the neck with two little grommets for accommodating the giant safety pin of a back tag license holder. Since I live in Pennsylvania where this feature is needed, I was extremely pleased.

I also wore the vest deer hunting. It provided the required orange and also made extra appendages like a backpack unnecessary. Because of volatile weather I shoved: three pairs of gloves, two hats, full raingear, roll of toilet paper, box of rifle shells, drag rope, mini-Leatherman, my cell phone and wallet into the vest, and I could still put it on over several dozen layers of clothes. .awesome!

Here the large front vertical openings provided quick access to gloves and other necessities. I liked the idea of the straps for lashing extra clothes to your back, but I had no use for them, though I may in the future

Speaking of the cell phone and wallet, the smaller zippered vertical pockets on the front are perfect for these items, along with car keys and other valuables. The zippers are secure and the pockets handy. These pockets were my favorite feature.

This is a very good vest. I'll wear it until it falls apart - or I do.

Mark Banker  
Senior Regional Biologist Mid-Atlantic



Infinity™ Field Vest



# *Perfection Redefined...*

## *Model "Imperial"*

- ♦ Self-opening action.
- ♦ Locking screws fitted throughout internally.
- ♦ Bone charcoal case hardening.
- ♦ Hand detachable pin with locking stud.
- ♦ Finest hand picked engraving.
- ♦ Exhibition quality walnut.
- ♦ Diamond Chequering.

AYA's Imperial shotgun embodies the very highest level of quality you have come to expect from AYA. The Imperial boasts exquisite hand picked engraving, bone charcoal case hardening, and exhibition quality walnut, making it one of the most elegant shotguns available today. AYA has also taken great care to ensure the Imperial functions as beautifully as it looks. Crisper trigger pulls, smoother opening, and lively handling are to be expected from this masterpiece. The Imperial has not been made to a price, but to a level of fit, finish, and function unmatched in Spanish gunmaking.

AYA USA • P.O. Box 647 • Old Saybrook, CT 06475 • 860.388.3989  
[www.aya-fineguns.com](http://www.aya-fineguns.com) • [aya-usa@aya-fineguns.com](mailto:aya-usa@aya-fineguns.com)

New England Custom Gun Service, Ltd. • Plainfield, NH • 603.469.3450  
[www.newenglandcustomgun.com](http://www.newenglandcustomgun.com) • [bestguns@comcast.net](mailto:bestguns@comcast.net)

# CLASSIFIED



**Northeast Sponsor's Hunt**  
**October 15-18, 2000**  
 Weatherby's Lodge,  
 Grand Lake Stream, Maine  
 Space is limited,  
 register early!  
 (800) 928-2211

## ART

**MASTER CANINE ARTIST ORIGINAL ARTWORK AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE. CONTACT BRUCE PRENTICE (215) 674-2488 HATBORO, PA E-MAIL: [birdogbruce@yahoo.com](mailto:birdogbruce@yahoo.com) OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE. [www.birdogbruce.com](http://www.birdogbruce.com)**

**RGS/STAMPS:** All nine mint with die-cut board ready for framing. Fits std 11 X 14 frame \$195.00/full set w/ stamp savers  
**TO ORDER: 1 (888) 361-4344 or [jfreimuth2@comcast.net](mailto:jfreimuth2@comcast.net)**

## BOOKS/TAPES/ETC.

***Grouse Dogs: A Professional Trainer's Journal* and *Training Your Pointing Dogs For Hunting and Home* by Richard D. Weaver, \$19.95 each [www.grousedogs.com](http://www.grousedogs.com) or call (717) 385-5417.**

## DOGS

**BAYVIEW SETTERS:** linebred 50 years, resulting in natural, consistent foot-hunting grouse & woodcock dogs. These are dogs with excellent dispositions, style and noses. They make great companions, as described in Joe Augustine's book, **Feathered Tales**. **CALL: (845) 223-5546 EVENINGS. E-MAIL: [bayview56@aol.com](mailto:bayview56@aol.com).**

**BONASA KENNEL:** Dual Type English Setters at Stud. Excellent Bloodlines. Outstanding Grouse and Woodcock Dogs  
**JOHN BERNARDI, SARANAC, NY. (518) 534-4191.**

**Dark Hollow English Setters** – Summer litter of our natural, companion grouse dogs, Dark Hollow Shade X Dark Hollow Corey. Serious inquiries at (717) 385-5417, (717) 369-3595 or [www.grousedogs.com](http://www.grousedogs.com).

**GSP PUPS:** Looking for an excellent grouse dog with superior FCH and VC bloodline? Planned spring breeding of my personal grouse dog. Hunting families please, responsible dog owners a must. Contact George at **330.688.4360**, or e-mail [deborah.epling@att.net](mailto:deborah.epling@att.net).

**WHISPERING PINES SPRINGERS** - WE HAVE 18 YEARS EXPERIENCE RAISING AND TRAINING FIELD BED ENGLISH SPRINGERS. OUR PUPPIES ARE OUT OF PROVEN FIELD TRIAL DOGS AS WELL AS GUN DOGS, OUR PUPPIES ALL COME WITH A 3 YEAR GUARANTEE, WE ONLY SELL QUALITY DOGS PUPPIES AND TRAINED DOGS AVAILABLE NOW. CONTACT LARRY HENNESSEY AT **715 546 2418** WEB SITE [www.whisperingpinesspringers.com](http://www.whisperingpinesspringers.com)

## FOR SALE

**[www.MunitionsToGo.com](http://www.MunitionsToGo.com) BEAT THE HIGH COST OF AMMO BY BUYING IN BULK. [www.MunitionsToGo.com](http://www.MunitionsToGo.com)**

**"GROUSE WON'T ALWAYS FEED ON ASPEN":** Gordon Gullion. Add winter feed diversity to your hunting areas. Contact: COLD STREAM FARM, 2030D FREE SOIL ROAD, FREE SOIL, MI 49411 (231) 464-5400

## HUNTS

**NORTH DAKOTA/WILD PHEASANTS** – Also Huns & Sharptails CHEAP \$40 per night. Public PLOTS land maps & "Private Land-Access Bulletin Board" available. **1 (866) ROOSTER or [tailfeatherinn@aol.com](mailto:tailfeatherinn@aol.com)/[www.tailfeatherinn.com](http://www.tailfeatherinn.com).**

**FABULOUS UPLAND EXPERIENCE:** Unlimited Highbush Cranberry patches loaded with ruffies and sharptail. Minimum of 10-20 flushes an hour in light cover and easy walking. Three days \$850. First-class meals and lodgings. **CONTACT PETER MARTIN AT (705) 335-3163 or E-MAIL [pw-martin@ontera.net](mailto:pw-martin@ontera.net).**

**HUNT NORTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE** for grouse and woodcock this fall. The vast timberlands of NH's Great Northern Woods is the perfect habitat for the elusive ruffed grouse. We offer comfortable cabin accommodations, true northern hospitality and professional guide service for bird hunting and fly fishing. Orvis-endorsed fly-fishing outfitter **LOPSTICK LODGE & CABINS, FIRST CONNECTICUT LAKE, PITTSBURG, NH 03592. (800) 538-6659; [www.lopstick.com](http://www.lopstick.com).**

**HUNT PALMQUIST FARM IN NORTHERN WISCONSIN** Trek through 800 private acres of forest & 10,000 additional acres of public forest & grouse trails. After bagging the birds, leave the woods for a comfortable cabin. Palmquist Farm strives to make your hunt successful & enjoyable. We prepare lunches for the field & home cooked meals are scheduled to accommodate your hunt schedule. We welcome dogs & provide professional guides. Call for packages and rates  
<http://www.palmquistfarm.com/activities/hunting/>; (800) 519-2558

**NORTHERN MAINE GROUSE & WOODCOCK HUNTING:** Classic cover on 100,000s of acres of commercial timberland and 1,000s of miles of logging roads. Sweeping river valleys and abandoned farms offer good woodcock cover. You will experience some of the most consistent grouse hunting in the country. Professional guiding, quality pointing dogs, lodging, meals & transportation. Packages by day, 1/2 week or full week. **ALLAGASH GUIDE SERVICE, (207) 398-3418, [www.allagashguideservice.com](http://www.allagashguideservice.com)**

**UPLAND HUNTING ADVENTURES** in beautiful Adirondack Mountains and Lake Champlain Valley. Hunt successional growth covers containing aspen, oak, hickory and beech along with apple, cherry, dogwood, sundry berries and plenty of young conifers for security. Covers right out of Spiller's **Grouse Feathers** and Harnden Foster's **New England Grouse Shooting**. Scenery reminiscent of a Schaldach print or a Lynn Bogue Hunt sketch. It all comes together with great habitat and beautiful scenery in the Lake Champlain Valley. **ADVENTURE GUIDE SERVICE (WILLSBORO, NY), (518) 963-4286, [www.adventureguideservice.com](http://www.adventureguideservice.com).**

## REAL ESTATE

**PHEASANT HUNTING LODGE** SW North Dakota 6000+ sq ft. Fully furnished. \$595K (928) 606-0604

# ADVERTISING

## RGS Travel Now Open

RGS members and others may now book their travel needs through RGS. As a means of expanding and diversifying RGS' income stream, the Society is now in the travel business with its own websites, [www.RGSTravel.org](http://www.RGSTravel.org) or [www.RGSTravel.com](http://www.RGSTravel.com). Both will take you to the same website that will appear in your browser address window as: <http://www.ytb-travel.com/ruffedgrousesociety>.

The site is maintained by YTB Travel network and powered by World Choice, a segment of *Travelocity.com*.



[www.RGSTravel.org](http://www.RGSTravel.org)  
or  
[www.RGSTravel.com](http://www.RGSTravel.com)

### TO PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED AD

- \$.50 a word for single insertions
- \$.45 a word for multiple insertions.
- Allow 34 characters per line including punctuation marks and spaces.
- Allow 24 characters for bold type.
- 2009 Closing Dates - January 15, April 1, June 15, and September 15, 2009.
- 3 line minimum.
- Send payment & ad copy to:  
Editor/Ruffed Grouse Society  
Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044  
[editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org)

### MAINE GROUSE & WOODCOCK

*Specializing in Grouse.  
(Your Dogs or Ours!)*

Call or Write for Free Information

### FOGGY MOUNTAIN

Guide Service  
Wayne A. Bosowicz, Master Guide  
(207) 564-3404

131 Ladd Road  
Sebec, Maine 04481  
[www.maine grouse.com](http://www.maine grouse.com)



### HUNT NORTHERN ONTARIO'S BEST-KEPT SECRET - RUFFED GROUSE

Millions of acres of prime habitat with huge grouse populations. Easily bag your daily limit. Enjoy your stay in beautiful lakeside cabins in the grandeur of the northern bush country with an ultimate ruffed grouse hunting experience. Six-day hunt package \$595.

Write or call

#### CALL OF THE NORTH

Box 697 Hwy 11 Geraldton, Ontario POT 1M0  
Photos & information at [www.callofthenorth.com](http://www.callofthenorth.com)  
(807) 854-1371 Toll Free (800) 801-4080



### GROUSE & WOODCOCK SHOOTING

BATTENKILL LODGE BATTENKILL LODGE  
Shushan, New York



*in the beautiful Battenkill Valley*  
3 Hours from New York City

Over 1,000 Acres Managed for Grouse with 15 Miles of Trails and Edge Cover.

Private Suites.

Trips can be Combined with Trout Fishing (no extra charge).

Close to 4,000+ Acres of State Lands.  
Late Season - February Grouse Shooting.

**CAPT. BOB STORC**  
22 VILLAGE SQUARE  
GLEN COVE, NEW YORK 11542  
1 (516) 671-7690

[www.battenkillodge.com](http://www.battenkillodge.com)

### Grouse & Woodcock Atlantic Salmon



#### Miramichi Inn

Fine shooting over old-fashioned Irish setters in prime coverts: Atlantic Salmon, spring black bear, fishing & shooting school, sporting clays. Combination packages: Puppies occasionally & dog training exclusively on grouse & woodcock.

P.O. Box 331  
Red Bank, New Brunswick E9E-2P3  
Tel. (506) 836-7452 Fax: (506) 836-7805  
[www.miramichinn.com](http://www.miramichinn.com)  
e-mail: [info@miramichinn.com](mailto:info@miramichinn.com)

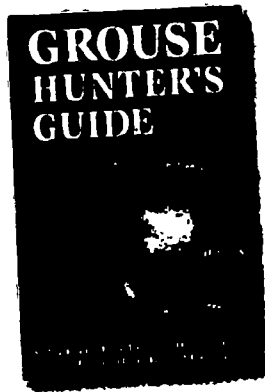
### Northwoods Bird Dogs

- Gun dog and field trial training on wild birds.
- Puppies and started grouse dogs available
- Proven producers at stud.

For more information, call Jerry Kolter at 320-245-6988 and please visit our website.



[www.northwoodsbirddogs.com](http://www.northwoodsbirddogs.com)



**Grouse Hunter's Guide**  
by Dennis Walrod.  
\$16.95



**Drummer in the Woods**  
by Burton L. Spiller.  
\$15.95



**Ruffed Grouse:  
Woodland Drummer**  
by Michael Furtman  
\$19.95



**Eat Like a Wild Man**  
compiled by  
Rebecca Gray.  
\$24.95



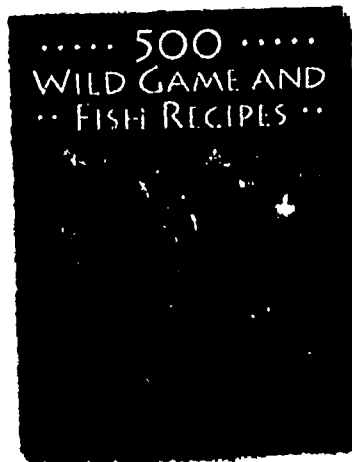
**VIDEO - Woodcock  
Hunting with Tom  
Huggler.**  
\$21.95



**Fishing Dry Flies for Trout  
on Rivers and Streams**  
by Art Lee.  
Hardcover \$24.95



**VIDEO - Field to  
Feast RUFFED  
GROUSE.**  
\$39.95



**500 Wild Game and Fish Recipes**  
by Galen Winter.  
\$14.95



**Zip Zap** by Mike Gaddis.  
\$24.95

QTY	ITEM	TOTAL
<b>SHIPPING AND HANDLING</b>		<b>TOTAL PRICE OF ITEMS*</b>
		<b>SHIPPING / HANDLING</b>
		<b>TOTAL (US CURRENCY)</b>

Orders from \$10 to \$19.99. \$5  
Orders of \$20 and more \$7.50  
All Shipments to Alaska,  
Hawaii, Canada \$7.50

United Parcel among shipping options. Please provide street address  
\*PA residents add 7% sales tax

**METHOD OF PAYMENT:**

- Check or money order enclosed
- Charge to my VISA, MasterCard, Discover, American Express (circle one)

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (as shown on credit card) \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

**SEND TO:** Ruffed Grouse Society  
451 McCormick Road  
Coraopolis, PA 15108



FOR MWV,  
SUSTAINABILITY IS  
MORE THAN A GOAL.

IT'S A GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

As a leader in our industry and as a responsible partner to our customers, MWV builds sustainability into every decision we make, from business strategy to forest management that provides a habitat for wildlife. Sustainability shapes everything MWV does – and every packaging solution we create for customers and consumers around the world. [mwv.com](http://mwv.com).

**MWV** MEADWESTVACO

# Support the Ruffed Grouse Society and Take Part in One of These Exciting Offers!



## RGS Special Life Sponsor Shotgun Promotions

Sportsmen and women who pay \$10,000 to become an RGS Life Sponsor and pay half upfront and the remainder within 6 months will qualify for a limited time offer. This special shotgun offer is a choice of a Caesar Guerini Magnus, a Kimber Valier Grade II or an AYA Model 4/53.

### Caesar Guerini Magnus

The Magnus shotgun has been designed to appeal to the discriminating hunter who appreciates a classic firearm with timeless features.

Over-and-under

Choice of: 12- or 28-gauge  
with 28" or 30" barrels, or 20-  
gauge with 26", 28" or 30" barrels.

Gold inlays of grouse, pheasant and quail

Lined lockable hard case

Five precision flush choke tubes included

\$3,850 retail value



Caesar Guerini Magnus



### Caesar Guerini Magnus

Kimbers are still available, but only for a short time. Please hurry, the number of guns is limited.

Side-by-side

20-gauge, 28" barrels

Double trigger

\$5,000 retail value



Kimber Valier Grade II



### AYA Model 4/53

Side-by-side

Choice of 20-gauge with

28" barrels, or 28-gauge

with 27" barrels

Double trigger

\$3,700 retail value



AYA Model 4/53

An RGS Life Sponsor may also elect to pay sponsorship dues over four years in installments totaling \$10,000. However, those who choose this payment method do not qualify for a shotgun.

## RGS Centurion Membership

An RGS Centurion membership is available for \$1,000. Purchase a centurion membership today, while Kimbers are still available, and you will receive a ticket. For every 10 Centurion memberships sold, there will be a drawing for a Kimber Valier Grade II.

As a new Centurion member, you have a one in 10 chance of winning one of these coveted shotguns.



## Are you ready for a blower with power?

STIHL has a blower that's right for you. We offer an entire line of backpack and handheld blowers, including low-noise and electric models. Ask your STIHL Dealer which blower is right for you.

[stihlusa.com](http://stihlusa.com)

**STIHL**®



# RUFFLY SPEAKING

## Early Spring Ruminations

by Paul Carson

It seems to me it's in late winter and early spring the ol' bio-rhythms can just about flat line. If there is a low ebb for life forces, that stretch of weeks (that seem like months) at the end of winter into what is referred to – usually whimsically – as “spring” is a natural venue. Not to sound too morbid, but taking the long dive off this mortal coil during that time of year doesn't seem half as bad as taking the plunge in some other time slot. In February and, especially, in early March, as I watch another blizzard of completely-unique-to-themselves-with-no-duplication-anywhere snowflakes or gaze on the approximately 150th artistic glaze of ice on my car's windshield, an almost uncontrollable urge to hurl comes over me

The thought intensifies with the passing of each unrelentingly oppressive day that it would be so nice to just curl up in the fetal position in some out-of-the-way corner to eventually be swept out with the rest of the dust bunnies.

The late Ned Smith, wildlife artist and outdoor writer, once wrote about seeing a skunny doe under an apple tree in late winter. A wind was bringing down the last of the winter-hanging fruit. And as each apple plopped into the snow the malnourished doe would trot over and eat it. There were only a few apples, and they were soon gone. Ned didn't say – or didn't know – what happened to the needy doe after she ate the last apple.

Sometimes, trying to get through the uglies of late winter and early spring, you can use up all your happy thoughts and optimism, like that doe eating up the windfalls. And then what happens when you've worn all your cheerfulness threadbare?

Well, you probably don't have to eat snow until green-up as the doe may have had to do, but sometimes it can be a near thing until the crocuses start stirring.

Even though that out-of-the-way corner looks more and more inviting as the year progresses and the calendar says spring should be around somewhere, I still go out and walk the old trails where – reason keeps trying to tell me – there'll be trillium in bloom in a few weeks and towhees scratching for breakfast.

And maybe I almost believe, until I find a dead grouse in a patch where the snow has reluctantly retreated. It's a bird that hasn't been obviously torn or mangled; he's just ... flat, pressed by

heavy snows like a flower or a leaf between the pages of a book. (In this case it was probably the Book of Job.)

On another cold but bright day in February I found a beautiful bronze-ruffed bird lying on the branch of a hawthorn tree. It looked as if he were stretched out there for a nap as the wind swayed him gently and his breeze-stirred ruff glittered in the sun. Maybe he'd been picked off by a hawk and dropped? I don't know. Maybe he had just drifted off to the big sleep on the branch thinking, What the heck. What's the use?

But I doubt that. Grouse don't have to keep telling themselves that spring, real spring, is coming. I don't know when a grouse's bio-rhythms might take a nosedive. But in that time of year when mine are barely kicking, a grouse's are starting to practice clogging

There was fresh, deep snow under a sky the color of lead left too long out in the weather one mid-February. Although I was convincing myself we'd never see the sun (or ground) again, I was out walking a familiar circuit to check out drumming logs. And there in the fresh snow on one of the snow-covered logs were the feather prints of the drummer. He had anchored himself as best he could in the snow exactly where he'd be in all seriousness in a few more weeks and had taken, by the looks of the imprint, one single swipe with his wings. Maybe just to make sure he still had clearance for drumming. Maybe to check if he might have acquired a touch of bursitis over the winter. The wing swipe in the snow wasn't much, but it was his declaration that he'd be back, despite a doomsday sky.

It was enough for me. I leaned on his act of defiance that year and made it through, without becoming too unhinged, until the coltsfoot started blooming on our road bank.

Spring, real spring, is coming. The drummers know it down to the very roots of the tiny little pectinations, the feathers on their toes that work sort of like snowtreads for them in winter. And if you can't convince yourself that winter has to go, take their word for it; the grouse know these things. If you yield to temptation and join the dust bunnies in some remote corner, you'll miss drumming season, which is great time of year to feel your bio-rhythms spike. 🐿



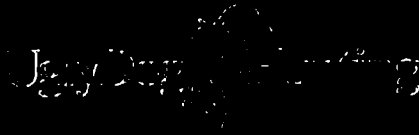


*Want birds?*



Hunt with an **Ugly Dog**  
and support the **Ruffed Grouse Society**.

Please join us in keeping the covers thriving and the birds flying.



The Ugly Dog Hunting Company has serious gear for you, your dog, and the hunt  
-- rugged, hunt-tested field gear  
-- men's and women's upland clothing and boots  
-- dog kennels, gear, vests, and training equipment  
Shop online at [www.uglydoghunting.com](http://www.uglydoghunting.com) or call toll free for a catalog 877 982 7054

# The Woodlander... Understated Elegance, Unmatched Craftsmanship.



At Caesar Guerini we are all avid bird hunters and wanted to create a gun that truly reflects our deep passion for thundering wings, autumn foliage, steady gun dogs, and the snell of wood smoke on a crisp afternoon wind. The Woodlander with its classic color case hardened receiver and natural oil finished Turkish walnut stock is the shotgun you imagine in such a setting. It is destined to be the upland game gun of choice for its quick mounts and smooth handling. The Woodlander is available in 12, 20, 28, and .410 gauges in right hand, left hand, and English stocks. Two and three barrel sub-gauge combo sets are also available. For more information visit our web site.

 CAESAR  
GUERINI

(410) 901-1131 • [www.gueriniusa.com](http://www.gueriniusa.com)

# ruffed GROUSE

Summer 2009 • Volume 21 • Issue 2

## SOCIETY

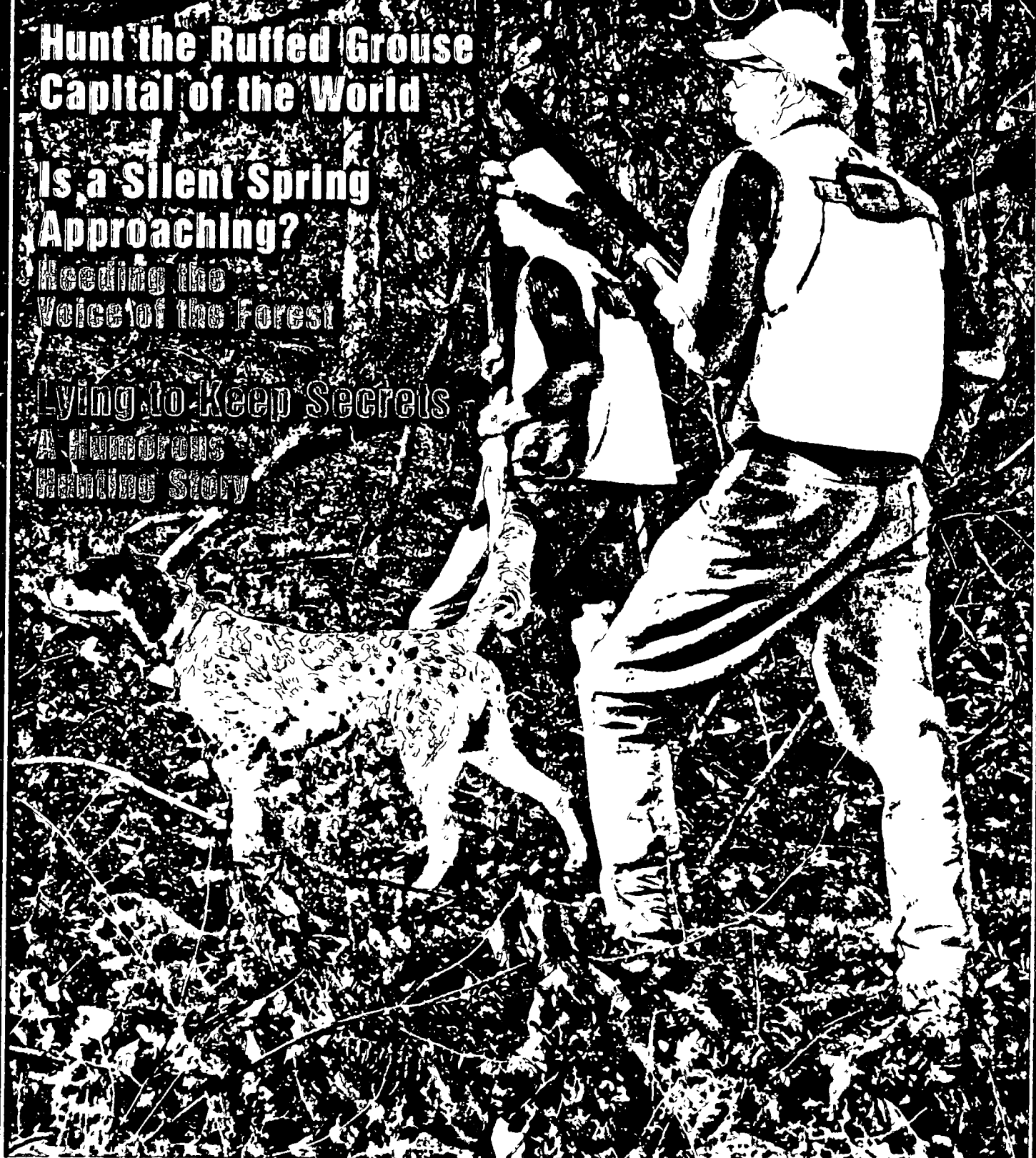
**Hunt the Ruffed Grouse  
Capital of the World**

**Is a Silent Spring  
Approaching?**

**Heeding the  
Voice of the Forest**

**Lying to Keep Secrets**

**A Humorous  
Hunting Story**





# WHEN NUTRITION COUNTS

*The birds are scarce, but he continues his search working the ditches and fence rows quartering through the field. He slams on point and you say to yourself, "this is what it's all about."*

His breeding, your training/conditioning combined with high-quality nutrition have made this possible.

Give him the high-quality nutrition that helps keep him in the field when other dogs are heading for the truck. Feed what many top field trialers feed — Purina® Pro Plan® Performance Formula.

brand DOG FOOD

- Real chicken is the #1 ingredient, for a high-quality protein source to help support muscle mass for strength and provide energy
- VO2 max optimizes oxygen metabolism so dogs burn fat more efficiently
- Natural sources of glucosamine for joint health and mobility
- High levels of antioxidants to help support a healthy immune system
- Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, including EPA and DHA
- Highly palatable

For more information of interest to sporting dog enthusiasts,  
visit [www.proplan.com/sportingdog/mag](http://www.proplan.com/sportingdog/mag)

Purina is a proud sponsor of:



Quaker

PURINA

PROPLAN

brand DOG FOOD

FUEL THE CHAMPION WITHIN™

For complete usage information, visit [www.proplan.com](http://www.proplan.com)

PRO PLAN  
PERFORMANCE  
FORMULA

ALL LIFE STAGES

FIELD-TESTED  
**FIELD-PROVEN**

**TRUST OUR GEAR**



Field-testing is a way of life at Cabela's. It's the only way to make sure everything in our proven selection of quality hunting gear lives up to our high expectations.

We know how much you value the time you spend outdoors, and we take seriously the responsibility that comes with outfitting your adventures.



Cabela's | Infinity™ Field Vest



Wingshooter Boots



Garmin | Dog Tracking System

**Cabela's**

WORLD'S FOREMOST OUTFITTER

Shop Online Request a Catalog Find a Store

www.cabelas.com • 800.761.0066

**TOP-OF-THE-LINE BRANDS**

at bottom-line prices.

Proud partner of





*Ruffed Grouse Society*  
**SERIES**

SKB proudly presents a Limited Edition of 20 and 28 gauge Over & Unders. Available in 28" & 26" barrels. Featuring Fancy American Black Walnut Stock and Forend, Automatic Ejectors, Manual Safety, Selective Trigger, Briley Choke Tubes

The Ruffed Grouse Society depends upon members, volunteers, staff, landowners and corporate sponsors to insure that this and future generations can enjoy ruffed grouse, woodcock, songbirds, deer and many other types of wildlife that depend upon young forest habitat.

**WWW.SK3**

DEPARTMENTS

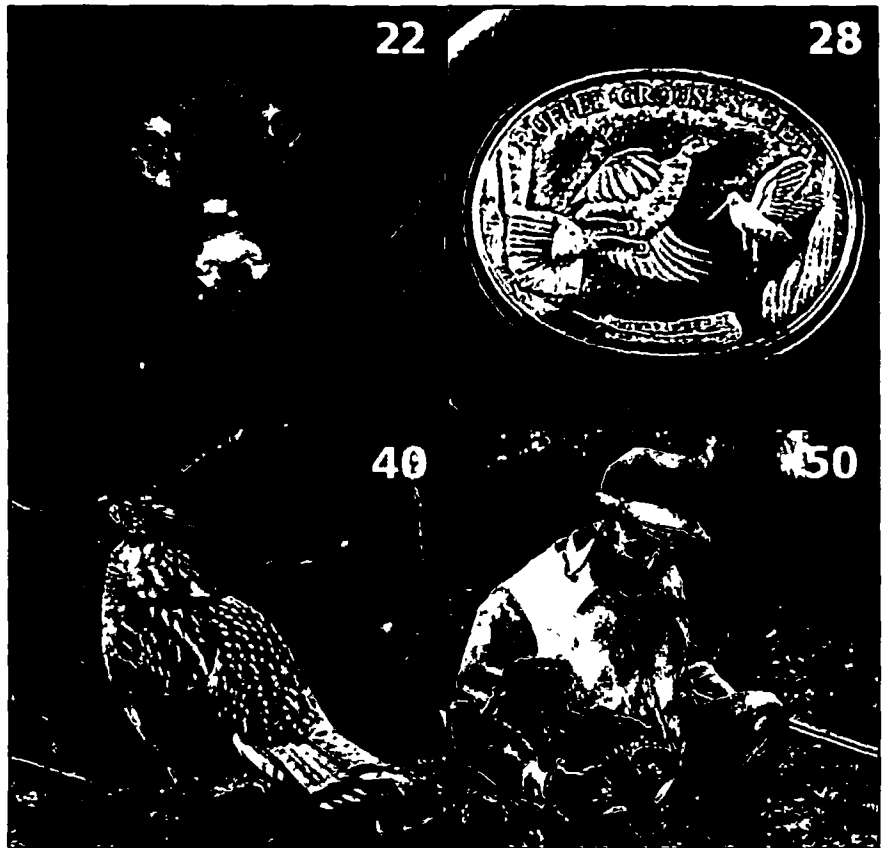
- 4 Editor's Log**  
Pieces of the Puzzle  
*By Anna Stubna*
- 6 Letters to the Editor**
- 8 Executive Director's Report**  
Succeeding Together  
*By Mike Zagata*
- 10 Purely Dogs**  
Working Through  
Gun Sensitivity  
*By Bob West*
- 17 RGS Canada**  
Canadian Outdoors Network  
*By Jeff Helsdon*
- 20 Junior RGS**  
Wildflower Wild Card
- 26 Chapter Spotlight**  
A Personal Effort in  
Staunton, Virginia
- 31 Seasons of the Grouse**  
An Eastern Summer
- 36 Home Covers Calling**
- 39 News Updates**  
Minnesota Forest  
Decision Appealed  
Tennessee National Forest  
Supervisor Addresses Hunters
- 48 Wild Flavors**  
Palate Pleasing Pheasant
- 54 Hits or Misses**  
Investments  
*By Art Wheaton*
- 58 Classified Ads**
- 64 Ruffly Speaking**  
Brood Encounters  
*By Paul Carson*

About Our Cover – This issue's cover, the father and son posed alongside a classic setter on point, is the work of Designer Ed Ramaley. Ramaley created his composite from photographs taken by RGS Field Photographers. The hunters were photographed by T. C. Flanagan, and the dog comes from a photograph taken by N. Anisfield.



# ruffed GROUSE

SOCIETY



## FEATURES

- 14 The Art of Keeping a Secret**  
Memoirs of a crafty hunting partner – *by Doug Forsythe*
- 22 From Rose, With Love**  
The friendship of a man and his Hungarian vizsla – *by Owen Cecil*
- 28 The RGS SKB Special Grouse Gun**  
Light grouse guns examined – *by Nick Sisley*
- 30 The River Camp**  
A humorous epic poem of the hunt – *by Patrick Beck*
- 40 The Other Silent Spring**  
The disappearance of birds in young forests – *by Steven Backs*
- 44 Woodcock Hunter Survey**  
Weighing in on the data – *by Dan Dessecker*
- 50 The Ruffed Grouse Capital of the World**  
Hunting in Park Falls, Wisconsin – *by Doug Stamm*



# EDITOR'S LOG

## Pieces of the Puzzle

by Anna Stubna

I'm a big fan of jigsaw puzzles. It's something I always enjoy doing, though to claim even passable proficiency may be giving myself too much credit. It's a rather mindless endeavor (and, yes - this is a part of the appeal) but the interesting part is that achieving success depends solely upon your dedication to following the process. Turning over the pieces, organizing them by color, and working on the edge first are just some of the rules that, if followed, will result in a completed puzzle.

It recently struck me that putting together a magazine is a similar experience, albeit on a decidedly more ambitious level! The biggest challenge is determining what pieces to throw in the mix. The contributors are my puzzle pieces - and be they writers, photographers, artists, volunteers or staff - every one has a voice in how the final product comes together.

This issue we've kept all the familiar pieces and showcased a few new ones. Patrick Beck's poem "The River Camp" adds a note of levity, and Nick Sisley's expertise is readily apparent in this issue's grouse gun feature. Our *Wild Flavors* contributing chefs - Denny Corriveau and Joe Rossi - add flavorful inspiration for those of you with culinary aspirations.

Even our advertisers play a vital part in the magazine, without them we wouldn't have the funds to grow the magazine as we have over the past year. Here at headquarters we've added a few new exciting programs this year - the RGS Doubles Club and our Tailfeathers membership drive. Details of each are included in this issue.

Our contributions to our Letters to the Editor section have continued to pick up in recent months. From the number of responses we receive, it's a pretty clear indication that you value this forum!

Finally - and perhaps my favorite piece to put together - is the Chapter Spotlight article. The RGS chapter in Staunton, Virginia is only about 50 miles from Monterey, where the Ruffed Grouse Society began nearly 50 years ago. The remarkable philosophy of this chapter is a continued and uncompromising commitment to the importance of personal connections. By writing personal letters and taking the time to share the RGS message at events they send a unified message that they are committed to their work and are making a difference.

The final result is similar to a completed jigsaw, a snapshot of our organization today. It's my hope that it includes an indication of our future direction - best described in the words of Fanny Kemble as "onward, upward, till the goal [we] win." 🐾

# ruffedGROUSE SOCIETY

### MEMBERSHIP RATES:

Junior membership (16 and under)	.....\$10
Timberdoodle (Web access only)	.....\$15
Regular membership	.....\$25
Conservation membership	.....\$50
Sustaining membership	.....\$100
Sponsor membership	.....\$250
Centurion (life) membership	.....\$1,000

### Officers and Staff

#### OFFICERS

D. Wayne Jacobson, Jr.	.....President
Denis S. Kamosky	.....Vice President & Treasurer
Scotty Searle	.....Secretary

#### DIRECTORS

Larry Brutger	Denis S. Kamosky
Gaylen J. Byker	Bruce Ogle
Joe (Leon II.) Chandler, M.D.	James H. Oliver
Edwin H. Gott, Jr.	John C. Oliver
Jim Hayett	Stephen F. Quill, Sr.
Joe R. Irwin	George Rich
D. Wayne Jacobson, Jr.	Scotty Searle
Butch Johnson	Terald J. Wilson

#### DIRECTORS EMERITI

T. Stanton Armour
S. Prosser Mellon
Sally B. Searle
David V. Uthlein

#### HEADQUARTERS STAFF

Dr. Michael D. Zagata Executive Director/CEO
Ronald P. Burkert Information Systems and Webmaster
Anna Stubna Editor & Special Projects
Margie Vollmer Controller
Tracy M. Greene Director of Banquet Operations
Julie Caugherty Director of Membership and Marketing
Rudy Mamula Accounts Payable
Kim Swisher Accounts Receivable
Leatha M. Verock Information Systems Assistant & Mailroom
Shirley Rice Membership Services
Alison Kelley Administrative Assistant
Wallace L. Chevront Staff Assistant - Shipping & Receiving
Dick Nelson Publicist

#### CONSERVATION POLICY

Dan R. Dessecker	..... Director
------------------	----------------

#### BIOLOGISTS

Mark E. Banker	..... Senior Biologist
Gary Zimmer	..... Senior Biologist

### Sugarloaf Smooth Bores



#### New & Used Shotguns

Buying and selling collector quality shotguns from American manufacturers including Browning, Fox, Parker, and Ithaca. Large selection of hard to find pieces. Guns shown by appointment only. Contact Dave Sizemore at:

606-780-2329

[www.sugarloafsmoothbores.com](http://www.sugarloafsmoothbores.com)

### Northwoods Bird Dogs

- Gun dog and field trial training on wild birds.
- Puppies and started grouse dogs available
- Proven producers at stud.

For more information, call Jerry Kolter at 320-245-6988 and please visit our website.



[www.northwoodshirddogs.com](http://www.northwoodshirddogs.com)



#### REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Mark D Fouts . . . Director of Regional Operations  
& AK, MO, MN, OR, WA  
Douglas R. Doherty . . . MI & northwestern IN  
Dave "Swede" Johnson . . . WI; far western UP of MI,  
Twin Cities, MN; IA; & IL  
Boyd Cooke . . . ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT  
Dave Hansroth . . . NJ, eastern PA, MD, portion of VA  
Kenneth N. Waite III . . . NY, portion of PA  
Lisa M. Rossi . . . IN; OH; western PA; northern WV  
Don Mallicoat . . . GA, KY, LA, NC,  
TN, VA & southern WV

#### FIELD EDITORS

H "Bumper" Bauer  
Paul Carson  
Jeff Helsdon  
Art Wheaton

#### FIELD PHOTOGRAPHERS

Nancy Anisfeld  
Timothy Flanagan

#### NATIONAL OFFICE

Ruffed Grouse Society  
451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044 • Toll Free (888) 564-6747  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)  
E-MAIL [rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org)

#### RGS CANADA

Contact Gary McWilliams  
RGS Canadian Coordinator  
PO Box 272 Cobourg, ON K9A 4K8

To report RGS-Canada chapter news contact Jeff  
Helsdon, Canadian Field Editor, [jhelsdon@bellnet.ca](mailto:jhelsdon@bellnet.ca),  
(519) 842-8468 in RGS-Canada

#### MAGAZINE DESIGN

Ed Ramaley, Art Director - Marcomnordic Printing

#### ADVERTISING

Cherek Group, Inc (307) 635-8899  
E-mail [cherekgroup@bivestnet](mailto:cherekgroup@bivestnet)

The Ruffed Grouse Society is the one international non-profit 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. It was incorporated as the Ruffed Grouse Society of America on October 24, 1961 in Monterey, Virginia. National headquarters is located in Coraopolis, PA. Donations and gifts may be tax deductible.

RGS is a quarterly publication of the Ruffed Grouse Society, and is published seasonally in the spring, summer, fall and winter. Positions or views expressed by advertisements and articles which appear in the magazine may not reflect those held by the Ruffed Grouse Society.

**EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS:** Letter, article and photo submissions are welcomed. No responsibility is assumed for unsolicited materials. Please address emails to

[editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org).

**UNWANTED MAIL ALERT:** Occasionally we make our member listing available to select organizations whose services or products may interest you. If you prefer not to share your name and address, you can simply remove your information from our mailing lists by contacting our membership department at [juliac@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:juliac@ruffedgrousesociety.org). Also contact our membership department if you receive multiple magazines to your household, and wish to consolidate your memberships.

**CHOICE HOTELS INTERNATIONAL**  
Special rate identification number 00802089

© Copyright 2008 Ruffed Grouse Society. All Rights Reserved



**LAST  
CHANCE TO...**

# Win all Upland Bird Dream Hunt October 2-10, 2009

## The Ruffed Grouse Society 2008-2009 National Raffle

### 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 at Bear Paw Mountain Outfitters 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 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.

\*Winners are responsible for applicable taxes.

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

**Order your tickets today,  
time is running out!**



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Share your thoughts, opinions and questions with us. Send emails to: [editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org). Letters should be mailed to: Attn: Editor, 451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108. Submissions should not exceed 150 words, and may be edited for content and length. Name and address must be included.

## The Tale of a Tail

On an early October grouse excursion this past season, I bagged a bird in Langlade County, Wisconsin with an unusual tail. (See picture.) This tail tells a tale. I was wondering if one of your field biologists could come up with a scenario or two to explain it.

Thanks,  
Bob Feller  
Manitowoc, Wisconsin



**Editor's Note:** We asked Gary Zimmer, our intrepid biologist in the Western Great Lakes region, to answer your question Bob – here is his response:

Bob,

Your picture could be titled "The one that got away, the first time!" Most likely the ruffed grouse that you bagged had a previous close call with a predator, probably about a month or so before you harvested the bird. I would surmise that a mammalian predator was very close to the bird before it pounced, and its only prize was a mouthful of tail feathers.

The tail is actually a great defense mechanism for grouse because it provides a large, inviting target for predators when a grouse flushes. However, tail feathers pull out relatively eas-

ily and are replaceable. As you can see in your photo, more than half of the tail feathers were lost and were in the process of re-growing. Perhaps in just another week the feather replacement would have been completed, and you would never have known that the bird had a prior close call.

The number of feathers lost in this encounter leads me to believe a medium to large size mammal that target grouse in northern Wisconsin - such as bobcat, coyote, fisher, or fox - was responsible, but we'll never know for sure!

Thank you for sharing your interesting photo.

Gary Zimmer

Sally B. Searle Senior Regional Biologist

## Noteworthy Works

Two notable omissions immediately struck me in Mr. Wheaton's roundup of sporting books in the Spring edition of RGS. They are Charles Fergus' *A Rough-Shooting Dog*, by far the most heartfelt of his fine books, and Guy de la Valdene's *Making Game: An Essay of Woodcock*. They are modern classics.

Kevin C. Shelly  
Pleasantville, New Jersey

Kevin,

Thank you for your sincere interest. Space limitations prevented me from naming those you mentioned and numerous others. Here are a few more authors for interested readers to consider: Ted Nelson Lundrigan, Frank Forester, Charles Norris, John C. Phillips, George Bird Grinnell and Ben Ames Williams. The search to quench our thirst for classic sporting literature continues.

Good shooting!  
Art Wheaton

## It's a bird! It's a plane! No ... it's INCOMING!

Paul,

I could never make the shot coming at me either - it just isn't a natural thing to do! Grouse shooting is all in timing - bringing the gun up and firing all in one motion. Turning around can be dangerous, if you trip or even worse - fire in the wrong direction. In hunter safety class we always tell our students never to shoot at incoming birds that pass over your head, but just to let them go.

When I read your story (*The Trick Shot* by Paul Carson, Winter 2008) I just had to write to tell you about an experience I had with just such an "incomer".

I was hunting with my partner along a logging trail. He put up a grouse and he yelled to me that it was airborne. When I heard him I looked in front of me up the trail - and

there it came – but what was it? All I could discern was a projectile-type object coming right at my head. It was like someone had shot an arrow at me with about a golf ball sized point on it. The bird went by me in a flash, it was just a blur. As it went by I could feel the air swish.

I tried to spin around but never got there and lost the bird from my view. I think of that image often when I read or see someone with a bird close to them during a flush.

I enjoyed your piece and hope you will continue to provide us with your experiences afield. Enjoying the unusual stuff that happens out in the woods is a big part of hunting!

Loyde Childs  
Marshall, Wisconsin

Loyde,

*Thinking about incomers - it was this time of year, long years ago, when a friend and I were out with his setter looking for returning woodcock. The dog flushed a grouse farther out in a hawthorn thicket we were working through and the bird came straight at me down a narrow trail. He saw me, but the cover was apparently too thick for him to veer. He'd tip a wing and twitch to one side and then tip the other and*

*twitch the other way. Maybe he was trying to decide which of my ears to take off. In the end he came right for my nose. But instead of taking me between the eyes, he shot by just above my cap and just under the overhanging branches. I think the rush of sound he made as he went by impressed me the most.*

*A few years after that, when our English springer was an old codger, I'd take him out to our woodlot so he could dodder around and relive the glory days. Amazingly, he flushed a grouse along the woodlot's edge and the bird flew back over me as it headed for thicker cover. I remember it as it went over as if it were a picture hanging up there so close I could almost touch it. With its underbelly and all, it looked like a Ned Smith pencil sketch that had been colored in. I'd always admired Ned and his work, but that day I realized he had it dead on when he sketched a grouse.*

*I guess maybe incomers are so special because most of the time we only catch glimpses or hear the wings of so many outgoers.*

Best,  
Paul Carson



Pictured from left to right are RGS member Mark Zysk along with Allen Ray from Wild Turkey Federation, Joseph Anderson from Ducks Unlimited and Mike Landerfield from Whitetails Unlimited at Nilo Farms in February.

## Winchester Conservation Sweepstakes Winner

*Editor's Note: In 2008 RGS partnered with Winchester to provide one lucky RGS member with an all-expense-paid two day pheasant, chukar and mallard hunt in addition to a 100 clay target shoot at NILO Farms in Brighton, Illinois. Round-trip airfare, accommodations, meals and ground transportation were also included in the grand prize.*

*NILO Farms are owned by manufacturers of Winchester ammunition, Olin Corporation. To enter the sweepstakes, entrants had to be current RGS members and submit their application online by the end of 2008.*

*Mark Zysk of Taylor, Michigan was the RGS grand prize winner. Following is a brief description of his trip.*

I received an e-mail about the Winchester's Conservation sweepstakes and registered online late in 2008. About 5 to 6 weeks later I was notified that I had won a hunt at Winchester's Nilo Farms! At first you tend to not believe it, I thought it was a scam in order to get my credit card number. But no - it was the real thing!

The hunting trip was set for February 9-10, 2009. All transportation, food and accommodations were included. When I arrived, I checked into the hotel and had dinner and cocktails with Mary Ann and Brad from Winchester. I also met the other sweepstakes winners: Mike from Whitetails Unlimited, Allen from Wild Turkey Federation and Joe from Ducks Unlimited. (The Quail Unlimited member was unable to attend.)

After breakfast the following morning we met staff at the farm, obtained our preserve license and shot sporting clays, trap and skeet. After lunch we went pheasant shooting. When the day finished we were more than ready for dinner and cocktails with staff from the farm again.

The next day we shot ducks and chukars and after lunch we were each given a box of cleaned, frozen birds to take home with us. (If I seem a little focused on all the food, that's because we were extremely well fed!) We got to use Labs, springers and pointers in the field, the handlers changed dogs frequently so they were always fresh.

This was my first time at a preserve hunt and sporting clays. Previously I could never justify spending the time and effort to shoot clays when I could be actually hunting. There were over 30,000 entries – so I was pretty lucky to have won! I will always remember the experience, special thanks to Winchester and RGS for making it possible.

Needless to say – I still prefer hunting ruffed grouse. The thrill of it and the hunting in tight cover can't be beat.

Mark Zysk  
Taylor, Michigan



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Mike Zagata  
Executive Director/CEO

## Succeeding Together: Spreading the Conservation Message

months! The RUFF capital campaign to help endow the biologists is off to a great start with over \$2 million pledged toward our \$5 million goal. The \$5 million in timber rights that were granted to RGS by the Richard King Mellon Foundation and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy became a reality, and our first timber sale was let. Your Society, along with several partners in conservation, was successful in litigation involving the Superior National Forest in Minnesota. This win may help gain greater recognition for the needs of early successional species like grouse, woodcock and numerous non-hunted species.

RGS was heavily involved in the release of the 2008 "Ruffed Grouse Conservation Plan" and the "Woodcock Conservation Plan" and has taken a lead role with regard to securing funding for them, including the option of a proposed woodcock stamp. Based upon some excellent grant writing by our biologists, RGS was the recipient of several grants to help with habitat work. Two of

those grants will help us increase the number of tree-harvesting machines we have from one to five - and in 2009 we expect to have them operating in Pennsylvania, the Northeast, Wisconsin and Michigan.

As you might expect, these challenging economic times have forced your Society to become even more focused on the business side of operations. Thanks to outstanding volunteers, the cadre of people who make our events happen; we've held our own so far this spring. But it didn't happen by accident - Regional Directors, volunteers and headquarters staff are working as a team to help one another succeed during these difficult times. I expect that in years to come RGS will be better off for having gone through this trying experience.

In 2008 your Society listened to its members who wanted the means to fund local projects. We knew that operating funds would be tight and thus looked for a new approach to accommodate your needs. As a result, a growth target for net revenue was established and more than \$30,000 was raised for local projects. My hat is off to you!

There still remains an issue that can cloud our future. Until we

can address it, the small strides that we make will be offset by the continuing march of our landscape toward mature forest. The average person looks at the green canopy of beech, yellow birch, maple and oak during the summer months and is consumed by its beauty - and rightly so.

But we know that a truly healthy forest should not be entirely composed of just one stage of successional development. That lovely canopy of leaves is very effective at blocking sunlight from reaching the forest floor - and without sunlight there will be no green plants, and thus no food or cover from predators. Every time a meadow converts to goldenrod the songbird



Bobolink, female (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)  
Photo by Christopher Taylor, [www.kiwifoto.com](http://www.kiwifoto.com)

residents of that meadow - like meadow larks and bobolinks - are evicted. Each time the brush at the edge of the field is replaced with taller trees, the species that depend upon that brush for their habitat lose their homes. As an RGS member, you understand that without active management to create different ages or stages of habitat, we effectively place many species of young-forest wildlife, both hunted and non-hunted, at risk.

We need to spread the understanding that the aging of our forests is having a powerful, detrimental impact upon our wildlife. The ruffed grouse is listed as a species of greatest conservation need (a precursor to being listed as threatened or

endangered) in all of the Northeastern states except Maine.

At RGS we are committed to continuing our efforts to tackle this problem in 2009. In addition to publishing articles about this dilemma, we are also working to organize a session at the 2010 North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference aimed at focusing on the rapidly accelerating loss of early successional (grasslands, brush, young forests) habitat and its attendant impact on wildlife - all wildlife - not just hunted species.

Steve Backs, an Indiana Department of Natural Resources biologist, has contributed a piece entitled "The Other Silent Spring" in this issue. I urge you to read it and share it with your acquaintances. We desperately need to get the message to those outside the hunting fraternity. Help us move toward a scientifically-based forest management approach - one that is conservation focused.

Thank you for your efforts to help wildlife, especially the grouse and woodcock that we hold so dear and who are unable to speak on their own behalf. 🐦

MIKE

# L.L.Bean—Official Boot Sponsor of the Ruffed Grouse Society



We've been outfitting wingshooters for over 97 years with gear that stands up to the rigors of the field. Our upland boots are crafted from tough yet supple kangaroo leather and rugged canvas that can take the punishment of pushing through brush without weighing you down. They're lined with waterproof, breathable Gore-Tex<sup>®</sup> and cushioned for long-lasting comfort.

Bean's Gore-Tex Kangaroo Leather/Fabric Cap-Toe Upland Boots  
Available in Men's whole and half sizes Medium D and  
Wide EE 7 to 12, 13 Women's Medium B 6 to 11

FOR A FREE CATALOG  
Call 800-791-8164 or [shop llbean.com](http://shop.llbean.com)

## L.L.Bean



L.L.BEAN IS PROUD TO BE THE OFFICIAL BOOT  
SPONSOR OF THE RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



# PURELY DOGS

## Working through Gun Sensitivity

by Bob West



Photo by N. Anisfield

The excitement of this young German shorthair pup is palpable as he retrieves a chukar during a training session to increase prey drive.

### Reprint from *Gun Dog Magazine*

It's not uncommon to hear of a young dog being concerned, apprehensive, or even frightened of gunfire during the first hunting season. Thankfully, most good dogs can be helped through it and learn to associate the "bang" with the fun and excitement of a productive hunt, rather than something bad.

Even though we all try very hard to avert problems through early conditioning or "socialization" - three gunners working a covey of quail or a pair of roosters puts a whole new spin on the overwhelming power and noise of gunfire. While training there's one bird up in plain sight, one gunner and one shot - that's a very controlled environment that is definitely not the case when hunting. Most importantly during this exercise the dog sees the bird.

Here's one possible scenario - on her first pheasant hunt a young Lab, we'll call her Betty, was working heavy briars unaware of two roosters flushing 20 yards out. Subsequent gun blasts from the two hunters caught her off guard at the same time she was hurt getting free from the briars. Now we have a problem - because Betty associates the harsh, loud gun blasts with the pain caused from briar thorns.

Put yourself in the dog's place, not privileged to logic but only aware of a sudden commotion, pressure, and intense noise, again and again. Anyone who's experienced even the slightest muzzle blast knows what I mean, and can understand how problems can develop even though the dog was

properly introduced to gunfire during early training.

Granted, some individual dogs are predisposed to problems simply because they're not mentally strong. However, most of the time gun shyness or gun sensitivity is man-made. It usually results from poor socialization, improper introduction to gun noise, or short cuts taken during training.

The good news is if we have a little boggle during the first season, it can usually be corrected - especially if the dog was started right and only shows sensitivity to gun fire.

We use the word "sensitive" to describe some level of concern or fear the dog shows of something, yet in the absence of those particular stimuli recovers relatively fast and goes on with the job at hand. "Shy" describes indications of a much stronger, overpowering, and lasting fear.

My best results in either case, whether starting a pup with gun sensitivity or working through the severe problems of a gun-shy dog, involve engaging the dog's innate desire, prey drive, and mental strengths. There is no magic involved, we simply help Fido associate gun noise with good stuff. Progress depends on the dog and the severity of the problem.

Highly driven, mentally strong dogs usually have no problem and can be steadied early, but others who lack punch and confidence should be allowed to chase and enjoy for a good while.

PURELY DOGS *continued on page 12*



GEAR THE WAY YOU'D DESIGN IT.

Lance Tracy and "Ripley"  
SportDOG Brand Director



The SportHunter™ 1825 Remote Trainer

DESIGNED BY FOLKS AS  
BIRDY AS YOU.

SPORTDOG.COM

## Equipment

I recommend you use a .22 black-powder blank or cap gun in the beginning of your training. You'll also need a lead or check rope, a few game birds or pigeons and a friend who understands your objective and will help throw birds

## The Drill

First, reassure yourself that the dog is comfortable with birds and handles them correctly. We don't want to create, or reinforce, an associated problem.

I like to use a clipped wing live pigeon and start by letting the dog hold and carry it around a little. This gives me a pretty good idea of the dog's manner and confidence. Next, tease the dog by flipping his nose and face with the wings. If the dog seems to back off, then toss the bird out a foot or so and encourage the dog to chase. This exercise helps to excite prey drive, divert attention, and build confidence.

Now hold your dog and toss the bird a few feet so it flutters and lands in open cover. Again, encourage the dog to chase, catch and retrieve. Use plenty of praise and don't grab the bird when he returns, allow some time to enjoy. Next, throw the pigeon farther, you might ask a friend to help. Extend retrieves to 15 or 20 yards during this first session, depending on the dog's response. Don't get in a hurry and quit while the dog is in high drive and excited about the chase!

Notice that we haven't introduced a gun yet. We're building drive while clearing any chance of subtle bird-shy problems before the noise comes in. Often dogs associate birds, guns and discomfort of gun noise all together. We have to reverse that notion, one element at a time.

Next session may be a repeat, especially when working through an existing problem. We want our dog driving with full attention on birds. Keep a check rope attached to guide the dog back, pet him, fuss and praise to pump him up, then gently take the bird and toss it for another retrieve.

At this point we call on our helper again to walk out ten or fifteen yards



Photo by N. Anisfield

Patience on the part of the handler is key when training dogs, especially young ones like this German wirehair

and toss a bird while we hold our dog in position to watch. Depending on the dog we may release while the bird's high and flopping, or wait until it's on the ground. The point is to release the dog while excitement is at its peak - steadiness comes later and is of no concern at this point. Continue to extend retrieves out a good ways, maybe 25 or 30 yards.

By now we're sure of our dog's confidence, drive and comfort with birds and can move to the next step - introducing, or reintroducing, gun noise. Notice I've not suggested time parameters or length and frequency of sessions, you alone can make that call. Just keep it fun as you build.

## Gun Noise

A .22 black-powder blank works well to produce a more shotgun-like bang. (I don't use stud driver blanks, because the report is too sharp ) Now we'll bring in the gun sound while our dog's in high drive and less likely to notice.

Set up once more with your helper out around 30 yards with a few wing-clipped pigeons and the blank gun ready. Toss a couple to get you dog revved. Then on the next retrieve send your dog while the bird is still in the air and cue your helper to shoot when the dog's a good way off but in full pursuit. Most won't even notice the noise, but be ready with another bird just in case. This drill may be good enough for one session or you might mix a couple more retrieves, some without any shots.

From here, use similar scenarios but shoot earlier in the sequence so gun noise becomes more evident in a positive way, as the dog realizes gun noise is actually a signal to down birds and is followed by the fun and excitement of the chase.

As you progress, hold the dog and ask your helper to shoot, then pause, before throwing the bird. By now your dog should key off gun noise and dig to retrieve, it's even a good idea to pop a blank as the dog drives to the fall, he gets more excited and it reinforces his confidence.

Next, have the helper walk closer to your position, shoot and throw the bird at an angle, so the dog sees it go. You'll eventually be able to stand off and pop blanks yourself as the helper throws birds. Once you've reached this point, steadying the dog shouldn't cause any confusion.

You can also plan to bring in real shotguns. Your helper should be out 30 or 40 yards and you are both set up as you were when first introducing blanks. Work through each step as before.

If you have seasoned dogs around, put the one you're conditioning to a gun on a chain gang or stake him out near them while working the others, the enthusiasm of the older dogs helps the confidence of the gun-shy dog. These same concepts can be very helpful in conditioning and socializing young prospects as you build the foundation for future training and hunting. 🐾

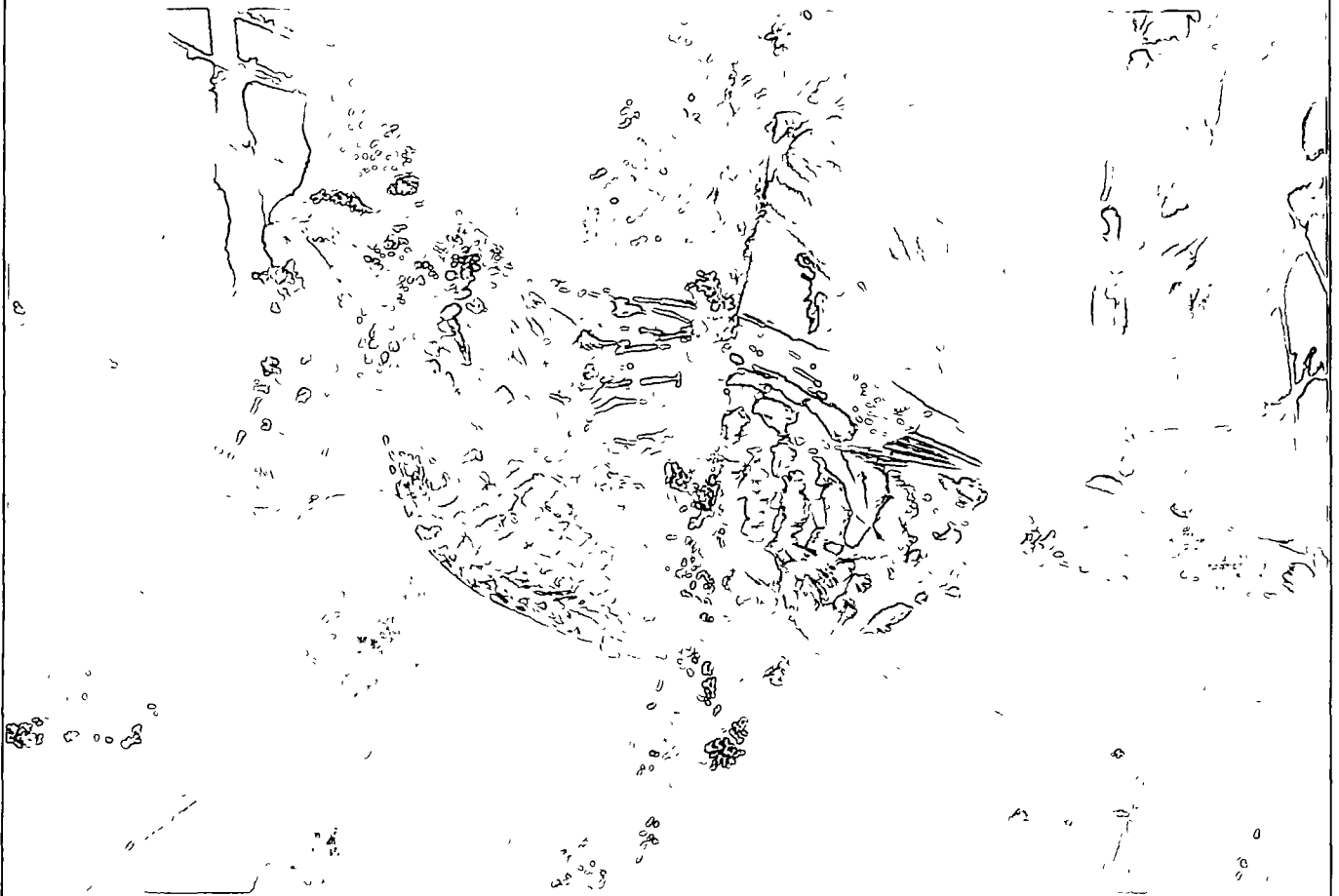


Photo by N. Anisfield

As this Labrador's trainer knows, it's of primary importance to make sure your dog is comfortable with birds and handles them correctly before addressing any additional problems.



# *Sustainable Forestry,* To Us, It's Only Natural

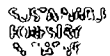


All Plum Creek lands have been certified to the standards of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative®. This certification confirms our longstanding commitment to practicing sustainable forestry, which incorporates the perpetual growing and harvesting of trees with the protection of wildlife, plants, soil and water quality. It also confirms the diligence of our foresters who work every day to meet this commitment.



## PlumCreek

*Growing Value from Exceptional Resources*



# The Art of Keeping a Secret

by Doug Forsythe

Illustrations by Kevin Turner

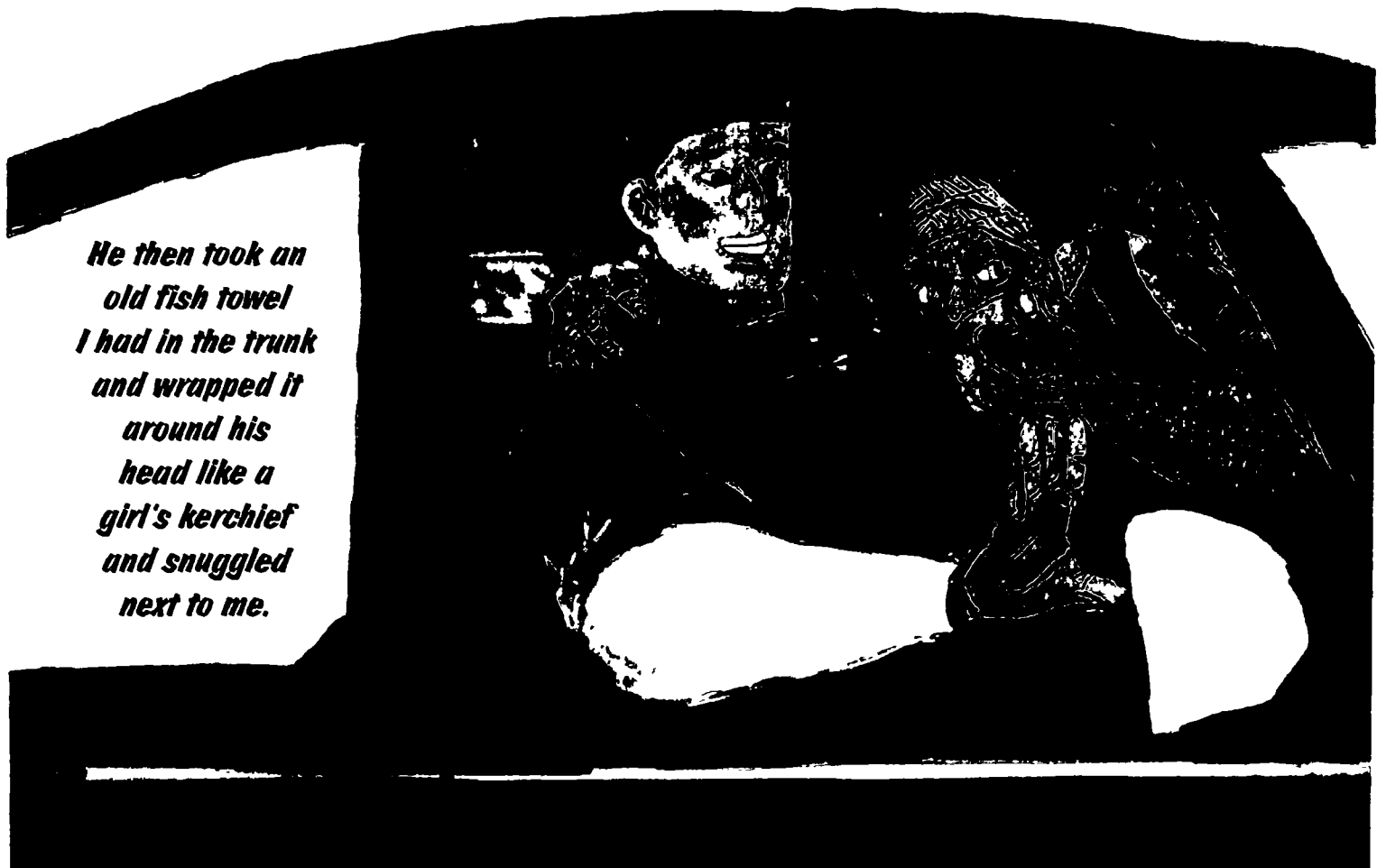
I was reading a newspaper the other day. While this is not an unusual event for most folks, I do have a tendency to let my mind wander after reading just a few paragraphs. That's usually enough reading for me to leap to a conclusion or two. It's also enough time for me to come up with some quick solutions to problems an astute reporter has detected, and is now making me worry about.

In this particular case, it was about keeping secrets. Seems our government is having trouble hiring people who can keep a secret. Now that can be a real problem for our country. Organizations like the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Intelligence Agency won't survive if their folks can't keep a secret. Apparently, government recruiting efforts on our college campuses have shown that prospective hires just blurt out the truth when interviewed. I guess they didn't get the practice I did when explaining my class absences on opening pheasant or early small-mouth bass seasons. I never lied, but I got pretty good at evading. That is why I have decided to recommend our government recruiters interview hunters and fishermen. We have lots of experience in keeping secrets and evading the truth.

Probably the best secret keeper I know is my ex-brother-in-law Arnold. It's just something that comes naturally to him. I noticed it about 40 years ago when we were fishing for striped bass off Crane's beach, north of Boston. We were by ourselves on the far end of the beach on a moonless hot summer night when it happened. I was using a rod I built from a blank. I had added an old Mitchell 300 spinning reel loaded with 12 pound test monofilament. By taping my reel on the cork grip with electrician's tape, I could place my reel anywhere and move the rod's center of gravity based upon the weight of my lure. At first Arnold was impressed that I could "feel" an out of balance rod. It wasn't until I snagged a lobster pot buoy one very dark night, and fought it for an half an hour, that Arnold changed his opinion.

However, this night a fish hit my Rapala plug, hung there for a few seconds and then started taking line and wouldn't stop. With all the calmness I could muster, I mentioned this unusual - no let's say never before - situation to Arnold, who was about 50 yards away. He slowly started wading my way while muttering that I always exaggerate my fish that turn out to be the size of a slightly overgrown herring. This time, when he saw

*He then took an  
old fish towel  
I had in the trunk  
and wrapped it  
around his  
head like a  
girl's kerchief  
and snuggled  
next to me.*





*"Really? That's a long way from hereeah. I wouldn't think they would be in thereeah at this time of yearnah."*

that I was about spooled, his eyes lighted up like two full moons. He shouted orders. "Chase it down the beach!" "Get out of the water - run faster!" I did I only fell three times. Old style heavy duck hunter's rubber waders, loose sand and darkness will do that to any superior athlete.

Finally, the fish stopped and after several shorter runs and 35 minutes later, I had it on the beach. It was big. It later weighed in at 46 pounds. Now this is where I learned of Arn's ability to keep a secret. I let out a whoop of excitement that was more like a "whoo--!" I immediately had a big sandy hand with a slight taste of fish wrapped around my mouth. While I was gagging and struggling for breath, Arn was telling me how we were going to get this fish off the beach without anyone knowing. He said if people find out about this fish, the beach will look like a 4th of July weekend. He whispered the plan to me. I was to take his rod and walk back down the beach. If I came upon other fishermen, I was to tell them how I thought it was a waste of time fishing on this beach - I was quitting and never returning. At the parking lot, I was to drive to the exit, turn off the car lights and then make my way back to the far end of the lot. I was to use the parking brake to stop so the brake lights wouldn't illuminate. There would be some bushes at the north corner and I was to back up to them, open the car trunk, get back behind the wheel and wait. With that, Arn grabbed the fish, slung it on his shoulder and disappeared into the darkness.

I heard the thud of the fish hitting the trunk floor. The car door opened and a hard-breathing, fish-slimed, 6 foot 5 inch redhaired ex-brother-in-law said "Let's get outta here." He then took an old fish towel I had in the trunk and wrapped it around

his head like a girl's kerchief and snuggled next to me. He said if anyone sees us he wanted to make it appear like it was a couple parked there for something other than loading a fish into the car. I would have preferred that scenario over the smell of the fish slime emanating from Arnold and that towel.

It was only last year that he told me I could finally talk about that fish. When he told me that, I thought he was testing me, so I said "what fish?" The secret has been kept for over 40 years.

When it comes to grouse covers or fishing holes, I'm as good as they come at evading direct questions or providing disinformation about them. Arn has a more direct approach to this situation. He lies!

He invited me to hunt on Cape Cod many years ago. The ruffed grouse population had exploded because of the regeneration of habitat from a fire 25 years earlier and development hadn't laid its ugly hand on the Cape yet. It was a time when up to 40 flushes a day were not out of the ordinary and a limit of six ruffs could be had, but usually turned down. (It's easy for me to turn down a limit of ruffs. I normally apply my fishing philosophy of catch and release to bird hunting. I shoot and miss.)

That day we had just hit the first cover and were driving the narrow dirt roads to the next. In the car trunk, we had three birds from six or seven flushes. It was a wonderful hunt. A car appeared ahead and was approaching us. Arn sternly told me to keep quiet and he would do all the talking. Both cars stopped

---

ART OF KEEPING A SECRET *continued on next page*

when we met and the windows were opened. An old man was in the other car and was obviously an acquaintance. The conversation - thickly laden with Downeast accent - went like this, after initial pleasantries were exchanged.

Old man: Seen any birds Arn?

Arn: Oh, ayah few.

Old man: Whey-ah?

Arn: Knee-ah the old cemetery. Right in the bull briyahs, thickest stuff on the Cape. Couldn't get a shot off.

Old man (now with eyebrows raised) Really? That's a long way from hereeah. I wouldn't think they would be in thereeah at this time of yearaah.

Arn: Yeah, surprised me too, but if I were you, I would give it a try tomorraah. Since we never got a shot at them, they won't be spooked eethaah.

Old man: Thanks Arn. I'll give it a try. See you lataah.

With that, he drove off. I told Arn I had not seen a cemetery and we had been in scrub oaks with good visibility and we had three birds in the car trunk! Arnold smiled, and said, "That's how you keep your covers a secret." I was curious, so I asked Arn who the old man was.

He said "Oh, that's my father."

I was shocked. I exclaimed, "Arnold - you lied to your own father?" Nonplussed, he said if he had told the truth, there wouldn't be a bird left in the cover by tomorrow. He then quoted George Bernard Shaw who said "If you reveal your secrets to the wind, you should not blame the wind for revealing them to the trees." I never expected a quote like that from

Arnold. Then again, I hadn't expected he would lie to his own father either.

The more I think about it, I know Arnold would have made the perfect CIA agent. One day on the Cape we were having an unusually poor day of finding ruffs. Arn was frustrated and getting desperate. With time left for only one more hunt, he said he would take me to his never fail cover, if I would consent to certain "arrangements." I had learned to be suspicious of Arnold's arrangements as well as many other things, so I asked what they were.

First, I would have to be willing to wear a hood over my head to and from the cover. Second, I would agree to then be spun around 42 times before being helped into his car. (This is so I wouldn't know what direction we would be traveling.) Third, I would have to sign a notarized statement that I would never reveal the whereabouts of the cover if I inadvertently discovered its location - even if I was subjected to torture. I vigorously objected saying these were unreasonable "arrangements" for an Air Force officer with integrity who had undergone resistance training and who had been trusted with the highest security clearances. He thought about all those requirements, and said "OK, the statement won't have to be notarized." Hah! I knew all along he had been bluffing about that statement because we were too far from town to get it notarized. A man just has to stand up against things that are unreasonable!

The trip to the cover was anything but pleasant. The old burlap bag we used that season to hold our downed birds is not an ideal hood. It didn't help that I had regurgitated in it at about spin number 38. Arn congratulated me and said normally his friends upchucked by spin 25. Defending my honor as an Air Force pilot, I said it wasn't the spinning that did it; it was the aroma of some putrefied bird guts left in the game bag from last week.

The hunt was the best I had ever had on the Cape. Birds were flying everywhere - even into my pattern of 7 1/2's. It was one hour of pure hunting pleasure. As Arn was getting the burlap bag ready for our trip back to the main road, I figured I now had the upper hand since the hunt was concluded. I refused to wear that hood. I was very surprised when he so easily agreed to my refusal. I surmised that finally after ten years he must be starting to trust me with his secrets.

As we were driving away Arnold came up with still another quote. This one from one of my favorite founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin who said, "Three can keep a secret, if two of them are dead."

I casually reached over and removed the shells from Arnold's game jacket. ♣

*Doug Forsythe is a retired Air Force pilot, and learned to hunt and fish in upstate New York. He shot at - and missed - his first ten ruffed grouse on Cape Cod in 1964, and continues to miss them in Washington State while hunting with his very frustrated Portuguese water dog, Beamer.*

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**



# EMBROIDERED APPAREL



**Bob Allen  
High Prairie  
Hunting Shirt**

**\$35.00**  
RGS-HU127

**1.800.550.2698 • WWW.SHOPRGS.COM**

## Canadian Outdoors Network:

*Diverse Conservation Organizations Work Together to Influence Government Policy*

*by Jeff Helsdon*

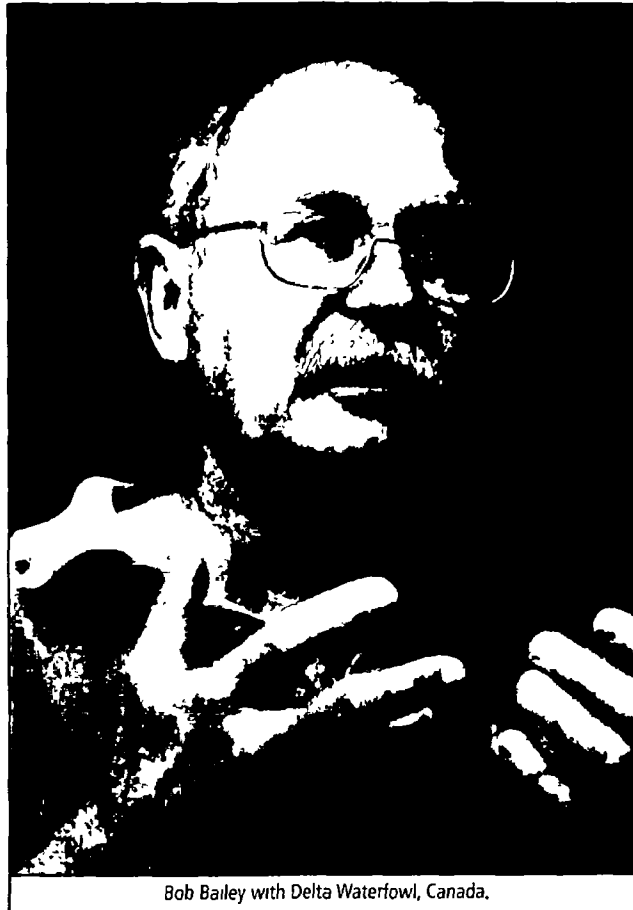
Being a conservation organization these days involves many issues; first and foremost is habitat preservation, of course. Another growing issue is hunter retention. A necessary part of hunter retention is to bring new hunters into the fold. Another growing challenge is to address the political forces that have the potential to affect hunting. Firearms legislation, government cutbacks to wildlife programs and other pressures from an increasingly urban society are all factors that have ramifications for the Canadian hunter.

Traditionally, national conservation organizations within Canada have operated individually from each other. Although the same issue could have been tackled by several national conservation organizations and provincial wildlife federations, there wasn't a lot of coordination; that all changed with the birth of the Canadian Outdoors Network.

Delta Waterfowl Foundation's Vice-President of Policy for Canada, Bob Bailey, had been mulling over the idea of creating a national network for some time. His vision was not to compete with what individual organizations were doing, but to coordinate and add to their efforts. Bailey has an extensive background in resource management at national and international levels. He was the Canadian senior author of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and he had the contacts to bring such a network together. What he didn't have was an issue of magnitude to bring the groups together.

That all changed in January 2007, following the Liberal convention when Stéphane Dion was crowned leader. The convention was held when emotions were running high after a shooting at Montreal's Dawson College, where a gunman shot and killed one person and injured many more. Two of the resolutions passed at the convention called for a total ban on semiautomatic firearms.

Bailey saw his chance for an issue that would affect duck hunters, upland bird hunters, big game hunters and target



Bob Bailey with Delta Waterfowl, Canada.

shooters. He called everybody he knew across the country, from provincial wildlife federations to the Ruffed Grouse Society and National Wild Turkey Federation and invited them to take part in a teleconference on January 16, 2007.

The groups shared the background they had on the motion and potential actions that could be taken to counter it. Individual groups lobbied, but the Canadian Outdoors Network – as it became known – also lobbied collectively. The group's efforts met with success and both motions were eventually quietly withdrawn.

"The network has been effective in espousing the view there is a political cost to talk of banning semiautomatics," Bailey said. "It is attributable to the individual groups, but also to the collective work."

RGS Canada former Executive Director Jim Abbey was part of the initial phone call, and knew the society should be part of it from the outset. He believes

the purpose of RGS Canada is more than just creating habitat for upland game birds. "I see it as being much broader - it should include anything to do with wildlife," he said. "Part of our belief system is that hunting is a valid, scientifically proven way of managing wildlife. The outdoors network tries to provide an advisory position to government with respect to issues that impact hunters." Abbey also pointed out hunters are the primary supporters at RGS banquets.

The possible semi-automatic ban was important, as many grouse and woodcock hunters use these guns. Other issues have risen that the network has tackled, such as the demise of the Migratory Bird Branch of Environment Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS). These organizations support Canada's system of National Wildlife Areas and participate in migratory bird surveys that are crucial to setting

limits for birds like woodcock and waterfowl.

Due to the publicity raised over the possible demise of the CWS, Bailey was interviewed on national television. He then met with Minister of Environment John Baird about it. "He (Baird) assured us the maintenance of our hunting and sport shooting heritage would be reflected in the Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment Canada," Bailey recounted.

One of the current issues the network is battling is a portion of the Canadian budget legislation that will change the Navigable Waterways Act. Although the changes are designed to expedite measures in the budget and eliminate red tape requiring surveys in relation to the effects on boat navigation, there are implications for hunters and anglers. Often hunters, anglers and canoeists are the only ones still navigating these waterways and the legislation could prohibit access. It also removes the need for environmental assessments in some cases, which could have ramifications on fish habitat and wetlands.

Bailey's hope is to have that part of the legislation removed from the budget bill so more consultation can take place. But, as part of the budget, he fears it could be passed quickly. "Everybody wants the government to rush through

the legislation to deal with the recession," he said, adding that removing the navigable waterways portion of the budget would be an easy solution to allow more discussion to take place.

Another contentious issue is international legislation that will require all firearms entering the country to be marked with a stamp unique to the date of import and the letters "CA" for Canada. Although the current Canadian government gave a reprieve to the legislation, Bailey said a solution still hasn't been found. If implemented, the cost of the machinery and dies necessary for each gun would add over \$100 to the cost of a single firearm.

The network is now comprised of 25 groups across the country, and represents about 500,000 members. Bailey estimates there are about 10 million people in Canada who hunt, shoot, fish or trap. "These groups are the opinion leaders for the 10 million people in the country," he said, adding the network gives the individual groups more political clout.

The majority of the work is done electronically, either through e-mail or teleconferences. Conference calls are still held on a regular basis, with the frequency being dependent on the issues on the table. Bailey believes the meetings have resulted in all groups being better informed of all issues that have the potential to affect them. Abbey is still the RGS representative for the group, and keeps the society up to speed on the issues discussed. ❖

## Russell Moccasin...Proud RGS Corporate Sponsor

Russell Moccasin Company is proud to be a corporate sponsor of RGS. Russell has been making fine custom fitted hunting boots by hand from the finest leathers available for more than 110 years. Legions of satisfied customers can attest to Russell's quality, fit and comfort.

The Signature South 40 Birdshooter, far right, is the finest upland bird hunting boot made. .waterproofed leather, triple vamp construction for all day comfort and support and light as a feather. Judy's Boot, (below, center) is a more lady-like boot made with buttery soft heirloom French Veal leather... lightweight with exceptional water resistance. A significant portion of the proceeds from both boots goes to RGS to help support vital grouse habitat.

For ordering instructions and measuring form see the Russell Moccasin website, [www.russellmoccasin.com](http://www.russellmoccasin.com), click on Order Form and Fitting Instructions



285 S. W. Franklin • PO Box 309 • Berlin, WI 54923  
920-361-2252 • Fax: 920-361-3274  
[www.russellmoccasin.com](http://www.russellmoccasin.com)



Russell offers two of its most popular models...the Signature South 40 Birdshooter and the lady's Judy's Boot in special RGS-brand versions



*project* POTICO

Fostering Sustainable Forests in Indonesia  
A WRI AND NEWPAGE PARTNERSHIP

*Make a Difference: Choose NewPage*  
**YOUR COMPANY CAN SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION  
OF RAINFORESTS IN INDONESIA**

NewPage has made a three-year, multi-million dollar commitment to the World Resources Institute (WRI) to fully fund the initial phase of Project POTICO. We invite you to participate with us in this important global undertaking to preserve rainforests in Indonesia and protect local communities and species that depend on them.

For more information, please visit [www.projectpotico.org](http://www.projectpotico.org). And to learn how to get involved, please contact Shawn Hall at NewPage Corporation at 937-242-9373. Together, we can make a difference!

 WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

 NewPage



# JUNIOR RGS WILDFLOWER WILD CARD

Some of nature's most beautiful plants are very small, and they are easy to miss when you're in the woods. Match each flower name with its picture and test your knowledge of a few common wildflowers!

The common name of each flower is followed by a Latin name. Carl von Linne, a Swedish botanist who lived in the 1700's, is responsible for the now common practice of giving plants Latin names. Though it seems confusing to us – he actually intended for it to be helpful. The names he used for plants often included little hints to help identify the plant. For example, bunchberry dogwood's Latin name is *Cornus Canadensis*. *Cornus* is a Latin word that means dogwood, and *canadensis* means coming from Canada.

As a BONUS question, do you know which of these plants have a fruit eaten by ruffed grouse? (Answers at the bottom of the page.)

Sweet American Wintergreen,  
*Pyrola americana*

Indian Paintbrush,  
*Castilleja*

Columbine,  
*Aquilegia*

Jewelweed,  
*Impatiens capensis*

Bunchberry dogwood,  
*Cornus canadensis*



Answers: (Bonus Question: Wintergreen and Bunchberry)

1. Bunchberry dogwood,  
*Cornus canadensis*

2. Columbine,  
*Aquilegia*

3. Indian Paintbrush,  
*Castilleja*

4. Jewelweed,  
*Impatiens capensis*

5. Sweet American Wintergreen,  
*Pyrola americana*





**IT'S OUT THERE. GO GET IT.**

THE PERFECT SHOT DOES EXIST. THERE'S NO WAY OF KNOWING WHEN IT WILL APPEAR. BUT WHEN IT DOES, BE SURE YOU'RE READY. SUCCESS OUT THERE BEGINS RIGHT NOW. OUR WING-SHOK™ LOADS ARE FAST, AND FEATURE COPPER-PLATED LEAD AND EXCELLENT PATTERNS. THEY GIVE YOU THE ADVANTAGE OVER EVEN THE ELUSIVE RUFFED GROUSE. WITH WING-SHOK, WILD FLUSHES ARE FOLLOWED BY A BIRD IN HAND—NOT JUST AN EMPTY GUN AND A DISAPPOINTED LOOK FROM YOUR FAVORITE BIRD DOG.

EVERY SHOT COUNTS



PROUD SPONSOR  
OF RUFFED GROUSE  
SOCIETY HABITAT  
PROJECTS

**FEDERAL  
PREMIUM**  
AMMUNITION

WWW.FEDERALPREMIUM.COM

# From Rose, with Love

by Owen Cecil

It was late September and the fallen yellow leaves of silver maples littered our town's dilapidated sidewalks like delicate Swedish pastry. A dirty gray sky threatened with the first cold daggers of autumn. Southbound mergansers, chased down from Canada by a hard freeze above the North Shore, had dropped in off Lake Huron and were bobbing the river behind City Bank. Diligent homeowners around Oscoda, Michigan were hustling to take up gardens, get storm windows hung, or re-shingle leaky roofs.

I was standing in line at Al's Hardware, waiting to pay for a roll of weather-stripping and a box of Remington #8 Field Loads. A voice behind me asked, "What ah ya gonna do with those?"

The dialect was distinctly foreign to the Midwest, but sounded familiar to me from earlier days in another part of the country. Its speaker, a gray-haired gentleman peering through heavy horn-rimmed

glasses, was wearing a brown leather bomber jacket and a pair of baggy gabardines splattered in various colors of paint. I guessed his age at late

sixties. He was pointing at my tan and green box of shotgun shells, illustrated on one side with a bobwhite quail and on the other with a mourning dove.

"Might try a little grouse hunting if I ever get caught up," I answered.

"No time like the present," he said. "What's yah gun?"

After looking down at his scuffed penny loafers I decided to tell him about my old reliable.

"I know the Mahlin ovah-undah," he said in a cheerful tone. "No rib between the barrels if you've got the post-wahr model." I told him I did. He went on to explain that his

uncle had hunted black ducks on Long Island in the 1940's with the first version of the Marlin Model 90. "Did the job for him, and that was befohr all this magnum baloney."

The man's friendly, intelligent, unassuming manner struck me as refreshing. You could plainly see he was from another era, a throwback to the days of paper shotshells, Jon-e hand warmers, and Poly-Chokes. I immediately liked the guy and wanted to know more about him. Perhaps he had read Burton Spiller, maybe even visited the same territory in New England. I lingered outside the store. When he came out I asked him if he hunts nowadays.

"Certainly. Me and my sweethaht, Rose," he said, pointing to a sedan parked in the gravel lot beside Al's. Without paying close attention to the vehicle, I hastily took it to be an early 1950's Plymouth, DeSoto, or other relic like grandfather drove in his latter years. Glancing at the front passenger window, all I could see was a dark shadow of the female on the other side of the tinted glass. She seemed somewhat anxious to me.

"Where are you pahked?"

I pointed to my van. While I followed the man's instructions to stow my purchases, he opened his vehicle and leashed a rusty gold, smooth-coat dog whose distinguished appearance, like that of her master, suggested strains of Old World nobility.

Arthur Manning introduced himself while Rose cautiously sniffed my pant leg, then watered beside the front tire of my Chevy van. Her owner looked amused and beamed a huge smile at me. "She wouldn't do that here in front of a stranger if she didn't trust you. You should feel honahed."

Rose struck me as such an aristocratic lady - full of charm and poise - that I believed every word he said.

That was my first exposure to the Hungarian Vizsla, a

"He opened his vehicle and leashed a rusty gold, smooth-coat dog whose distinguished appearance, like that of her master, suggested strains of Old World nobility."

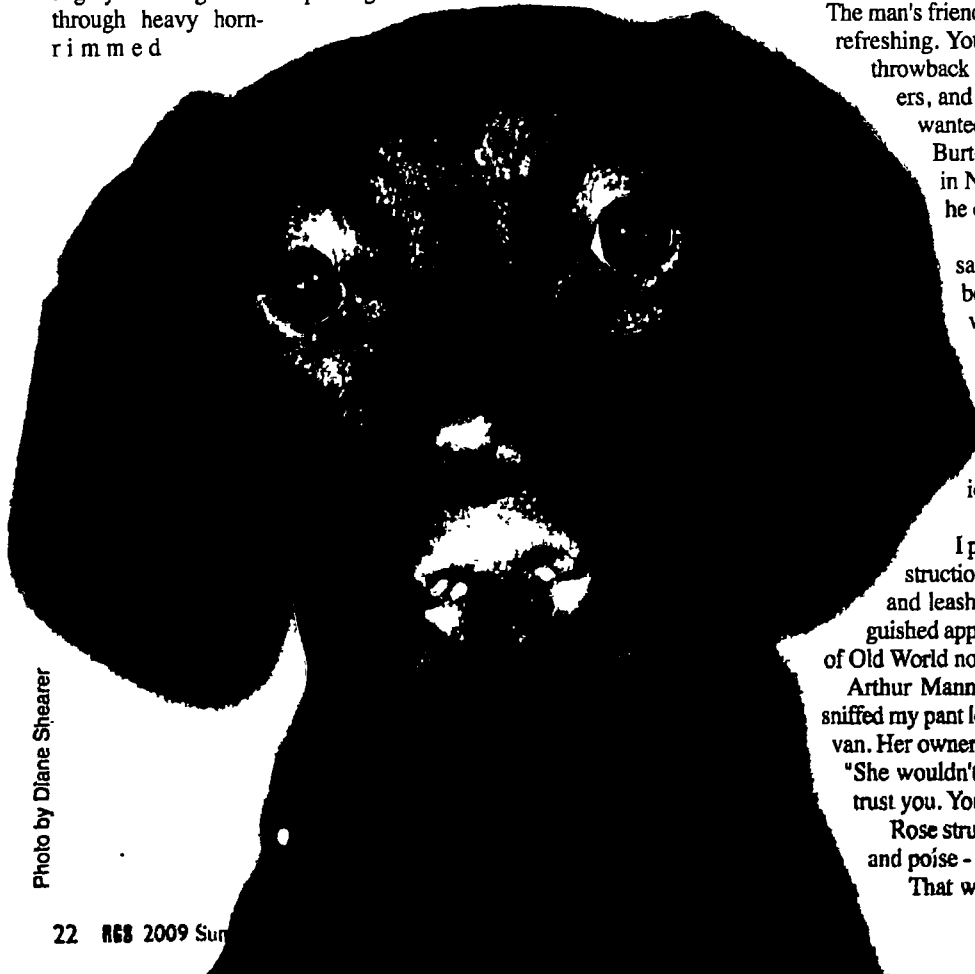


Photo by Diane Shearer

bird dog rarely seen in northern Michigan's woods Arthur went on to tell about the animal's gentle manner, superior intelligence, and highly affectionate nature. Getting to see and learn about the Vizsla would in itself have been a delight. The invitation to join Mr. Manning and Rose for an afternoon of grouse hunting kept me excited for the next three days.

We met that Thursday at half past twelve behind Gilbert's drug store. I offered to drive. "Thank you very much. I appreciate the offer. But, Rose . . ." Mr. Manning's forehead developed a deep set of flying geese as he held his hands in a helpless, apologetic gesture. "Rose becomes upset in unfamiliar surroundings. Please don't misunderstand me - there's nothing wrong with your van. As I explained to you the other day, the Vizsla is an unusually sensitive animal."

The way he said the word, "sen-si-tive," carefully pronouncing each syllable, left me with the impression that I needed to police my conduct carefully if I hoped to win approval of the soft-spoken lady now dancing impatiently in the back seat of her sea-green limo.

After I stowed my gun in the trunk, we purred out of town in Arthur's 1958 Mercedes Benz. Mr. Manning explained that he lives south of town, just past the Wagon restaurant. I didn't ask, but wondered if his was the lakeside place with the tall lilac hedges and tennis court. He briefly mentioned New York and retirement from the pharmaceutical industry. I listened as Rose planted her rump in my lap and gave me the check-to-check test like the woman did in the old television ad for Schick electric razors.

We motored northwest of town to an area that Arthur knows well. He turned off on Rearing Pond Road and continued south to a sand track that dead-ends on a grassy run overlooking the Pine River. After we stopped and got out of the car Mr. Manning suited up in a weather-bleached J. C. Higgins field coat - a marsh tan duck cloth affair that had a corduroy collar and frayed button holes. I noticed that its shell loops held only five rounds.

What interested me more was the short side-by-side shotgun he removed from a take-down green canvas case whose ends were trimmed in leather. Before I could ask him about the gun, he closed the trunk of his car and disappeared over the hill in pursuit of Rose.

I got to the base of the slope in time to see Arthur motioning me upstream. We crossed at a shallow sandbar and worked up the opposite side. He stopped part way up the slope, breathing hard, and put a hand on my shoulder. "I must tell you, Owen - Rose does not mind if you pass up a shot at a pointed bird. But whatever you do, don't shoot and miss."

Telling Mr. Manning that I miss a lot would have been awkward, so I said nothing.

"It's okay if you miss a bird she doesn't point," he continued, holding up his hand to indicate fair play. "On a point, though, I choose my shots very carefully. Again, it's feelings - the dog's, I mean."

I nodded slowly.

"We have them too, of course - feelings, that is. My wife says I don't, but she has a tendency to be ah-gu-men-ta-tive." Arthur glanced at me with a doubtful expression. "That's got something to do with why she's in Florida at the moment and Rose and I ain't."

I told him I understood.

Rose started getting excited as we approached a young aspen stand. Arthur waved me in on the first point of the afternoon. My focus on the game rules almost caused me to miss an easy straightaway. Our Hungarian sweetheart retrieved the young gray phase, her whole body wiggling in delight. The master watched the whole affair with pride and graciously overlooked my unnecessary expenditure of ammunition. I extracted the two empties from my Marlin and knelt to receive the bird from Rose.

Mr. Manning let two birds go - one a steep climber that disappeared into the massive top branches of an old red pine. Another grouse escaped across the creek in a low, furtive glide and vanished into a blowdown.

"I should have told you about my Fawx," he explained. "It's cut awff - both sides straight through. They did this a lot in the old days, before

## So, You're Thinking About a Velcro Dog?

Is a Vizsla the right bird dog for you and your family? Here are a few things to take into consideration.

According to Diane Shearer, breeder, show judge and rescue coordinator at Enola, Pennsylvania, the breed is not for everyone. "Vizslas require a family atmosphere if they're going to be contented, happy dwellers. They want to be where you are, which is why they're called Velcro dogs. Busy, high-maintenance and social are a few of the adjectives that Shearer uses to describe them. "They demand a lot of attention and affection and can become neurotic if kept away from their owners." The best owner match, she explains, is someone not committed to other time-consuming interests.

This isn't to say that your Viz will be a couch potato. Like most sporting dogs, they require plenty of exercise. According to Shearer, Vizslas that do not get the proper amount of exercise can develop bad habits or behavior. Because of their short coats, and their need for social interaction, Vizslas shouldn't be regarded as a kennel dog, she adds.

Taking these factors into consideration, if it sounds like you and the Hungarian lady might have a Valentine in the cards, consider adopting a rescued dog. Sadly, many people rush into Vizsla ownership without understanding the special nature of the breed, and then realize they've made a mistake.

Shearer is the Vizsla Rescue Coordinator for Pennsylvania and parts of several adjoining states. Check out her website, [www.legacyvizslas.net](http://www.legacyvizslas.net), for additional information. Another source of information is the Vizsla Club of America (VCA). VCA can provide the names and contact information for others involved in Vizsla rescue work all over the country.



Photo by N. Amsfield

FROM ROSE, WITH LOVE *continued on next page*

choke tubes, when these guns were not treasured as they are today. And when partridge were plentiful. So I can't go long."

When I heard his venerable Philadelphia pipes bark ten minutes later, the victim came cartwheeling through the spindly overhead branches of a white pine. Rose was there in seconds. I again saw the expression on Arthur's face. A man would look no less delighted if his daughter had just received her diploma from medical school.

Seldom have I enjoyed a hunt as much as that one. We flushed seven grouse and bagged two. After Arthur connected, I fanned the breeze on a slow curve ball as it sailed behind a hemlock tree. Around 4:00 we rested on the remains of an old stump alongside an overgrown logging road. Arthur produced a neatly folded hand towel from his game pocket and wiped Rose's face carefully, examining her eyes with all the thoroughness of an ophthalmologist.

I mentioned a cedar thicket on the creek bottom and told him about a wild flush that had flown for its safe shelter. Mr Manning nodded and said nothing. When I suggested we work through the cedars, he voiced a quiet but firm objection. "I don't believe so. It's been a good afternoon. You shot three times, I shot once. We each got one. I'm satisfied. You should be, too."

There was no case for argument. Given the poor drum counts of recent years, we apparently had fallen into the mother lode. On the way home I sat quietly, pondering the lessons in restraint and gratitude. The man's religion seemed honorable to me. I would soon learn it goes deeper than a mere conservation ethic.

We were heading back to Oscoda along the high plateau south of the Au Sable River. The speedometer wasn't reading much above 45 mph. To tell you the truth, I'm not sure Mr. Manning's vision was all that good. He slowed as we motored along through the jack pine. I looked up ahead and saw a car parked on the left shoulder, facing our way. Arthur came to a full stop and dropped the driver's window. The

young man leaning against his car stood up and stared at us without saying anything. He was alone and appeared to be in his early twenties. His attire of jeans, hooded sweatshirt and rubber work boots suggested an outdoor occupation.

Rose took over behind the wheel and thrust her head out the window. The fellow studied us with an amused look, then stepped to one side, apparently hoping to see if the car held other occupants. Arthur waved from behind Rose's flank and yelled, "DON'T WORRY - SHE'S NOT DRIVING. WHAT'S YAH PROBLEM?"

"I, ah . . . ran out of gas."

His car was a mid 80's sedan, much of its blue paint peeled off. The vehicle had ragged rocker panels and a rear side window covered with Abitibi board and duct tape. One end of the front bumper hung loosely on several wraps of bailing wire.

"Hop in," Mr. Manning said. "We're headed into town. I've got an empty gas can in the trunk."

The kid looked at us with a blank stare, then replied, "Gee, thanks. That'd be great."

After the young lad got into the back seat, Arthur slowly accelerated and shouted over his shoulder, "YOU LIVE OUT THIS WAY?"

"No. I live in town."

"Yah not a partridge huntah ah ya?"

The lad leaned forward on the rear seat and said, "Pardon me, sir."

"Do you hunt the ruffed grouse?"

"No. No, I was headin' out to my deer blind at Conger Swamp. Been seen' a nice six-point lately. Thought I might get a chance today. Guess I blew it."

Arthur continued on down the road for a few minutes, then took his foot off the accelerator and looked up in the rearview mirror. "Are yah bow and yah geah in yah cah?"

After a brief pause, the young lad answered, "Oh, my bow and gear. Yea, no problem. They'll be okay until we get back."

"That's not what I had in mind," Arthur braked and turned onto a gravel side road, then U-turned and stopped. When he twisted around in the driver's seat and faced the back seat, those coarse platinum strands and thick dark-rimmed glasses must have looked intimidating, like a county prosecutor or someone of similar authority. He asked his lead question as if it were a matter of grave importance. "Would you trust me and my friend, Owen, with yah cah keys?"

"My car keys?"

I, too, failed to understand what Arthur was about to propose.

Mr. Manning looked at his watch. "It's only fifteen minutes out to the swamp."

The kid frowned. "Well, by the time we get gas and . . ."

"Don't worry about gas," Arthur ordered. "We'll get you to your blind."

"You mean . . . you're gonna wait . . . while I hunt?"

"No, I don't mean that," the driver said patiently. "Waiting while someone hunts could be ver-ry tedious. We will deposit you and yah archery at Conger so that you can hunt as planned. While you are in the swamp Owen and I will get gas into yah vehicle and pahk it where we drop you off."

There was a moment of silence while the kid and I absorbed it. Rose whined a tender, mournful plea and worked her nose under Arthur's arm. I've often wondered if Mr. Manning learned his affection for people from Rose, if Rose takes after her master, or if, together on chilly evenings by the fireplace, they both read the same old-fashioned love stories. ❀

RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY

LOGOED  
MERCHANDISE

Boyt Signature  
Series Case with  
Accessory Pocket

\$101.00  
RGS-GC2IWC

Features RGS Logo Foil Embossed on  
Leather Patch on the Reverse Side

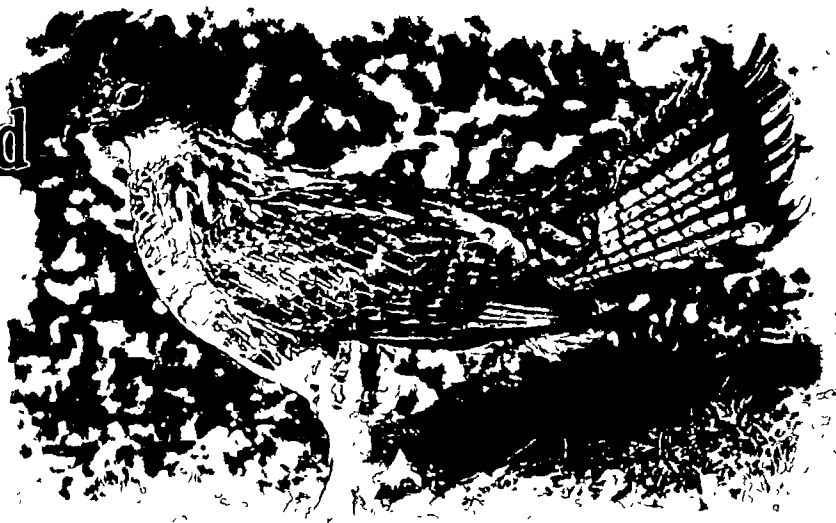
1-800-550-2698 • www.SHOPRGS.COM

# Some Natural Resources Help Energize the World, Others Need Our Energies to Help Improve Their World

A leading producer of coal and natural gas, CONSOL Energy also maintains a corporate policy of developing or donating surplus property for wildlife enhancement, recreational use and conservation.

This is acreage with incredible potential as fish and wildlife habitat. And CONSOL Energy is exploring innovative ways to improve the food and cover that will benefit a variety of wildlife throughout its various operating areas. Sites range from forested areas, through farmlands, to sagebrush prairie.

A part of CONSOL Energy's effort involves partnering with leading wildlife and conservation groups, such as the Ruffed Grouse Society, the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. CONSOL Energy is committed to environmental stewardship, sustainable forestry programs and related initiatives.



CONSOL Energy – using its energies to give wildlife a boost.  
*Responsible coal-mining benefits the land and all those who make it their home.*

# H. C. Edwards Chapter of Staunton, Virginia

## Creating Extraordinary Event in Every Event



H.C. "Duck"  
Edwards

Staunton, Virginia isn't a big town – yet their banquet draws over 200 attendees and typically has around 70 sponsors. Their success in raising much-needed funds for habitat is undeniable, which is the reason we've asked them to share some of their secrets to success.

H.C. "Duck" Edwards is a charter member of the chapter, which will hold their 20th banquet this fall. "Our first banquet we had about 100 people, and we may have cleared \$800 that night. In 20 years we've come a long

way!" Edwards says.

Over the last several decades, Edwards has truly shaped the chapter's direction "He's the backbone of our chapter! In the past he took care of a lot of things - it was his passion. The rest of us, I would say, are his followers," says Kenny Wilkinson, ticket chairman.

One of Edwards' philosophies is that a personal touch makes all the difference. Sincere efforts to reach out to interested members of the public garner results. Writing personal letters of invitation to the banquet is one method he has used with great success in the past. "I just send them a note, telling them about our event. I say I hope they continue to support us, and share with them the progress we've made," Edwards says. Personally, Edwards sells about 50 tickets – and he is quick to point out that several other members of the committee accomplish the same.

"I'm proud that our chapter has so many sponsors – they have really helped us! We shoot for 80 or better every year and you just can't let up. Personal letters, as much as any mailings from headquarters, have contributed to our chapter's success."

Edwards' practice of reaching out on an individual level has carried over to the rest of the committee members. Throughout the year chapter volunteers work at booths at local shows and fairs. They routinely leave a notebook out for names and phone numbers. When someone is interested in finding out more about the organization, they leave their information and volunteers follow up with a personal phone call and letter of invitation to the banquet.

As well as collecting personal contact information, the chapter also advertises for their banquet year-round. By having last year's banquet flyers and hand-outs at every event, it's easy to share with attendees a little more about the banquet.

Another interesting concept the Staunton chapter has practiced is to hold a banquet sponsor

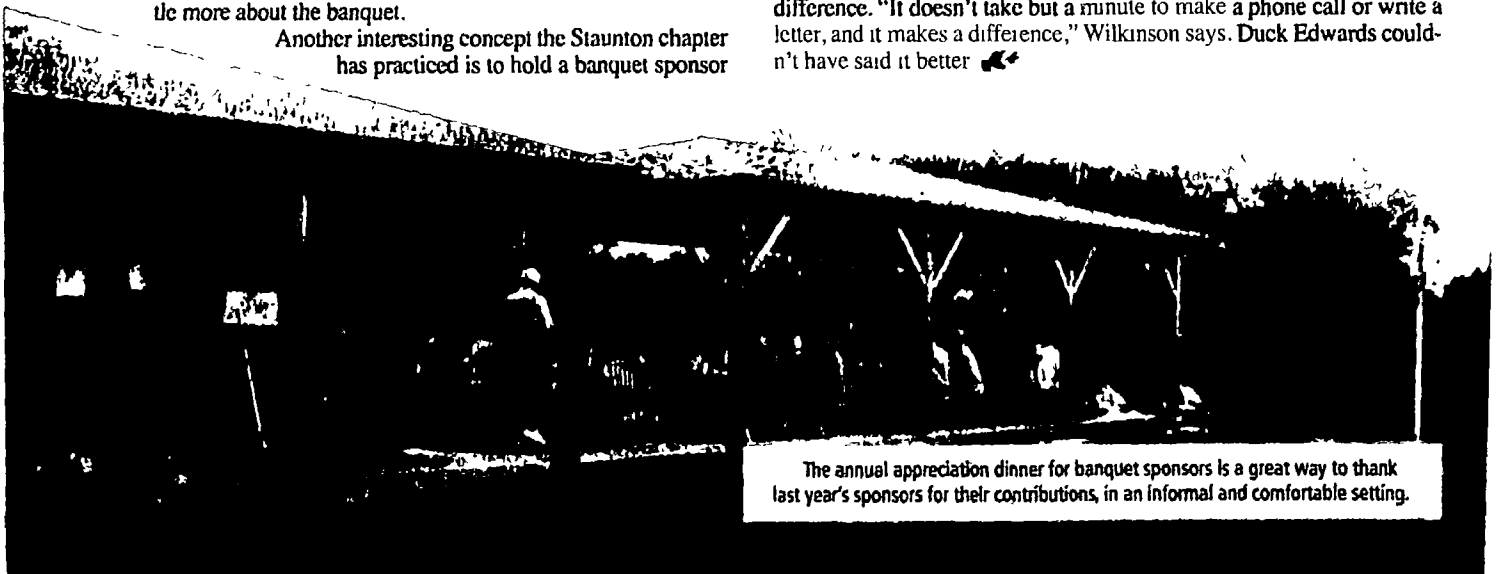


Pictured from left are chapter member Buddie Chandler, Senior Regional Biologist Mark Banker, Pete Duncan, and Prize Chairman Al Bourgeois after a successful hunt in Pennsylvania this past fall

appreciation dinner in spring, as a precursor to the upcoming fall banquet. The event is sponsored mainly by committee members who prepare dinner and have the sponsors at a local gun club for shooting during the event. "Our goal is really to break even on this dinner," Wilkinson explains. To that end, one of the committee members often donates a print to raffle off to help cover the cost of the dinner. The event serves to keep the organization visible for sponsors, as well as to get them thinking about the upcoming fall banquet (This year, due to the stressed economy the event was cancelled, though they plan to resume the tradition in the future.)

The Staunton event draws attendees from over an hour away, a testament to how hard this chapter works to generate interest in their event. "It takes an entire committee to hold such a large event," Wilkinson says. Many of the spouses of committee members are just as heavily involved with the planning as the committee members themselves.

Yet, in the end, it may just be the smallest things that make the biggest difference. "It doesn't take but a minute to make a phone call or write a letter, and it makes a difference," Wilkinson says. Duck Edwards couldn't have said it better.

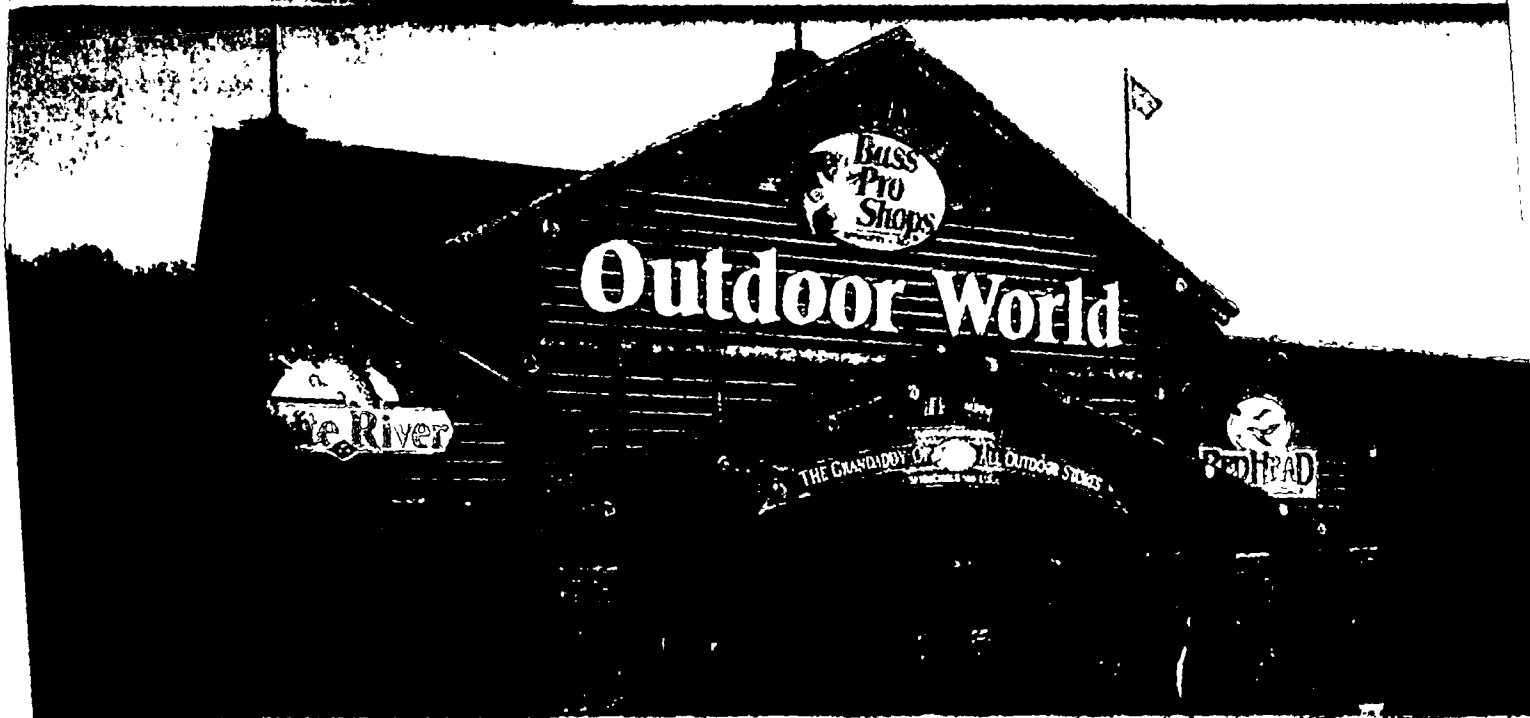


The annual appreciation dinner for banquet sponsors is a great way to thank last year's sponsors for their contributions, in an informal and comfortable setting.



*Welcome*  
**FISHERMEN,  
 HUNTERS,  
 ——— AND ———  
 OTHER  
 LIARS.**

Welcome, outdoorsmen! We built it just for you. It's true. Your local Bass Pro Shops® store is the only one of its kind. Sure, you'll discover in all our stores the same Low Price Guarantee, expert sales associates, and the best selection of outdoor products around. But the specific gear you'll find is unique to each location, because we understand that the Kansas grasslands are very different from Ohio hardwoods. And that's no lie.



Shop online at  
[basspro.com](http://basspro.com)

For a FREE catalog  
 1-800-BASSPRO

For an adventure in itself  
 Visit Our Stores Nationwide



The trigger is gold plated and the barrel selector is the button at the top of the trigger

# The Ruffed Grouse Society SKB Special Grouse Gun

By Nick Sisley

Every year the Ruffed Grouse Society auctions off or makes available some very special ideal upland grouse and woodcock shotguns. Let's take a close look at one of them: the 20-gauge SKB, which is also available as a 28-gauge. One of the features that make this one very special is the gold RGS medallion affixed to each side of the receiver. Chief honcho at SKB Rob Johanson tells me, referring to how the medallion is attached, "...we use the same product that is used to apply the gauge faces to controls attached to larger pieces of heavy equipment like diesel generators. This adhesive remains flexible when cured. It is not affected by heat or the shock and vibration that occur when the gun is fired." From that I take it you don't have to worry about this medallion ever coming off.

The medallion features a flushing grouse and a flushing woodcock as well as a grouse tail feather. The words "Ruffed Grouse Society" run across the top of the medallion.

The SKB receiver-to-barrel lock up is one of the strongest ever designed. The barrels pivot on trunnions. When you examine the receiver, you notice two lugs milled into the top back of the monobloc; when the gun is closed two bolts built into the top front of the receiver move to the right to engage the two lugs at the top of the monobloc. This system, as many of you know, is called the Kersten crossbolt. It is known for its super strength. But SKB didn't stop with just the trunnions and the crossbolt. There's a milled out area in the bottom of the receiver - and a lug milled into the bottom of the monobloc that nestles into this milled out area upon closing. There are tremendous forces placed on a shotgun when it is fired. The main forces are upward and forward - both trying to force the shotgun open. The crossbolt takes care of managing the upward forces, while the bottom bolt and the trunnions take care of the forward forces.

Since there are no underlocking bolts in the SKB system this means that the depth of the receiver can be a tad shallower. The depth of the 20-gauge is 2.20". The receiver width is 1.60", and the receiver sidewalls are fairly wide. Put all these factors together and I'd guess you could shoot an SKB for thousands and thousands of rounds with no fear of unusual wear.

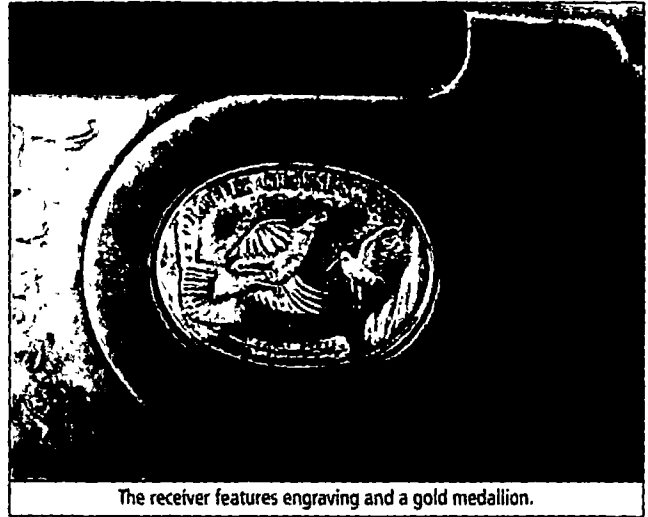
That said, most manufacturers suggest you return the gun for a thorough tear down, inspection and internal lubrication every one

to three years. If you are shooting 10,000 rounds or more a year, say not just at upland birds but also at clay targets, have the gun thoroughly checked every year. If you shoot around 5,000 rounds a year have the gun checked every two years. But don't let such an inspection go past three years - sure, you can let such an inspection slide, but the result is poor maintenance. You would not treat any of your vehicles like that.

But let's get back to the SKB grouse gun. The receiver, crossbolt, opening lever, fore-end iron and trigger guard are strong alloy steel, then that metal is nitride treated, which is excellent for corrosion protection. Further, there is nice engraving on all the mentioned parts above except, of course, the crossbolt. There's an appealing scroll/floral design that I think is extremely well done. I also suggest checking out the SKB engraving at any Ruffed Grouse Society dinner that you attend where there is one for your perusal. This engraving is done by roller and then hand finished.

The safety is non-automatic - a slide on the top tang. The trigger is gold plated, and the barrel selector is the button at the top of the trigger. There's plenty of room inside the trigger guard for a gloved finger. Barrel choices are 26" and 28". The vent rib measures .345 and is not tapered. Flush-mounted screw chokes come with the gun - three are supplied, each with notches at the end for identification when in the barrels. The most open choke has 5 notches and it measures .621. With the bores measuring .618 - that means a "belled" choke of .003. Keep in mind that most grouse and woodcock hunters do want very open chokes. The screw choke with 4 notches measures .612 - so .006 constriction. I'd say .008 constriction would be an Improved Cylinder in 20-gauge, so this is still a good open choke for grouse shooting. The screw choke with three notches measures .602 - so .016 constriction.

The gun weighs 6 pounds 13.5 ounces on my digital postal scale. The foreend hefts 10.3 ounces and the barrels go 2



The receiver features engraving and a gold medallion.

pounds 12 ounces. I'd say my test gun with 26" barrels balances about 0.125" behind the trunnions, i.e. hinge point. So theoretically you could drill out some of the wood in the stock by enlarging the through-the-stock bolt hole a bit. This would trim an ounce or two and would shift the weight to the hinge. Guessing, I would think the SKB with 28" barrels probably balances right at the hinge.

The stock is a good grade of American walnut. The finish is polyurethane and done in a three-step process. The foreend is the finger-groove style common to all SKBs. The checkering is particularly good - with sharp diamonds that are well executed. Done by a sophisticated CNC machine, the checkering is then hand finished. The butt stock wears a black plastic butt pad, so there's no sticky surface to hang up with your gun mount.

Overall I think you will find this SKB an excellent offering. Because of the locking system used the SKB is one heck of a super strong shotgun. Shoot this one for 100,000 rounds, and I bet it keeps on ticking. But don't forget regular maintenance - this is important with any shotgun. 🦋

Nick Sisley can be contacted at [nicksisley@hotmail.com](mailto:nicksisley@hotmail.com).

*Editor's Note: The RGS SKB shotgun is on display and available at every 2009 RGS fundraising banquet. Interested parties may also purchase the SKB through the RGS website under RGS Specials.*



The Ruffed Grouse Society  
proudly introduces...

# Tail Feathers 2009 Super Recruiter Drive

Photo by Dave Larnard

## you be the 2009 Super Recruiter

A new membership recruitment program will allow members, and their chapters, to compete for the title of **Super Recruiter 2009**.

When you introduce a new member to the Ruffed Grouse Society, let us know and we will track your credits. Top recruiters will be posted on our website. We'll also keep you posted of the standings during the course of the year.

**Rules and regulations:**

Each member will receive one individual credit, and one credit for their chapter every time they sign up a new member through the end of 2009. In January, 2010 a tally will be taken to determine the top individual recruiter and the top chapter recruiter.

The individual will receive a special edition Tail Feather Super Recruiter grouse display from headquarters, as well as recognition on the website, magazine and at their banquet.

The chapter with the most credits will get their chapter name engraved on a plaque to be displayed at headquarters and presented by their Regional Director at the 2010 chapter banquet.

**How do I receive my credit for a new member?**

To receive credit for the contest you must do **one** of the following:

1. Fill out a Super Recruiter Application, which is posted on the website and printed below. Send the completed form to **Membership department, 451 McCormick Road Coraopolis, PA 15108.**
2. Send an email with your new member information to: **membership@ruffedgrousesociety.org**
3. Write your name on the back of a banquet ticket stub, and specify that you are a Super Recruiter.

**What is a new member?**

A new member is anyone brand new to the organization, or someone who has not renewed their membership in the past 365 days. Any level of new membership/sponsorship counts for one credit toward the program.

**What if I have already signed up a new member?**

If you have already signed up new members this year, let us know and you will receive credit accordingly.

*Go on, recruit like*

### Tail Feathers Super Recruiter Application

For each qualifying new member one credit will be assigned to you and one to your chapter. Please print clearly.

YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
YOUR CHAPTER: \_\_\_\_\_  
YOUR EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
YOUR PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF RECRUITED MEMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail completed form to:  
RGS Membership Department  
451 McCormick Road  
Coraopolis, PA 15108  
You may also email information to  
membership@ruffedgrousesociety.org

# The River Camp

by Patrick Beck (with apologies to Robert Service)

**T**wo fellows accustomed to city life  
Took a notion to shoot a few birds  
'Neath the north Maine skies where a cabin lies  
According to the old guide's words  
Where the frosty nights bring the woodcock flights  
And the grouse are thick on the ground  
So they packed their kits and they kissed their wives  
And they headed north out of town

**N**orth they headed past Boston and Bath,  
Past marsh and meadow and pond  
Past the heights of the great Katahdin Mount  
To the North Woods that lay beyond  
Where the hillsides glow with a fireworks show  
Of maple and poplar and pine  
Where the streams run out of the dead spruce bogs  
And stars by the million shine.

**T**hey traveled with dogs and shotguns and gear  
In a coach of a modern sort  
With wellies and whistles and beepers and bells  
The *accoutrements* of their sport.  
And their maps were new and their cares were few  
As they heeded the polestar's call.  
And they sang a song as they rolled along  
In the lure of the great land's thrall

**T**he tall one was thin with a gimlet eye  
And his love for the woods was strong  
While the other was stout with a merry laugh  
And his son that he'd brought along.  
Their dogs were of fancy English blood  
I believe that they'd supped with the Queen  
And their leather britches and pretty guns  
Really just had to be seen  
The tall one's precious fowling piece  
Weighed six pounds plus an ounce  
And was scribed and scrolled by a little man  
Whose name you can't pronounce.  
The wide one carried a handsome Fox  
With the barrels set side by side  
But he rarely managed to pepper a tail  
No matter how hard he tried.

**T**hey carried on past where the blacktop ends  
Where the rocks turn into ruts.  
They lurched along the last few miles  
With blisters on their butts  
As the sun slipped out of the evening sky  
They glimpsed a welcoming lamp  
Where the wood smoke curled in a part of the world  
That's known as the River Camp.  
A cozy cabin sits up on a bluff  
And down through the trees below  
Two streams meet in a trout-filled pool  
To form the Aroostook flow.  
It was on that porch they took their ease  
Far from the city's glare  
And pitied the birds that were certain sure  
To meet their maker there.

**T**he three were artists with pot and pan  
Picassos of the plate  
The meals they made were rightly praised  
And just as rightly ate.  
Their packs held fruits and vegetables  
Breads, cheeses, nuts and sweets  
But boasting on their marksmanship  
They carried in no meat.

**"W**e'll shoot some grouse for the pot, my son  
We'll be just like the pioneers."  
But the youngster only shook his head  
As a smile connected his ears  
"You're puttin' socks over your boots, old man  
We'll be lucky to stay alive  
Why, the best you've ever shot at skeet  
Is nine for twenty-five"  
And the dogs stepped high in the British style  
From Sandringham, you say?  
And the tote roads stretched for many a mile  
On a bright October day  
The aspen leaves came flutt'ring down  
Like gold coins newly struck  
And the lad caught one and held it out  
"You'll need this Dad, for luck."

**F**rom a tangle of cedars a covey arose  
The grouse flushed left and right  
And each man had the double chance  
That haunts a winter night.  
The birds beat hard for the edge of the woods  
In that moment the long guns blazed  
Then the dogs looked up in disbelief  
For never a feather was grazed.

**T**he jury's sad and longing eyes  
Would offer no reprieve.  
How could there be with so much noise  
No partridge to retrieve?  
"A kink in my back", "I tripped on a rock"  
The excuses would fill a long list  
Then a small, young voice behind them said  
"I can't believe you missed"

**A** short discussion then ensued  
The fable and fact  
And sure enough another bird  
Sailed safe away intact  
They bid farewell to the dun-gray hen  
And wished her safely nest  
And when she brings forth next year's brood  
We'll be equal to the test.

**T**hat night in camp a feast was laid  
A match for the Cordon Bleu.  
And through the years we'll fond recall  
The night of carrot stew.



English Cocker, Spaniels Digby, (L) and Zero engage in a little frivolity at the River Camp.

Photo by Joe P. ante

### Spring, Canada

The female ruffed grouse will often follow the edge of a tree trunk, presenting a target for predators. She may then feign injury by flapping and chirping and dropping a wing, in order to lure the predator away from her chicks.



Artwork by Christopher Smith

Last issue we began exploring the life of ruffed grouse in the eastern region. We focused on drumming in particular – how male grouse move their wings to create that distinct sound, the purposes of drumming, and what makes for a good drumming location.

The illustrator for our centerfold this year is Christopher Smith, a wildlife artist from Interlochen, Michigan. The text of this centerfold first appeared in the New Hampshire Wildlife Federation Newsletter in 2005.

## An Eastern Summer

### Nesting: Perils of the Incubation Period

Nesting cover for grouse is probably the most open and inherently dangerous of all the habitats they use over the course of the year. Huh? Nesting habitat, dangerous? And how can that open condition work to a grouse's benefit?

Well, it's dangerous in a manner...that is, dangerous if you're a grouse moving around and being very visible. The key to good grouse nesting habitat is the fact that it provides the hen a chance to use her cryptic, almost camouflage coloration to "disappear" in fairly open cover where she can keep a sharp lookout for potential threats:

You see, good ruffed grouse nesting cover is typically in more mature stands of second-growth hardwoods, usually comprised of trees between 8" to 20" in diameter - plain old Northeast mature hardwood forest.

In these areas, grouse hens scratch out a very simple ground nest in the leaf litter debris, commonly placing one side of this nest against some solid "structure" like a large tree, rock, live shrub or downed log. In this small depression she'll take the better part of two weeks to lay from 8 to 15 eggs, only periodically leaving the nest for food. To conceal both herself and the nest, the hen will simply remain on the nest and be very still while maintaining a vigilant watch for any threats.

When you think about it, it's not hard to rationalize using this open, somewhat-sparse nesting cover from a grouse's perspective. As these forested areas are typically low in understory vegetation, the hen can see a great distance across the forest floor while remaining undetected in her protective camouflage. Should a threat be seen, this allows her time to flatten down her profile to enhance the degree

# Growth Stages of a Ruffed Grouse

In the span of roughly 13+ weeks, a grouse chick will go from natal plumage (or down) to juvenile plumage, followed by adult plumage. Completion of the process occurs around the 19th week, and adult feathers are replaced once a year after that.



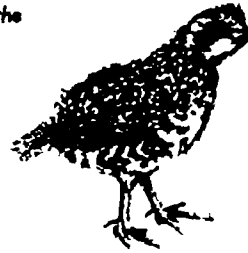
1 DAY



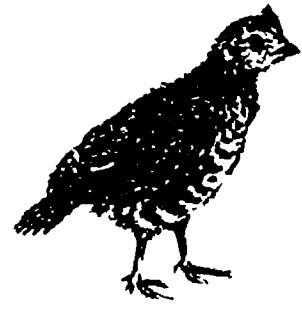
1 WEEK



2 WEEKS



3 WEEKS



4 WEEKS

to which she blends in with the dead leaf litter on the forest floor.

Rarely are hen grouse "surprised" by terrestrial predators. Should one accidentally stumble onto the nest site, the hen will immediately begin an elaborate ruse to draw the threat away from the precious eggs. The hen will leap off the nest, flutter a few yards, and begin hissing and clucking while dragging a wing on the ground to pretend she's wounded and unable to fly. In this mode, seeing her as an easy meal, the predator will hopefully be drawn away from the nest site.

This charade continues until the grouse considers the nest site safe, at which point she'll flush away from the nest site, and only circle back to the nest from another angle when she considers the threat gone. As for defense from avian predators, the hen's ability to blend into natural surroundings also works well in combination with the mature forest understory having less ground vegetation and less prey species, which means fewer species of predatory bird will feed there.

During the laying and incubation period, the hen will spend the better part of five weeks in this open, seemingly dangerous location. But the real danger to grouse productivity in the area has yet to come.

## Hatching:

### Chicks Fight for Survival

In late May to early June the eggs hatch, and what was great nest cover for the lone hen becomes a death trap for the dozen or so hungry, mobile, and highly visible grouse chicks. Ruffed grouse chicks are "precocial" - which means they are immediately able to walk around and feed themselves upon hatching - so they soon require areas of very productive and highly protective brood cover. Without this particular habitat, the entire clutch is at risk of being lost in a few short months.

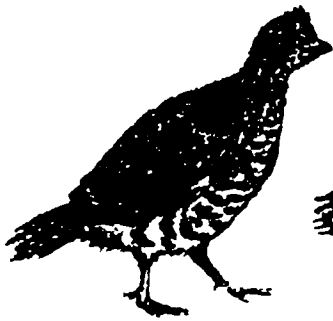
Great grouse brood habitat requires a site that is highly productive in terms of the density and variety of plants and other organisms it supports. This plant density and productivity requires an enormous input of energy, which in the case of these special forest habitats, is provided in the form of sunlight. Ideally, ruffed grouse brood habitat contains plants and insects that grow and live in forest openings. When some type of disturbance opens the forest canopy, ample sunlight can reach the forest floor and the abundance of life described above takes hold in the area.

Explosions of plant and insect life respond to sun-

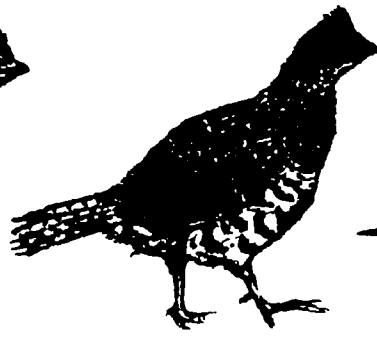
Day-old chicks are like little puffballs, covered in natal down with several small flight feathers (primary and secondary feathers) visible on the wings. At one week they have doubled their size and sport a few shoulder (scapular) feathers and longer secondaries and primaries on their wings. A tail is not present yet. Over the next weeks up to week eight or so, juvenile feathers continue to grow along the head, neck, back, wing, and tail. Juvenile primaries and secondaries mature and are replaced with adult primaries and secondaries. Pin feathers around the body begin to give the bird its adult look. During weeks eight and nine, many adult secondaries begin growing. The juvenile tail, which has finished growing several weeks ago, drops off at 9-10 weeks and is rapidly replaced by a growing adult tail. The outer two primaries will not be replaced until the molt next year. The bird now resembles a smaller version of an adult grouse.



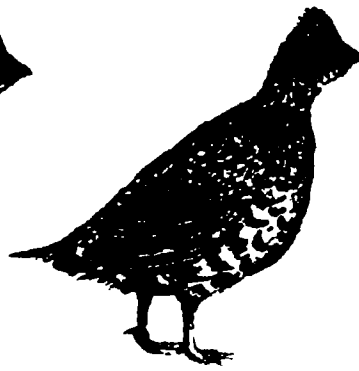
A bobcat waits patiently along a travel corridor frequented by several ground nesting bird species, including ruffed grouse. As the hen herds her brood from nesting to feeding cover, it often means a journey of several miles. Longer distances increase the likelihood of attack from terrestrial predators.



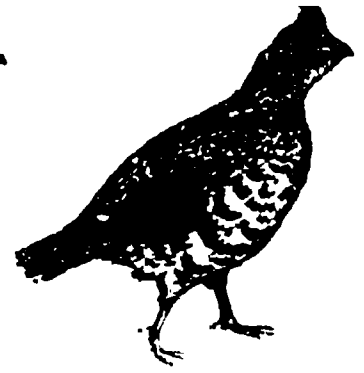
5-6 WEEKS



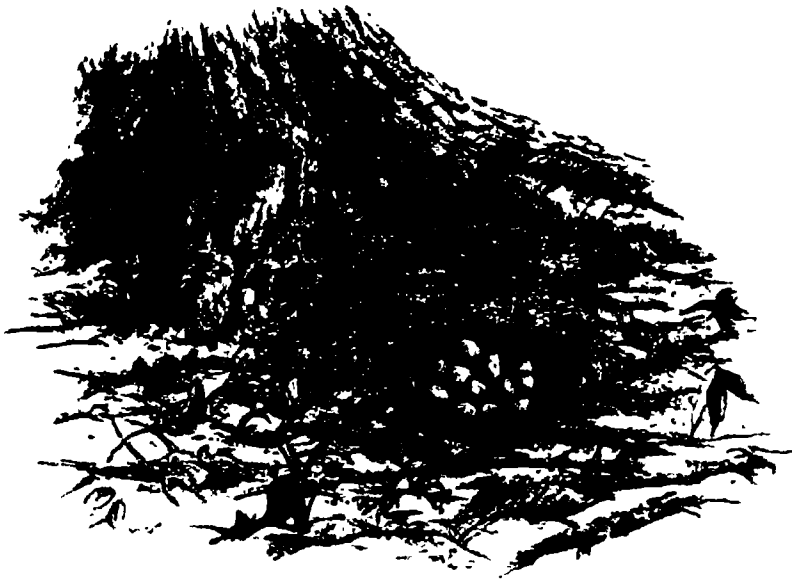
8 WEEKS



9-10 WEEKS



11-13 WEEKS



*A typical nest site is usually in relatively open woods. Her nest, which is nothing more than a small bowl or depression in the leaves, is often up against a tree stump, or some larger object to serve as a predator block. She relies upon her keen eyesight and cryptic coloration to avoid detection from predators.*

*Can you spot the nest in the picture above and the hen in the picture below?*



*light heating the soil and tree seedlings, and other plants that were formerly suppressed by canopy shading begin to grow rapidly. The growth in these openings in northeastern hardwood forests is dramatic, with fast-growing tree seedling densities often exceeding 12,000-15,000 stems per acre. Herbaceous plants that produce succulent shoots, flowers, berries and seeds erupt as well, thus providing the foundation for abundant insect life. The benefits to grouse chicks are clear: dense cover to hide within for protection from predators, loads of nutritious insects and tender plant material to feed on.*

*High-nutrition food sources are critical for grouse chicks, as they grow at an astounding rate, begin their first attempts at flight in only one week, and increase to 40 times their birth weight in only 12 weeks! Clearly, the most important habitats for good ruffed grouse production across their life cycle are these highly productive brood habitats. Unfortunately, this habitat is currently in very short supply in the Northeast, which often requires hens and their broods to wander long distances from their nesting sites to find quality brood habitats.*

*A grouse hen and her new brood will expend a tremendous amount of energy relocating from nesting cover to brood cover, and the greater the distance they have to travel, the greater the impacts from predators, weather and starvation. The very mobile chicks simply follow along after the hen as she leads them to acceptable brood cover, which in some cases can mean traversing long distances through very open and dangerous terrain. As a result, the highest brood survival occurs when nesting cover is very close to good brood habitat.*

*Traditional forest management for "high quality" grouse habitat prescribes that areas of about five acres in size of nesting cover should abut areas of good brood cover of similar size. In this manner, broods have only to travel a few hundred feet - instead of miles - to reach adequate safety and food. However, even in good brood cover with adequate protection and nutrition, chick losses can be high. By August typically only half the original brood of 10-12 chicks will remain alive.*

*Grouse chicks voraciously consume high quality feed and will grow to adult proportions in only 12 weeks. As the fall season advances, maturing juveniles will feel the pull to establish their own territories and emigrate from their brood habitat into the surrounding forest, where they'll face new threats. We'll explore this next phase of their life history in the upcoming fall issue, so don't miss it!*

## Natural Forces as Forest Management Tools

As noted before, high-quality brood habitats are currently in short supply in New England. Why is that? One reason is that humans, for the most part, have controlled the array of natural disturbances that once created and maintained natural canopy openings required for dense, regenerating forest habitats. Historically, wildfires, floods, abandoned beaver impoundments and agricultural efforts by Native Americans resulted in mosaics of both mature and young forest patches occurring across the landscape.

Ruffed grouse adapted to this diverse forest condition, and thrived where patches of different age classes of forest were present over a larger area.

However, as time passed and these natural agents of disturbance either ceased or were curtailed by fire suppression, controlling rivers or reductions in the number of large beaver impoundments, northeast forests began to be harvested for their timber. These harvests throughout the late 1800's and until about 1960 provided a man-made substitute for the declining natural disturbances allowing for continued natural forest regeneration to occur in the patchwork necessary to provide great ruffed grouse habitats.

But unfortunately, the current reason for the lack of regeneration, or early successional forest cover, is that there has been a negative shift in public attitude about the active forest management that has served as a viable substitute for those natural disturbance forces. Some people believe the types of management that create the regeneration cover used by grouse and other animals are actually harmful to forests and wildlife.

While some individuals and groups have actively worked to stop forest management on public and private lands, wildlife biologists point out that there currently is less regenerating habitat available across New England than at any time in recorded history and perhaps even less than in pre-European settlement times!

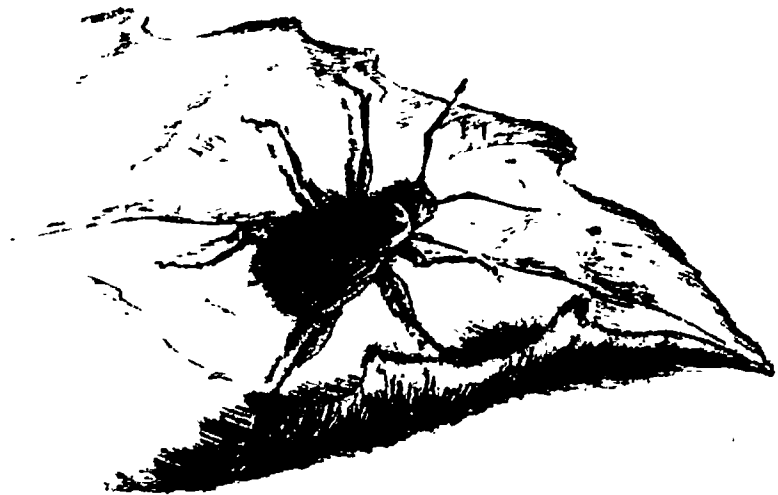
They've concluded that public misunderstanding of forest management has had dramatic, negative impacts on the biological diversity of our forests and wildlife, and many wildlife species that need young forest habitat types are declining as well. In short, good forest management results in good wildlife management – a topic we'll cover in a future column.

### Coming Fall 2009

Our newly hatched grouse chicks have grown rapidly this summer – they will be heading off to find their own territories in the fall. We'll explore the life of a typical young eastern ruffed grouse in our next issue.



Grouse benefit from habitat regeneration, which includes natural disturbances such as wildfires. In some parts of the country prescribed burns are used on a rotating schedule in much the same way that clear cutting is performed in the north. On a small scale, controlled burns can benefit grouse by burning out thick grasses and allowing for new growth of shade-intolerant species.



Beetles like this weevil, in the order Coleoptera, *Ottorhynchus* sp., represent a wide variety of insects eaten by young grouse during the early weeks after hatching, when protein intake is so important. The birds are opportunistic and feed on an incredible variety of animal matter before switching to a more vegetarian diet in adulthood.



ONE LOOK AND YOU KNOW IT'S BERETTA.  
ONE TOUCH AND YOU KNOW IT'S THE BEST.

THE UPLAND SPORTSMAN COLLECTION:  
687 SILVER PIGEON V, \$3,575 • MEN'S UPLAND CORDURA® JACKET, \$195



### BERETTA PRESENTS THE SILVER PIGEON V

500 years of Italian craftsmanship yield flawless reliability and refinement in Beretta's Silver Pigeon V. Imitated but never equaled, the Silver Pigeon series is the world's finest collection of over-and-under shotguns, unrivaled in fit and feel. As one of its most distinctive members, the durable Silver Pigeon V includes 12- and 20-gauge models as well as 28-gauge and .410-bore shotguns. Each offers appropriate weight and a properly scaled frame for exceptional balance, instinctive pointability, and handling. Available in pistol and English grip versions, with color-cased frames and gold-filled game bird inlays, it's truly a masterwork. See it, and an extensive selection of upland clothing and accessories, at your Beretta dealer.

SHOP 24 HOURS A DAY AT [WWW.SHOPBERETTA.COM](http://WWW.SHOPBERETTA.COM)

FOR A FREE GUN LOCK CATALOG OR INFORMATION ON BERETTA FIREARMS  
SPORT CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES, OR TO LOCATE A DEALER NEAR YOU  
VISIT [WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM](http://WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM) 800.636.3470.



# BERETTA

500 YEARS. ONE PASSION.

[WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM](http://WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM)



[InsureYourGunRights.com](http://InsureYourGunRights.com)

# HOME COVERS CALLING

Spotlighting the Doings of RGS People on the Ground

Volunteers of the Andy Ammann RGS Chapter of Lansing, Michigan smile for the camera during a recent work day. This winter the volunteers spent a day clearing and piling brush on the Rose Lake State Wildlife Area



Members of the Upper Hudson Valley RGS Chapter of Albany, New York participated in the 2009 Northeast Outdoors Show in Albany on March 20 to 22. The show received approximately 15,000 attendees, and volunteers were on hand to field questions and hand out information. Pictured (from left) are Ron Beauparlant, Michael A. Frisone and Michael G. Frisone.



The Allegheny Northwoods RGS Chapter of Franklin, Pennsylvania recently presented Robert "Shorty" Whitman with a conservation award. The award was in recognition of Shorty's outstanding commitment to the PA WHISL project. (More information on this project is included in this issue's Home Covers Calling.) Pictured (from left) are Steve Wilkinson, Bill Evans, John Guilinger, Denny Alston (back center), Shorty (holding plaque), Jeff Superak, Dave Galbreath and Jeff Perdue. Committee member not pictured: Jeff Quinn.



Brian Hanna, pictured here during a hunt last fall, was the recipient of a 2008 Conservationist award presented by the Covered Bridge RGS Chapter of Washington, Pennsylvania during their sportsmen's banquet last November. The chapter recognized Hanna for his outstanding dedication and commitment to habitat improvement in western Pennsylvania.



The Eastern UP RGS Chapter of Saint Ignace, Michigan held their 2nd annual youth hunt last September. Over 20 youth were in attendance and had the opportunity to hunt pheasant over gun dogs and shoot sporting clays.





The Wayne National Forest (WNF) in Ohio recently presented RGS with the 2008 Autumn Olive Invasive Species Removal award. Late last year WNF partnered with RGS to eliminate exotic vegetation on over 400 acres of abandoned mine lands that are part of the forest. Local volunteers and WNF employees were instrumental in the successful implementation of the project. Pictured (from left) are Cheryl Coon, a WNF employee, Dale Dalrymple, a committee member of the Hocking River Valley RGS Chapter of Athens, Ohio and Lisa Rossi, RGS regional director

Welcome to a new chapter – the Southern West Virginia RGS Chapter in Logan West Virginia. They held their first banquet last year on August 30. Jimbo Nagy, banquet chair, and Eric Salyer, ticket and prize chair, did a great job organizing the event. The event had around 90 attendees.

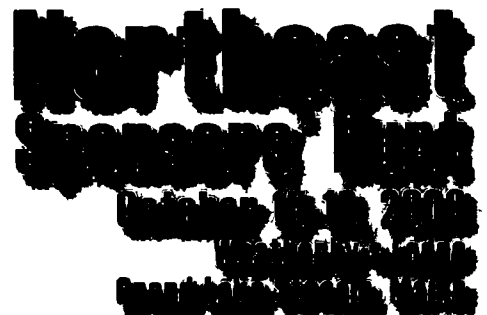


Kayley White, the 2008 Junior RGS Poster Contest Winner, is pictured here along with her winning entry at the Northeastern Wisconsin RGS Chapter of Green Bay, Wisconsin banquet last fall.



RGS chapters in lower Michigan held their 6th annual chapter workshop at the Ralph A. MacMullan center on Higgins Lake, Michigan. Each chapter sent representatives to discuss habitat updates and hear guest speakers. Pictured (far back from left) are Doug Doherty, RGS regional director, Al Stewart, Michigan Department of Natural Resources Upland Game Specialist and Gary Zimmer, RGS senior biologist.

HOME COVERS CALLING *continued on next page*



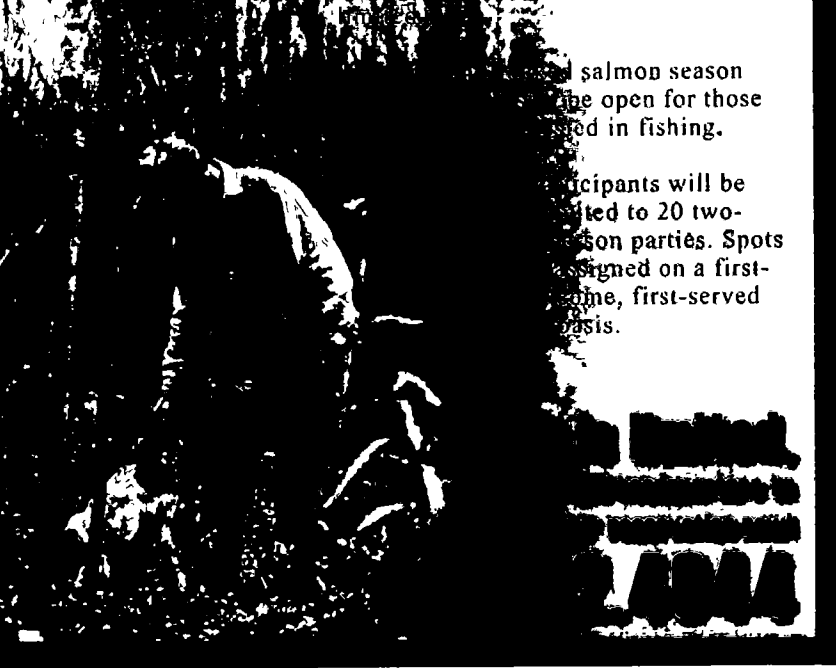
RGS is planning an exciting fall adventure for upland hunters at Weatherby's lodge in Maine. There are 20,000 acres of habitat managed for grouse and woodcock nearby, and the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge - a center for woodcock management research open to hunting - is only a short distance from camp.

**Schedule:**

- October 15 - arrival, cocktails and dinner
- October 16 - hunting, lobster or steak dinner
- October 17 - hunting, dinner, business meeting, and silent auction

Cost is \$965 per person without hunting guide. One guide for two hunters is \$1,300 per person.

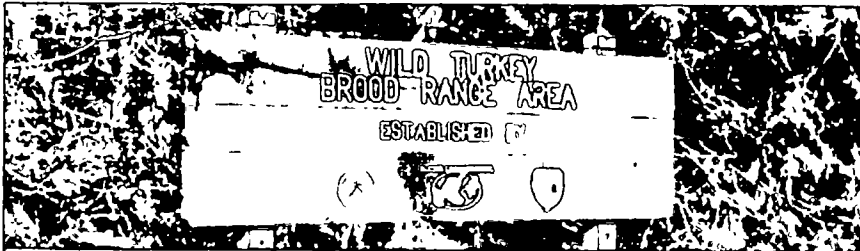
Number of guides available with dogs is



salmon season  
be open for those  
in fishing.

Participants will be  
limited to 20 two-  
person parties. Spots  
assigned on a first-  
come, first-served  
basis.





The Appalachian Highlands RGS Chapter of Bristol, Virginia and Bristol, Tennessee recently completed work on a habitat project on Brushy Mountain a Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management program. The chapter raised \$5,000 through banquet proceeds and other chapter events for the project, and partnered with the VDGIF and a local chapter of Quail Forever.



The Neshannock Creek RGS Chapter of New Wilmington, Pennsylvania and the Allegheny Northwoods RGS Chapter of Franklin, Pennsylvania recently joined efforts to staff a booth in New Castle, Pennsylvania in late February. The Laurel High School Conservation Club's Annual Sportsmen's Night draws local hunters and was an opportunity for RGS volunteers to meet like-minded folks. Pictured are Mark Gibson of the New Wilmington chapter (l) and Jeff Perdue of the Franklin chapter.

## Ruthven Limited Edition Prints

John A. Ruthven, often called the 20th century Audubon, has been internationally acknowledged master of wildlife art.

To purchase prints visit:  
[www.ruffedgrouse.com](http://www.ruffedgrouse.com)  
 and shop at RGS-Mart to choose from over a dozen limited edition prints.

Detail from *Strut*



The Pennsylvania WHISL project (or Woodcock Habitat Initiative on State Lands) sponsored a planting day early last October. The goal of the event was to plant 18,000 dogwood and alder seedlings over a 15-acre constructed wetland area located in Sandy Creek Township in Venango County, Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) donated the time of two employees and their seedling planter/tractor to assist in the planting effort. The Allegheny Northwoods RGS Chapter of Franklin, Pennsylvania provided a six-wheel "Gator" ATV to help move seedlings, equipment and volunteers around the site.

At the conclusion of the planting day, over 12,000 seedlings had been planted at the site and over 3/4 of the 15 acres had been completed. The PGC completed the project several days later.

Long-term monitoring of the site will be conducted by PennDOT District 1-0 along with others to evaluate the success of the project.

# Pennsylvania Wilds Upland Bird Hunt

## November 6-7, 2009

Hunt on thousands of acres open to public hunting in the Pennsylvania Wilds. Only 100 hunters will be able to participate, so reserve your space now! **Reservations are required, \$200 per hunter and \$125 for a non-hunting guest.**

Hunters will be provided breakfast buffets for both mornings also included. Fund-raising events and dinner to be held each evening. Non-hunting guests welcome to attend all meals and events.

Base of operations will be the Red Fern Inn in Kersey, Pennsylvania. Lodging accommodations will be available in the St. Mary's area.

Hunting areas include the Allegheny National Forest, several State Game Lands and State Forest lands.

**To register contact Mary Hosmer, (814) 512-2101, email: [wlab@windstream.net](mailto:wlab@windstream.net)**

For additional information contact regional directors:  
**Lisa Rossi (724) 693-9032, email: [rgslmt@msn.com](mailto:rgslmt@msn.com)**  
**Ken Waite (315) 406-5016, email: [rgsknw@twcny.rr.com](mailto:rgsknw@twcny.rr.com)**

# NIRGS News

## ■ Sierra Club Appeals Court's Decision in Superior National Forest Ruling

In 2004, the Forest Service produced a final version of its updated Forest Plan for the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota. The new plan governs all future management activities on the Forest, including habitat management projects adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). The Ruffed Grouse Society believes the new plan should provide for opportunities to actively manage forest conditions for the early successional habitat so essential to ruffed grouse and other species.

However, the Sierra Club challenged the plan and filed suit to stop its implementation. The Sierra Club argued that the plan was arbitrary and capricious. It complained of

minor discrepancies in the Forest Service's underlying data and also argued that the potential aspen clear-cutting and logging practices would negatively impact the forest and adjacent BWCAW. The Ruffed Grouse Society, along with the State of Minnesota, participated as Amicus Curiae (or "Friend of the Court") in the case.

In January the United States District Court of Minnesota ruled in favor of the US Forest Service and the Ruffed Grouse Society. The Sierra Club has decided to appeal the court decision to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. RGS is planning to act as Amicus Curiae in support of the US Forest Service in the appeal, just as it did for the initial case. Ryan Woody of Matthiesen, Wickert and Lehrer, S C continues to represent RGS on a pro-bono basis in these proceedings. Visit [www.nationalforestlawblog.com](http://www.nationalforestlawblog.com) to read more about this case or to follow other legal news and cases affecting national forests.

## ■ Tennessee National Forest Supervisor Addresses Hunters on Logging Practices

Tom Speaks, forest supervisor of the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee, spoke to grouse hunters in the newly formed Tennessee Valley RGS chapter in February. Speaks provided several years of timber harvest data from the Forest, which revealed the forest is being managed on a very modest

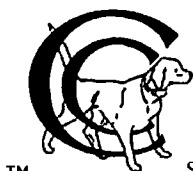
2000 year rotation. (This is about 1/20 the rate that one might expect for maintaining a healthy cross-blend of diverse habitat on such a large area.)

In light of its recent track record on timber harvesting, the Cherokee received a rather peculiar distinction from preservationist groups opposed to any kind of forest management. The Forest was named one of the "most imperiled" forests in the southern Appalachians because of the misperception that excessive timber harvest is occurring there. Clearly, this was an attempt to draw attention to a non-existent crisis. The real crisis in this situation is the loss of crucial young forest habitat for dozens of species due to lack of management.

The forest uses responsible logging practices as an essential part of achieving their forest management plan, as well as prescribed burns. "The Cherokee National Forest is obliged to gather public input for management proposals and they need to hear from hunters," said Don Mallicoat, RGS regional director, in his introductory address to the group.

"We are far behind our planned goals for young forest habitat," admitted Speaks as he addressed questions following his presentation. "This is not where we want to be... we encourage interested individuals, groups, agencies and organizations to become involved in national forest management projects." To join Cherokee National Forest's mailing list call 423.476.9700 or visit [www.fs.fed.us/tr8/cherokee](http://www.fs.fed.us/tr8/cherokee).

**WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!**



TM Since 1988

## Collar Clinic

Trusted by Dog Trainers Worldwide

The Best Selection in e-Collars and Electronic Dog Training Equipment

NEW and RECONDITIONED Dog Training Collars, Accessories, Repair Services, Tracking Systems, GPS, Bark Collars and Containment Systems

Free Color Catalog

800-430-2010

[www.collarclinic.com](http://www.collarclinic.com)

Trade-Ins Welcome

1517 Northern Star Drive Traverse City MI 49686

TODAY.

TOMORROW?



ELECTRONIC SHOOTERS PROTECTION

15290 Gadsden Ct  
Brighton • CO 80603  
[espamerica.com](http://espamerica.com)

## NEW DIGITAL MODELS

### New ESP Series 3 Digital

Our top-of-the-line model. The most advanced digital technology on the market produces the ultimate in smooth, natural CD-quality ambient sound. Multi-memory programming allows you to instantly select different modes for specific sound environments.

## NEW COLORS

Black  
Field Green  
Safety Orange

We guarantee the fit and function of all ESP products for one full year from date of purchase. Plus, we will refund your entire purchase price within the first 30 days if for any reason you are not completely satisfied. You'll find our service to be friendly, personal, and utterly professional at all times.

—Jack Homa, President

# The Other Silent Spring

## Disappearing birds of young forests

by Steven Backs

Wildlife Research Biologist, Indiana Fish and Wildlife Department of Natural Resources

Rachel Carson's classic book *Silent Spring* sounded the alarm over the long-term effects of the misuse of pesticides, especially those that persist for decades in the environment. Carson described how the misuse of pesticides, in particular DDT, unintentionally led to raptor eggshell thinning and negatively impacted populations of non-target songbirds either by direct poisoning or indirectly through their food sources. The premise of her historic book was if corrective actions were not taken soon, eventually the sounds of spring would disappear. Carson was dismissed by some as an alarmist and her credibility was attacked by the chemical industry. Over time the truth of her warnings became quite evident in field studies and led to a new awareness in the use of pesticides.

Although not as insidious as pesticides, a similar decline is occurring with populations of birds and other wildlife that utilize grasslands, prairies, and young dense forest habitats. The vitality of these habitats is measured not only by their existence, but also by the time since the last major vegetative disturbance. Historically, these habitats followed natural, catastrophic destructive events such as firestorms, tornadoes, and massive insect infestations. Young, regenerating forests lay scattered across the predominantly forested landscape where patches of old forests eventually died and had fallen in on themselves. The process of constant, destructive change

— — — — —

These three birds [the American woodcock, the ruffed grouse and the whip-poor-will] ... are "coal mine canaries" telling us by their absence that young forest habitats are quickly disappearing. Are we listening? Do we hear the emptiness? Will we listen?

— — — — —

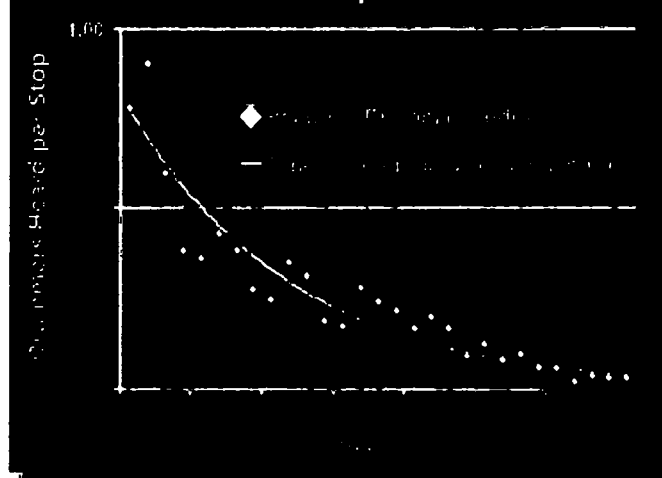
and death in the natural environment is the youthful renovation of habitats which result in a rich diversity of wildlife. Every species' existence is in a constant flow of temporarily disappearing and recolonizing in a diverse, ever-changing environment.

Forests environments are amazingly resilient. As long as there are connective forested corridors or pathways, wildlife can generally find those habitats that suit their specific life needs. Unfortunately, in many areas, man has chopped up the landscape to the point where these regenerative natural forces no longer function to the same extent as they did historically. Broken forested corridors are often not suitable pathways for wildlife re-

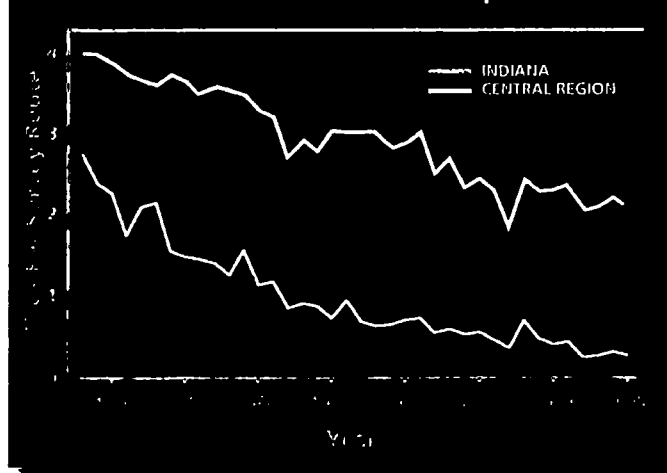
colonization and a fractured landscape can not be easily repaired without displacing human development.

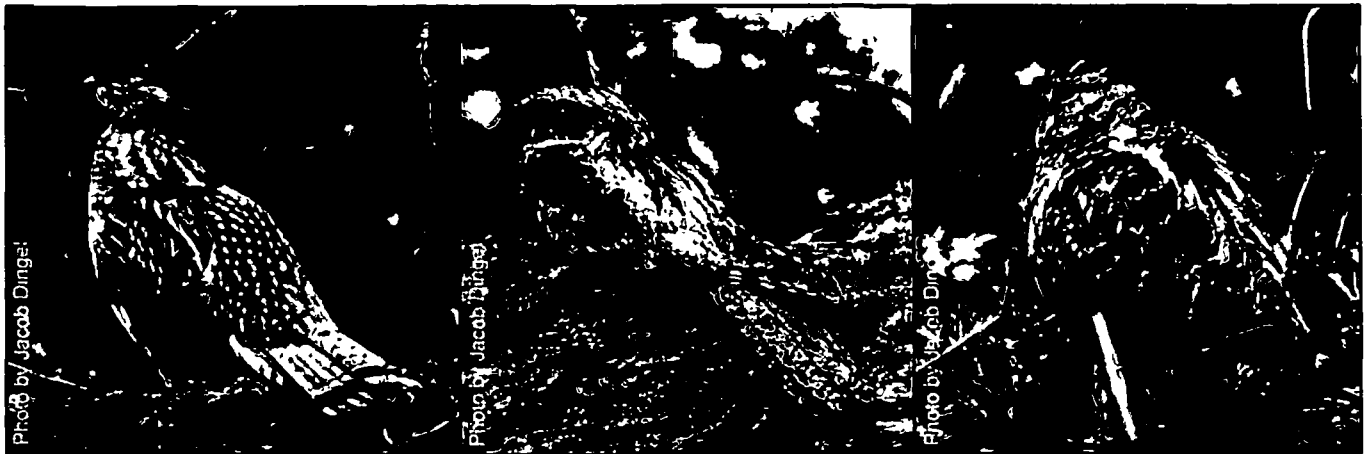
Beginning in the 1930's, Indiana was entering a period of reforestation following an initial burst of human settlement when many forests were cleared to build and heat homes, communities, and provide space for agricultural crops and grazing. While there were a few public agency programs for planting trees, most of today's forests returned in the same resilient way they had historically, regenerating on their own following natural destructive events. Along with the resurgence of young forests came the wildlife species whose life and vitality depends on the dense thickets and brushy fields.

Indiana Grouse Population Trend



American Woodcock in Steep Decline





Ruffed Grouse, *Bonasa umbellus*

Whip-poor-will, *Caprimulgus vociferus*.

American Woodcock, *Scolopax minor*

Some of the easily identifiable avian icons of young forest habitats are ruffed grouse, American woodcock, and whip-poor-wills. These birds are more often heard than seen, because their brown, mottle cryptic appearance helps camouflage them against predators, especially the females who are ground nesters. Naturalists have frequently described the distinctive courtship displays of these birds as harbingers of spring.

In late March through April, a male ruffed grouse proclaims his breeding territory by engaging in a "drumming display" upon a downed log, a tree root wad, or a small mound of earth in a protective woody thicket. The male grouse beats his wings rapidly creating a vacuum of air, producing a low hollow, drumming sound similar to the sound of an antique tractor motor starting or the distant pounding of rubber automobile tires on a rough country road. When you are relatively close to a drumming grouse, you can feel the sound as much as hear it, probably because the sound waves created by the air vacuum resonate off a person's head and chest. Besides proclaiming the male's territory, the drumming sound attracts female ruffed grouse that come to the male to breed. The best time to hear a grouse drumming is at dawn the first week of April, although this year-round resident may drum occasionally at other times of the year.

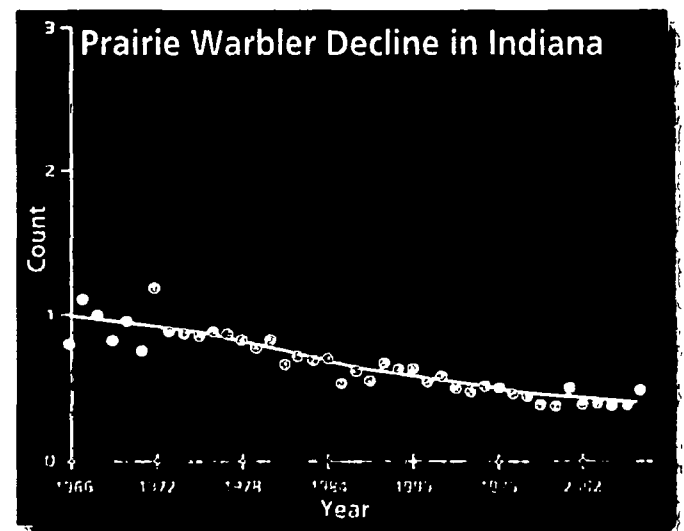
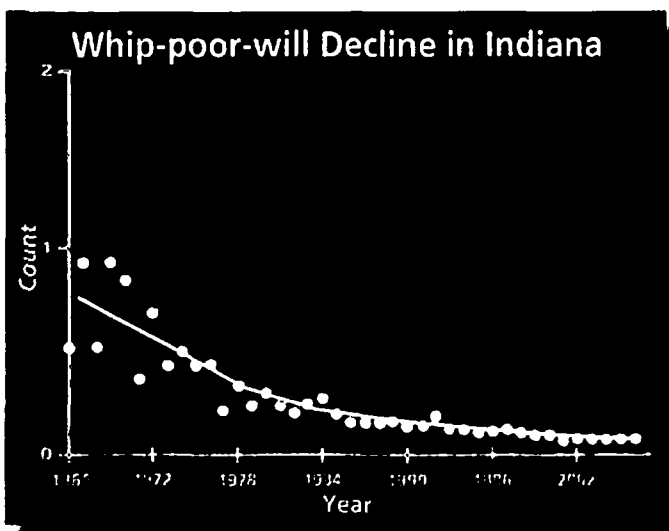
The courtship display of a male American woodcock is a combination of a nasal "peenting" sound made on the ground in a small forest opening or brushy field followed by a short 30-40 second circular aerial flight that ends with the flute-like twittering of air

passing through the male's wings as he quickly spirals down to the same spot to peent again. Like the ruffed grouse, the male woodcock conducts these repetitive displays not only to proclaim a breeding territory but to attract females for breeding. Migratory woodcock generally arrive in early March and begin their dawn and dusk courtship displays in late March through to early May.

Whip-poor-wills begin arriving in late March and the males will begin distinctive, repetitive "whip-poor-will" calls in mid April from dark to the early dawn hours. The calling of a whip-poor-will continues through the summer with the intensity influenced by moon phases and the breeding cycle. Depending on a person's perspective the calling, which can vary from a few dozen calls to several hundred repetitions, can either be entertaining or an incessant disturbance, especially if you are trying to hear something else or sleep.

Unfortunately, populations of ruffed grouse, woodcock, whip-poor-wills along with many other young forest birds like yellow-breasted chats, towhees and golden winged warblers have dramatically declined as the majority of our forests reach maturity. In the public's zeal to protect natural areas, there is a public misconception of not "seeing the forest for the trees." Vegetative disturbance is a means of revitalizing habitat diversity within a very dynamic forest ecosystem that needs young trees just as much as old trees.

THE OTHER SILENT SPRING *continued on next page*



Ruffed grouse populations in Indiana are now less than 3% of what they were just 25 years ago. Ruffed grouse have essentially disappeared from neighboring Illinois and have already done so in a number of areas in Indiana where they existed just two or three decades ago. Breeding ground surveys for woodcock conducted in Indiana are showing a similar decline. Not too many years ago, on our way to conduct grouse drumming surveys we frequently saw the reddish-pink eyes of whip-poor-wills sitting along the forest roads. The incessant calling of whip-poor-wills was an annoyance as we tried to count the number of drumming grouse. Now we no longer see the whip-poor-will eyes in the headlights and frequently hear neither grouse, nor whip-poor-wills, nor woodcock.

These three birds and distinctive calls are "coal mine canaries" telling us by their absence that young forest habitats are quickly disappearing. Are we listening? Do we hear the emptiness? Will we listen? It's happening not only here, but across the eastern United States.

In his book, "Restoring North America's Birds - Lessons from Landscape Ecology" (2000) noted ornithologist, Dr. Robert Askins, titled one chapter, "Another Quiet Decline: Birds of the Eastern Thickets" that recorded the plight of birds of young forests. Public perceptions are often a hard nut to crack, even when there are biological facts to the contrary. We tend to mix our emotions with our perceptions as to how the world should be, even if we are only seeing a snap-shot of history frozen on one beautiful sunrise or sunset. We tend to see forests as only large, mature trees while mentally discriminating against young, small trees that have an equal value in providing viable habitat for wildlife. We fail to recognize that some wildlife use old forests, some use young, and some use both.

We, as humans, have permanently modified the earth and there is no going back to a completely natural world without dismissing ourselves from this earth. It's now our incumbent responsibility as good land stewards to assure a diversity of habitats exists in what remains of our forests. We have to get past our biased perspectives and recognize that dramatic vegetative disturbances are temporary and are always an important revitalization of dynamic forest ecosystems.

While man-made disturbances like harvesting timber or prescribed fires may not be natural, nor pretty at the outset, they are manageable tools that can be directed to specific forest stands to replicate or mimic the effects of natural disturbances in creating and maintaining a diversity of habitats. Logging is not just about removing renewable, woody commodities from a forest; timber harvesting is a very useful tool in managing vegetation to assure a variety of habitat types for a diversity of wildlife.

To hear the drums of a grouse, the peents of a woodcock, and the calls of the whip-poor-wills are as refreshing as the cool crisp forest air we breathe. The increasing empty silence of our woodlands is a sign that our world is less healthy, and is a testament to our failure to act.

Our failure to maintain a diversity of habitat types in our forests is benign neglect for those wildlife species needing young forests to survive. A managed forest is still a forest, if left to be a forest after a natural or man-made disturbance. The key is to keep our forests as forests and not let them disappear under a growing sea of asphalt or be converted to some other non-forest land use. An active timber management program under the guidance of professionally trained natural resource managers perpetuates a renewable resource while maintaining a diversity of habitats for wildlife. ♣

## Want to put your grouse in clover? Give TRAIL MIX a Try...



The Ruffed Grouse Society is offering "Grouse Trail Mix" to address the nutritional needs of both young and adult grouse, as well as other wildlife.

Grouse Trail Mix is an AMPAC's "Wildlife Perfect" product and features four types of clover as well as birdsfoot trefoil. (Clovers are: Starfire red clover, Hunt Club brand white clover, Alsike clover, Crimson clover.)

AMPAC is packaging the seed in six-pound bags for one-half acre of ground. Planting instructions are printed on the bag. One bag is \$30 plus shipping from RGS Headquarters near Pittsburgh. (The per-pound price of the Grouse Trail Mix is well below the wildlife seed mixes currently available in stores.)

RGS Grouse Trail Mix is formulated to produce high protein content all season long. It's formulated to tolerate poorer soils. Plot Enhancer brand chicory will provide continuous feed in the summer when the legumes are either producing seed heads and are less palatable or during the droughtier times, thanks to its tap root system.

For more information on AMPAC Seed Company and planting tips, visit [www.ampacseed.com](http://www.ampacseed.com).

To place an order, visit the RGS website at [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org) or call 1 (888) 564-6747. (Ask about larger quantities.)



SEE NO EVIL.



HEAR NO EVIL.

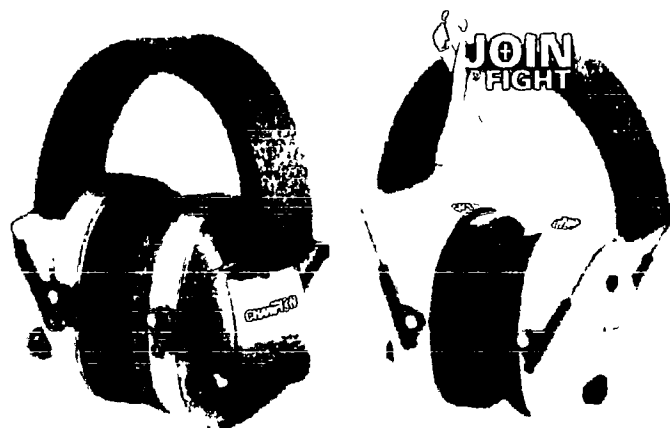
SHOOT LIKE  
A CHAMPION.

© 2009 Champion



JOIN THE FIGHT

SEE THE WORLD THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS. CHAMPION EYEGLASSES ARE AVAILABLE AT CHAMPIONTARGET.COM



JOIN THE FIGHT

CHAMPION HEADPHONES ARE AVAILABLE AT CHAMPIONTARGET.COM

**CHAMPION™**  
Eyes & Ears

SHOOT BETTER. HAVE FUN.

[www.championtarget.com](http://www.championtarget.com)

# Woodcock Hunter Survey: Weighing in on the Data

by Dan Dessecker

Sportsmen and women were America's first conservationists, and they remain among the most dedicated advocates today. Through the self-imposed Pittman/Robertson tax on sporting arms and ammunition, established in 1937, hunters provide hundreds of millions of dollars to support wildlife conservation and protect our hunting heritage every year. They are also the driving force behind local sportsmen's clubs and national wildlife conservation organizations like the Ruffed Grouse Society. Those who chensh their days afield each fall behind a dog, in a duck blind or deer stand have long been the steadfast proponents of wildlife management.

It isn't surprising, then, that in early 2008 a small group of passionate woodcock hunters - many of whom are RGS members - began to discuss the idea of establishing a mandatory federal permit or stamp for woodcock hunters to raise funds to support woodcock habitat conservation projects. Word soon spread and several bird hunting and sporting dog magazines pursued the story. Several of these periodicals invited readers to voice their opinions. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of readers enthusiastically supported the idea. RGS covered the story in our Spring 2008 issue, and likewise encouraged members to weigh in. Again, the majority of members who responded thought a woodcock stamp or permit was a fine idea.

Because RGS has been active in the political arena on behalf of ruffed grouse and woodcock for many years, we recognized that policy makers at the state and federal levels would want to know the opinions of not only woodcock enthusiasts, but typical woodcock hunters as well.

The only way to get an accurate picture of opinions held by all woodcock hunters was to conduct a random survey. During the 2008-2009 hunting season RGS mailed survey questionnaires to 2025 randomly selected woodcock hunters across the country. The survey was designed to gauge the sentiment regarding a permit or stamp, assess hunter effort and success, as well as indicate how woodcock hunters view the current state of their sport.

The survey questionnaire and results which accompany this article reflect the views held by the 546 hunters who returned a completed survey. The response rate was 27%, which is on the high-end of what can be expected from this type of survey. Although a larger response is always better, this number of survey participants can provide a reasonable estimate of opinions held by woodcock hunters across the country.

Results suggest that a typical woodcock hunter is male, probably in his 40's or older, and hunts woodcock primarily in conjunction with another game animal - often ruffed grouse. He hunts woodcock up to 10 days every year, and harvests 10 or fewer woodcock each season. Nineteen percent of all survey respondents hunt woodcock in more than one state.

Most woodcock hunters appear satisfied with the current season and bag limit structure. Seventy percent feel that the daily bag limit of three birds is about right, and 61% suggest that the length of the season is appropriate.

Although the highest percentage (38%) of respondents stated that the overall quality of woodcock hunting has remained about the same over the past 5 years, hunters who feel it has gotten worse (33%) far outnumber those who feel it has gotten better (17%). The majority of

## 2008 Woodcock Hunter Survey Results

(Please note percentages reflect an approximation of hunter responses)

1. When you harvest woodcock, are you hunting primarily for woodcock, or hunting primarily for another game animal (ruffed grouse, bobwhite quail, rabbits)?  
36 % ... Hunting primarily for woodcock.  
64 % ... Hunting primarily for another game animal.
2. Over the last five years, about how many days each year did you hunt woodcock?  
42 % ... 5 or less days  
32 % ... 6 - 10 days  
17 % ... 11 - 20 days  
9 % ... 21 - 45 days
3. Over the last five years, about how many woodcock did you harvest each year?  
56 % ... 5 or less woodcock  
24 % ... 6 - 10 woodcock  
14 % ... 11 - 20 woodcock  
5 % ... 21 - 50 woodcock  
0 % ... more than 50 woodcock
4. How many days per season are you woodcock hunting now compared to 5 years ago?  
52 % ... I am hunting about the same number of days as I was 5 years ago.  
13 % ... I am hunting more days than I was 5 years ago.  
26 % ... I am hunting fewer days than I was 5 years ago.  
9 % ... I wasn't hunting woodcock 5 years ago.
5. Which statement best describes how you feel about the current length of the woodcock season?  
61 % ... The season length is about right.  
16 % ... The season length is too short.  
2 % ... The season length is too long.  
21 % ... No opinion.
6. Which statement best describes how you feel about the current daily bag limit for woodcock?  
70 % ... The daily bag limit is about right.  
7 % ... The daily bag limit is too low.  
6 % ... The daily bag limit is too high.  
17 % ... No opinion.
7. What changes have you observed in the overall quality of your woodcock hunting over the last 5 years in the state or province you hunted most?  
38 % ... It has stayed about the same.  
17 % ... It has gotten better.  
33 % ... It has gotten worse.  
12 % ... No opinion.

WOODCOCK HUNTER SURVEY *continued on page 46*

SURVEY RESULTS *continued on page 46*



The Eyes of a Predator  
will be **Your Advantage.**

STEINER



10x42 Predator C5

12x42 Predator C5

STEINER

### New Steiner Predator® C5 10x42 and 12x42

Eyes sensitive to the color of game, even in low light, is the privilege of one of the world's most skilled hunters. After years of trying to match a predator's natural ability to hunt in darkness, we have developed lens coatings that maximize light transmission from game animals in the brownish range and hold back light from foliage and surroundings. The result is astounding contrast with highest light transmission and is featured on the new Steiner Predator C5.

*Nothing escapes these eyes.*

**STEINER**   
GERMANY  
[www.steiner-binoculars.com](http://www.steiner-binoculars.com)

woodcock hunters (52%) are hunting about the same number of days as they were 5 years ago. A significant percentage of hunters (26%) are hunting less than they were 5 years ago. Comparatively, a mere 13% of hunters have increased the number of days they hunt over the last 5 years. This decline in hunter effort could be due to a perceived decline in hunt quality or the aging of hunters, or a combination of both factors.

Of those woodcock hunters that expressed an opinion, 44% support the idea of establishing a permit to hunt woodcock - if the funds generated were used for woodcock habitat conservation - and 56% are opposed to the permit. Not surprisingly, hunters who could be considered more dedicated (those who hunt more days every year or hunt in more than one state or province) are more likely to support a permit than casual woodcock hunters. Forty-seven percent of survey respondents suggest that they would, or probably would, continue to hunt woodcock if required to purchase a permit in order to do so; 40% said they would not, or probably would not, continue to hunt woodcock.

This collaborative survey to gain insight into how woodcock hunters perceive the state of their sport is the first random, nationwide survey ever conducted. The data from this survey will be most helpful to natural resource professionals and policy makers as we move forward with woodcock conservation into the 21st century.

*The Ruffed Grouse Society sincerely appreciates the assistance of our many partners who made this woodcock hunter survey possible. These include the US Fish & Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey, Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies.*

8. Would you support or oppose the establishment of a permit that you would be required to purchase each year in order to hunt woodcock in the United States if funds generated from the permit were used for woodcock habitat conservation?

38% ... Support  
48% ... Oppose  
14% ... No opinion

9. Would you continue to hunt woodcock if you were required to purchase a \$15 permit each year in order to do so?

36% ... Yes  
11% ... Probably  
13% ... Unsure  
18% ... Probably not  
22% ... No

10. About how much do you spend on woodcock hunting each year?

79% ... \$250 or less  
18% ... \$251 - \$1,000  
3% ... \$1,001 - \$5,000  
0% ... Over \$5,000

11. Please indicate your gender.

98% ... Male  
2% ... Female

12. Please indicate your age.

6% ... 24 or under  
35% ... 25 - 44  
48% ... 45 - 64  
10% ... 65 or over



**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

# EMBROIDERED APPAREL




**Bob Allen  
Vented Mesh-Back  
Shooting Shirt**

**\$41.00**  
RGS-142K

**1.800.550.2693 • WWW.SHOPRGS.COM**

**JOIN**



**Collector's Association**

EST. 1993 | CHARLOTTE, VA

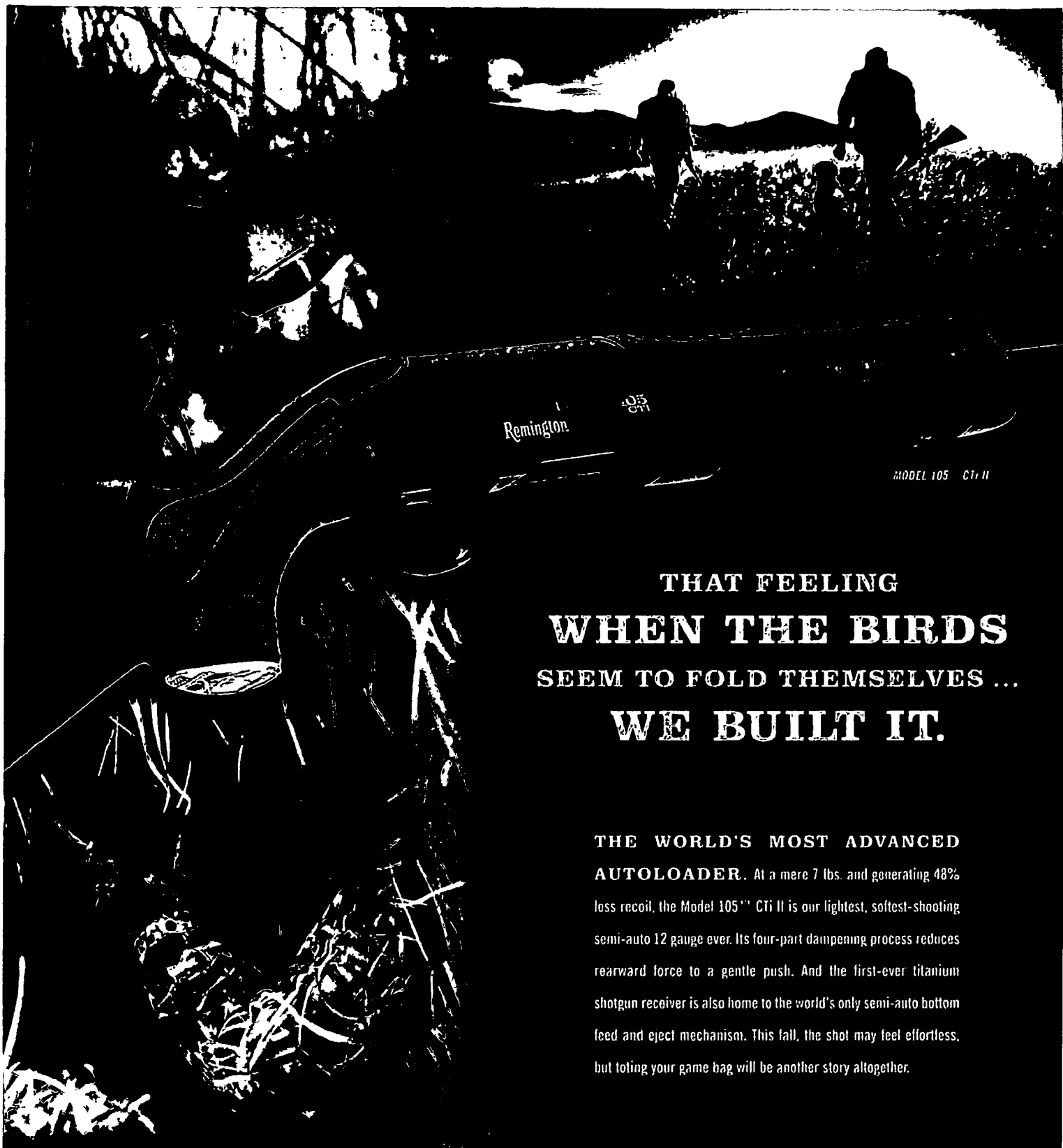
SINCE 1993, THE PARKER GUN COLLECTOR'S ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN THE GO-TO SOURCE OF HARD-TO-FIND INFORMATION ABOUT PARKER SHOTGUNS - AND A MEANINGFUL WAY FOR AVID PARKER GUN ENTHUSIASTS TO KEEP THE FLAME BURNING FOR A NEW GENERATION.

---

VISIT US ONLINE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR SERVICES, ACTIVITIES AND QUARTERLY MAGAZINE "PARKER PAGES".

[www.parkergun.org](http://www.parkergun.org)

Membership Application is available online or by email: [PGCA@members.bellsouth.com](mailto:PGCA@members.bellsouth.com)  
P.O. Box 115, Mayodan, NC 27027



Remington

MODEL 105 CTi II

THAT FEELING  
**WHEN THE BIRDS  
SEEM TO FOLD THEMSELVES ...  
WE BUILT IT.**

THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED  
**AUTOLOADER.** At a mere 7 lbs. and generating 48%  
less recoil, the Model 105™ CTi II is our lightest, softest-shooting  
semi-auto 12 gauge ever. Its four-part dampening process reduces  
rearward force to a gentle push. And the first-ever titanium  
shotgun receiver is also home to the world's only semi-auto bottom  
feed and eject mechanism. This fall, the shot may feel effortless,  
but toting your game bag will be another story altogether.

REMINGTON  
WINGMASTER HD™

The Drop-Dead Better™ heavy-density  
payload, and the ultimate ammo to feed  
our new autoloading masterpiece. They're  
packed with the roundest, truest-flying denser than lead pellets  
we've ever produced. And the results are truly devastating.



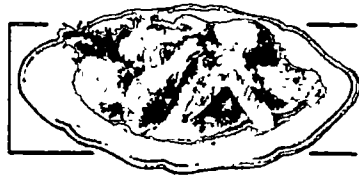
Remington

*Remington*

C O U N T R Y

www.REMINGTON.com/105CTi II

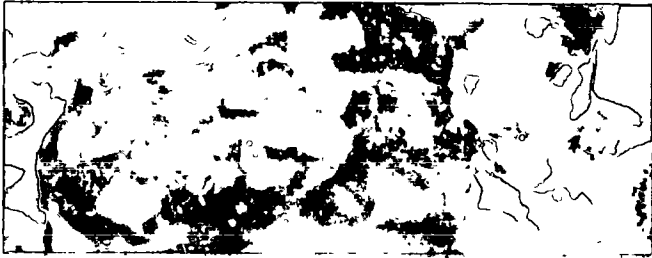
© 2004 Remington-Union, LLC. All rights reserved.



# WILD FLAVORS

## Palate Pleasing Pheasant

There's nothing like the summertime for dishes that have loads of flavor, thanks to freshly grown vegetables and seasoned game meat. We've asked two of the chefs we previously featured in this column to put together some tasty pheasant dishes that smack of summer. The results, as you can see from the mouth-watering pictures, were pretty fantastic! Try one of these recipes to really turn the heat on this summer. (Grouse, or even chicken, can be substituted in place of pheasant in both recipes.)



**Blackened Pheasant with Mango Pepper Salsa**

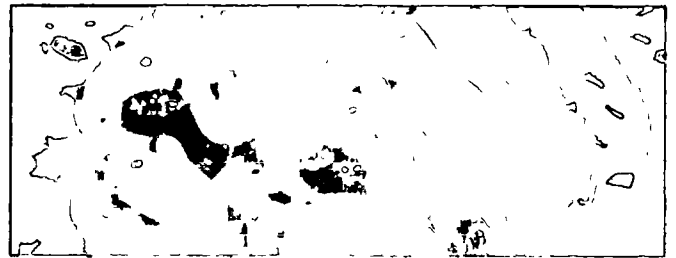
Serves 6

- 4-6 pheasant breast filets
- 1/2 c jalapeño peppers, diced
- 1/2 c red bell peppers, diced
- 1/2 c yellow or orange bell peppers, diced
- 1/2 c red onion, diced
- 1/2 c pineapple chunks, drained
- 1/2 c mango, diced
- 2 kiwi, peeled and sliced
- 1/2 c brandy
- 1/2 c vegetable oil
- 3 T Joe's Wildside Seasoning
- 1 T brown sugar

Take a large serving plate and cover the bottom with oil. Take 2-3 T of Joe's Wildside Seasoning and mix into the oil. (The thicker the mixture, the spicier your finished dish will be. If you want it a little less potent, add more oil or reduce the amount of Wild Side Seasoning.) Place each pheasant filet into the mixture and coat on both sides - be sure to cover the entire piece. Heat a cast iron skillet until smoking hot. Place the pheasant filets into the skillet and blacken for about 4 minutes on each side depending on the thickness. When the filets are done, remove from heat and set aside.

Note the following steps should be done alongside the blackening process, so that each is done at approximately the same time.

Put vegetable oil in a heated pan. When the oil is hot, add all peppers and red onion and stir. Cook for about 6-7 minutes or until peppers and onions are soft. Add a T brown sugar, 1/2 c pineapple and 1/2 c mango. When mixture is heated, add brandy and flame up the salsa - mixing constantly. Once alcohol burns off, cook for one more minute and remove from heat. Put 4 - 5 spoonfuls of salsa on a plate, place blackened pheasant on salsa and drizzle some of the salsa juice over the pheasant. Garnish with kiwi slices and serve.



**Penne Pasta Salad with Cherry Tomato & Shrimp**

Serves 6

- 1 lb penne pasta
- 1 lb shrimp, boiled and chilled
- 1/2 c calamata olives, pitted
- 2 c cherry tomatoes
- 1/4 c fresh broadleaf parsley, chopped
- 2 T fresh cilantro, chopped
- salt (to taste)
- black pepper (to taste)
- 1/2 c extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 c balsamic vinegar
- 1 t sugar

In a bowl, add 1/2 c extra virgin olive oil, 1/4 c balsamic vinegar and 1 t sugar. Mix vigorously and set aside. Boil penne pasta until cooked to your liking. Boil 1 lb of cleaned and deveined shrimp, chill.

Add parsley, calamata olives, cherry tomatoes and cilantro into a bowl and mix. Add penne pasta, shrimp and mix. Pour oil and vinegar mixture into the bowl. Add salt and pepper. Mix all of the ingredients to your taste.

The following text is a placeholder or bleed-through from another page, appearing as faint, illegible characters.





## Smokehouse Pheasant & Dried Cherry Fajitas with Lime Crème Fraiche

Serves 4

- 2-4 pheasant breast halves, skinned
- 1/3 c of WildCheff New England Smokehouse Brine
- 1 t WildCheff Tex/Mex blend
- 1 t WildCheff Smoky Paprika and Chile Rub
- 1 yellow bell pepper, sliced and seeded
- 1 orange bell pepper, sliced and seeded
- 3/4 c dried cherries (fresh cherries, pitted and halved, can be substituted)
- 1 large sweet onion, sliced
- flour or blue corn tortillas (depending on preference)
- 1 lime
- 1/2 t lime zest
- crème fraîche (sour cream can be substituted)
- olive oil

In a large bowl, combine Smokehouse Brining blend and 2 c of boiling water. Whisk to dissolve salt and infuse water with flavor. Add several ice cubes; stir to cool mixture. Rinse breasts under cold water and place into a large zip lock. Pour brine mixture over the breasts and add enough cold water to cover breasts completely. Place in refrigerator for 20-30 minutes. When brining is complete, remove breasts from liquid and pat dry. (Do not rinse!)

Place smoke-brined grouse breast onto a large plate and coat both sides of breasts with olive oil in preparation for outdoor grill. Preheat outdoor grill on high heat. (Grill grates should be clean and brushed with oil.) Place cast iron fajita pan on grill and close lid.

In a medium bowl, toss peppers, onions, cherries, Tex/Mex Blend, Smoky Paprika blend and olive oil to coat.

When grill is heated, reduce heat by 2/3rds and add pepper and onion mixture to hot fajita pan. Place breasts on other side of grill and close lid. After 3-4 minutes turn breast over with tongs and gently mix the pepper and onions on the fajita pan so they cook evenly. Close lid for another 2-3 minutes and then open lid and remove breast and place on plate to rest. Cook veggie mixture on grill for several additional minutes with lid closed, then remove from heat.

Slice breasts thinly across the grain and on a bias. Fan over top of vegetable mix in fajita pan. Squeeze fresh lime juice over top. Serve with warm tortillas and crème fraîche. (Infuse crème fraîche with some fresh lime juice and a small amount of lime zest prior to serving.) Garnish with sliced avacados.



## Blueberry & Andouille Salad

Serves 4

- 3/4 c fresh blueberries
- 1/2 c andouille sausage, diced
- 1/3 c sweet corn kernels, stripped from cob (frozen corn can be substituted)
- 1/3 c black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 poblano pepper, deveined, seeded and diced
- 2 c baby spinach
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1/2 t cinnamon
- 1 T fresh cilantro, roughly chopped
- 1/4 t WildCheff jalapeño flakes
- juice of 1/2 lime
- 1 T olive oil
- blue corn chips

Heat a large sauté pan, lightly coated with olive oil, over medium heat. Add andouille, corn kernels, shallots, black beans, poblano and half of the blueberries. Season lightly with salt, pepper, and cinnamon. Sauté until poblanos are cooked beyond raw stage. Remove from stovetop - squeeze fresh lime juice over pan and let cool to room temperature.

In a large mixing bowl combine all ingredients and toss gently. Serve over baby spinach with blue corn chips as a side dish with wild game fajitas.

### WildCheff Wine Recommendation:

Chardonnay, Riesling, Merlot or Red Zinfandel

Over the past 25 years Denny Corriveau, of the WildCheff, has honed his skills as an avid hunter, private game chef, and motivational speaker. Corriveau established the WildCheff Wild Game Cooking Academy Clinics in 1995 and continues to teach eager students how to successfully prepare and cook their game.

He has also developed an extensive product line of over 25 gourmet quality spice and sausage blends, as well as flavored brines. To learn more visit his website at [www.wildcheff.com](http://www.wildcheff.com)



▼ The first of the season, the birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow. The birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow. The birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow.

Steve and I are in the woods. It's a beautiful day. The birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow. The birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow.

Steve and I are in the woods. It's a beautiful day. The birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow. The birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow.

Steve and I are in the woods. It's a beautiful day. The birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow. The birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow.

Steve and I are in the woods. It's a beautiful day. The birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow. The birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow.

Steve and I are in the woods. It's a beautiful day. The birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow. The birds are still in the trees. The ground is covered with a thick layer of snow.



Thousands of acres of Wisconsin's northern forests are managed for ruffed grouse, and trails are seeded with clover to attract birds.

20 miles south of town at Musky Jack's on the southern shore of Pike Lake. Over a hunter-sized breakfast of bacon and eggs, we watch the October aspens turn gold in the rising sun and we wonder out loud about all the hunters in the area. The prospect of so many hunters is worrisome, especially if bird numbers are still down. We are here at the right time of the year, but are there too many hunters and too few birds?

We meet Jim Green, our guide, in Park Falls at 8 am and follow him for a few miles out of town where he pulls into a public parking area. From the edge of town to where we park has been grouse cover all the way, and yet we haven't seen a single hunter or parked vehicle anywhere. As it would turn out, we won't see another hunter or parked vehicle all day. We stand among almost a million acres of public land that has absorbed hundreds of other hunters. The cover around us of mixed age aspen interspersed with balsam fir is picture perfect for ruffed grouse, and we find ourselves alone in this vast place.

As we leave the trucks, I cast my setter Abby to her task. My reservations about our guide are quickly put to rest as I gauge in a few moments that Jim and his gun are old friends, and he seems especially wise in the ways of guns, dogs and hunters. Later this day I would find out why, and realize once again that those who appreciate life most are those who have been in dreaded places where it can be quickly taken away.

Jim decides to take us first to the edge of a lake in a wet area he says has been a predictable covert for years. It isn't long before a bird flashes wild near us and lands not far away. The cover is thick here with young aspen still holding their leaves, making it difficult to get a shot. As we head to the area where the bird landed we hear it flush near him, followed quickly by the *whumpf* of his 20-gauge. Jim emerges from a nearby aspen stand with the bird in hand, our first for the day.

Jim stuffs the bird in his game bag, pulls out his compass and takes a bearing. We are heading for a nearby trail that winds for



Steve makes a good shot and bags his first bird of the year.

miles through good cover. He tells us the trail, as part of the grouse management program, has been seeded with clover, a delicacy that attracts ruffs, and the trail also offers us more open lanes for shooting in the dense aspen cover.

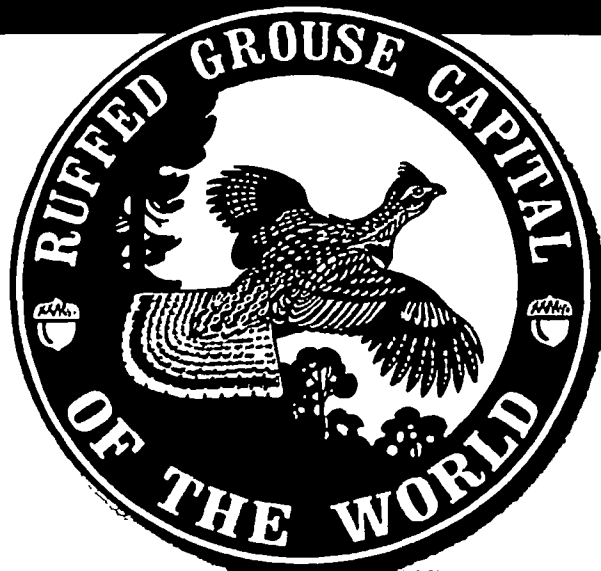
Abby knows this kind of hunting well and begins to weave back and forth across the trail ahead. She seems to know the grouse will be on the roads or on the edges, and in a few minutes we see her lock on point at the edge of the road, her eyes staring first at the base of a large balsam, then looking back at me as I approach.

Her tail is high, the bird is close. Only her eyes dart back and forth as I near, the rest of her stands frozen like a white statue placed in an autumn scene. I step ahead of her and an invisible bird lifts off almost at my feet with that startling, thunderous flush that makes the ruffed grouse famous among upland birds, but the ruff quickly disappears on the other side of the balsam and offers no shot. "Smart bird," I tell Abby, and we continue down the road.

In a few moments Abby locks up in the middle of the road, her stance telling us again the bird is close. I stay put, and this time Steve walks up behind her and steps into the edge. Another grouse explodes from the underbrush, sending leaves swirling in all directions like a covey of quail. The bird shoots for open sky, but Steve's shot sends it crashing back onto the trail and with a smile you can see 30 yards away he bags his first bird of the year.

Jim says he's seen a lot of pointing dogs through the years and is impressed with the way Abby is handling these birds. It's hard to know if that comment was genuine, or made in kindness to boost by spirits, but I soak it up just the same. Abby is working well. I just haven't had a shot.

Abby is white and stands out well among the golds and browns of autumn in the northern forest. One of the pleasures of hunting ruffs is watching her run with resolute purpose back and forth, back and forth, her nose high as she seeks the wind for a scent that can



**Park Falls, WI**

paralyze her with intense anticipation. She finds it soon and stands frozen 10 yards in front of me, just off the trail, only the longest hairs of her tail moving in the slight breeze.

I don't get quite to her when the bird rises and banks to the left against a tree line ahead, revealing the banded pattern of its tail. There is nothing in my way this time so I shoot and get lucky. The bird falls to lie invisible on the leaf cluttered ground. As Abby runs to make the retrieve I step back on the trail enjoying the moment, waiting for her return.

I know we shouldn't put human emotions in our dogs, but I'm pretty sure Abby simply enjoys retrieving. As she trots down the road towards me with the bird in her mouth, I think I see contentment in that canine face, and I

let her carry the bird around for a while. It seems a small reward for being so stalwart a friend.

After a couple more hours and a few more miles of walking we have pointed and flushed more than a dozen birds. We have 3 birds in the bag, shot at quite a few more, and it's time for a break. The day is warming and we find some shade to rest our legs not yet in shape for the long miles of grouse hunting.

We set our guns down on some boulders and logs and lay the birds along side to admire them for a moment. You can't help but be impressed with the beauty of a ruffed grouse - the intricate pattern of color and iridescent feathers are a wonder of nature.

Though it's not yet noon, we have earned a hunger worthy of an early lunch and so we head back to the trucks. We find and flush at least four more birds on the way and get one more. As we near the trucks Steve and I look at each other and smile, remembering our doubting conversation at breakfast about few birds and many hunters.

We give Abby a long cold drink at the trucks, down a cold soda ourselves, and drive the short distance to town for lunch. Ravenous

*CAPITAL OF THE WORLD continued on next page*



Abby is a natural for hunting trails and weaves back and forth in front of us, nose high in search of bird scent



Abby gets a well deserved drink after a long morning hunt in the northern forests of Wisconsin.

# The most excitement you can have without a shotgun!



With a history dating from the 1930's, Bowen Lodge has been one of the premier fishing resorts in Minnesota for a very long time. Whether for families or fishermen - our unique location on Winnie and Cutfoot Sioux Lakes - in prime hunting country, Bowen's is the place to visit.



Deer River, MN [www.bowenlodge.com](http://www.bowenlodge.com) 1-800-331-8925

from our miles on the trail, we eat heartily and fast, a process not well suited for conversation. But curious about our guide - who guides hunters from across America and is so obviously skilled in the outdoors - we start to relax over coffee and begin to ask Jim about himself and how he came to be a north woods guide.

He tells us he grew up in Vermont and as a boy of 12 began to hunt the grouse coverts of abandoned orchards and stone fences made famous in classic American hunting literature. This is the land where grouse are called pa'tridges and where long-haired, square-jawed setters run the mountain ridges in their quest.

When old enough, Jim joined the Navy and became friends with another recruit from Wisconsin. When Jim's new friend invited him to northern Wisconsin for a Thanksgiving holiday, he discovered an abundance of public land and wild game not found in the Northeast. He had found a hunter's paradise here and knew he wanted to live here some day.

Then suddenly Jim found himself in the middle of the Gulf War, on a Navy CH-46 helicopter, heavily armed with 15 other guys, and rappelling down onto unfriendly decks of Iraqi freighters in the Persian Gulf. In 30 seconds they were all on deck, and in a few seconds more would take over the ship. After that the north woods of Wisconsin seemed all the more appealing, he explains matter-of-factly. When a parachuting accident ended his Navy career, he moved here and never left.

Not knowing what to say after an explanation like that, we don't say anything at all and just sit transfixed and impressed, staring straight ahead and sipping our coffee as Jim tells us more. Now he says one of the things he enjoys most is guiding for grouse in the fall. With so many lakes and so much land available he also guides fall muskie fishermen as well as bow, muzzleloader and rifle hunters looking for big whitetail. In the spring he'll guide for bear.

The source of Jim's competence and his contentment in the grouse woods was obvious to us now. As we leave and say thanks for a memorable day we can't help but admire the guy. It's good to know both he and the birds will be there next time we hunt the Ruffed Grouse Capital of the World. 🐾

# Shoot with the Best

10 gauge 2 7/8" & 12 gauge 2"  
Shells Available!



PAPER HULLS AVAILABLE  
12, 16 AND 20 GAUGE

RST manufactures PREMIUM 2 7/8" and BEST GRADE 2" - 2 1/2" shotgun shells. Whether enjoying the soft recoil for clay targets or the superior patterning on upland game, RST shotshells will give you **THE BEST PERFORMANCE MONEY CAN BUY.**

570-553-1651 • [WWW.RSTSHELLS.COM](http://WWW.RSTSHELLS.COM)

## IF YOU GO

You can reach Jim Green through his guide service in Park Falls, Wisconsin at 715.661.1683, email [northwoodsgun@gmail.com](mailto:northwoodsgun@gmail.com). He's a busy guy, so if you're looking for a guide, don't wait too long. Remember, motels book up fast for prime time grouse hunting. For online information on lodging and other activities go to [www.parkfalls.com](http://www.parkfalls.com)



# Ruffed Grouse Society

## Doubles Club

We are announcing a new program for 2009 - the Ruffed Grouse Society

### Doubles Club

If you have shot a double on grouse or woodcock and would like to become a member of this unique club, please complete the application form below

To qualify you must be a current RGS member.

You will receive an exclusive honorary pin and an official certificate commemorating your achievement.



Photo by Tim Flanigan

#### What is a double?

RGS defines a double as the occurrence of two grouse, two woodcock, or a grouse and woodcock (a mixed double) that are in flight at the same time, and are successfully harvested by one hunter.

*Please note the birds must be in flight at the same time when harvested to qualify as a true double*

To apply for membership in the Doubles Club, please complete the bottom portion of this sheet and submit to:

**Membership Services  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
451 McCormick Road  
Coraopolis, PA 15108**

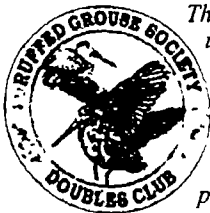
You may also apply by sending an e-mail to:  
[membership@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:membership@ruffedgrousesociety.org)

Post a picture of your double online at [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

*Cut on dotted line*

## Ruffed Grouse Society

### Doubles Club Application



The exclusive RGS doubles pin is 1 1/8" in diameter and will be finished in an antique gold. Each pin illustrates your double type - either two grouse, two woodcock or one of each (Note: Actual pin not pictured)

#### Indicate Double Type *(please check one)*

- Grouse double  
 Woodcock double  
 Mixed double

Name (last, first): \_\_\_\_\_  
Member number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email (if available): \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please check appropriate box on left to receive your pin)*  
Type of double: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of double: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location of double (city): \_\_\_\_\_ (state): \_\_\_\_\_  
Dog breed (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_  
Witness (if present): \_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Is witness an RGS member? (circle one) YES NO

I attest that on the date listed above, I harvested a double. I wish to apply for entry into the Ruffed Grouse Society Doubles Club

Sign here: X \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Ruffed Grouse Society, 451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108



# HITS OR MISSES

Investments  
by Art Wheaton

Some of the best grouse and woodcock covers are private. Those special little corners of a dairy farm, grown up orchard, damp-soiled glen, "up back" of someone's domicile, and the back of a hay field can be hidden treasures. These covers seldom get hunted with any degree of frequency. Most folks may be too lazy to investigate and complete the necessary preseason scouting. They simply don't want to walk very far and are most likely to look for the parking spot where the dogs can jump out and immediately enter a cover. I see it happen time and time again.

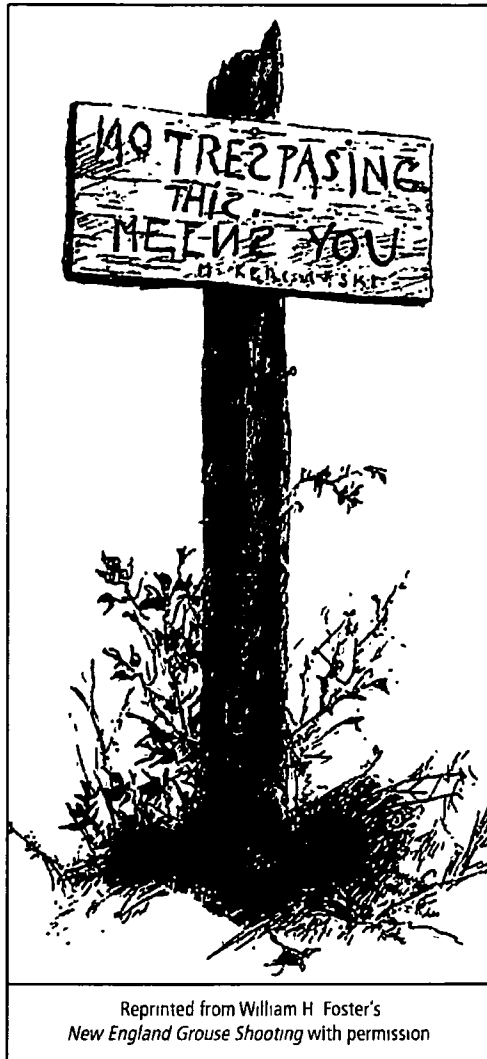
But the rare individual who is willing to locate private ground, invest in a relationship by talking to the landowner in the off season, and spend time doing some homework is usually very successful, especially when the influx of hunters may invade a few of your pet covers.

Last season I was looking for new territory to hunt, and I spotted a possible cover at the end of a series of fields. It was hard to make out whether the land directly behind the fields was good or not. I was driving my Chevy suburban slowly along and spotted a fellow driving a John Deere lawn tractor toward us. He was out in the middle of the field on a winding vehicle track that meandered down to a crossing between two rock walls and into the next field. I decided to stop and visit with the gentleman, so I left my sunglasses on the dash and stepped outside to await him.

He stopped the tractor and turned it off. I removed my cap, introduced myself, and made sure to tell him where I lived. I added a few comments about my family, whom he would have knowledge of, I suspected. We entered into an easy discussion of his deer stands placed around those fields, the apple crop, and then on to the birds he may have seen while working on his stands. Finally we got around to my particular interest in birds, and that I enjoyed hunting them with my pointing dogs. Before it was over he invited me and my fellow hunters to hunt some of his back covers, he even pointed out a few where he had seen a number of birds.

I promised we would walk to the covers so as not to damage his fields, but he urged me to drive down the winding track with my vehicle instead. In due time we parted and went on to find some woodcock and grouse where he suggested.

It was a lesson in patience - taking time to meet a landowner provides some insight into you and your intentions. This type of interaction can pay off! After the season I dropped off some moose sausage to him, and I am looking forward to hunting his land again next fall, now that I know how much it has to offer! That was a good investment, you might say.



Reprinted from William H. Foster's  
*New England Grouse Shooting* with permission

And then there is the "Cowboy." Well - that's what his mailbox says, anyway. I drove down the lane to visit. The house was out of site of the main road, next to an unfinished small plane landing strip that now - more appropriately - is a junk yard of tired old machinery.

I drove up to house, got out and knocked on the door. The lady told me Cowboy was next door, in the garage. I went over and knocked again. He was banging away on something inside the garage. As we began our discussion, he knew immediately by my brush pants and boots what I was doing. He was surprised by my appearance, and said that no one ever asks to hunt on his land. I answered, "Well, I live around here and want to be sure folks don't mind if I hunt their land." "No problem," he responded, and we moved on to discuss the moose season, and whether he had seen any deer.

Thus began our introduction. I always check with Cowboy every season and recently met his boy. One season I dropped off a little pocket knife in his mailbox with a note that it was for "little cowboy." I have always been welcome here and I make sure to respect the privilege. That little knife cemented our relationship - just another small investment. A hunting spot off the beaten track is worth cultivating!

Another time I approached a homestead, and after pulling in to the driveway, a gentleman came out with his John Deere cap. I explained we were bird hunters with dogs and asked if he minded if we hunted on some of his land. He told me his relatives hunted deer on the land and he did

not want to disturb the deer. I told him I understood and that's why we always check with the landowners. Who knows if that situation will change in the future? I thanked him and wished him well in the coming season. As we were leaving, he threw out that we might want to try just up the road on the left.

A balanced portfolio is a good strategy - both in life and hunting. Some investments pay off big, others are slow growing, and some are not successful. Folks like to be respected and know who is shooting close by. Being genuine, engaging, and without a single focus of simply gaining permission can make a real difference.

Simply put: asking permission, engaging folks in a down to earth way, removing your cap and sunglasses, shutting the motor off in the vehicle, and being prepared to chat a bit can make all the difference. When you do these things, you are sending signals that you respect the person, his property and are a safe and considerate hunter. This investment strategy, though simple, will get long term results time and time again. 🍀

# *The Best There Is, just less of it.*

Browning Feather models feature a lightweight, high-strength alloy receiver with an integrated steel breech face that gives you all the durability expected from a Browning, without the extra weight. There is nothing finer than spending your days roaming the woods with good dogs and great friends. Days like these are even better when you are carrying an exquisite Browning Feather over and under.

*Citori 625 Feather*  
(available in  
12, 20, 28 and .410)

*Cynergy Feather*  
(available in  
12, 20, 28 and .410)



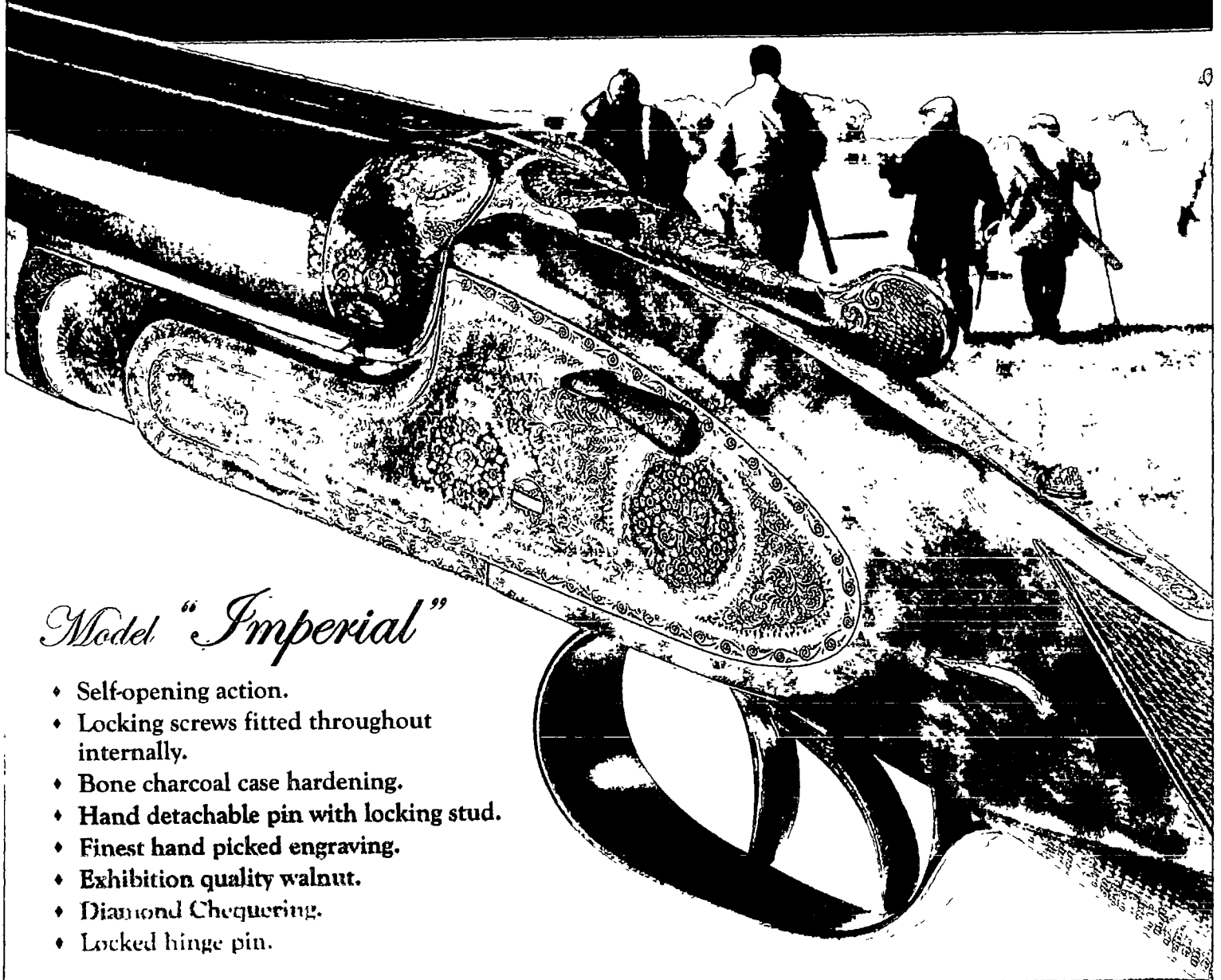
**BROWNING**

The Best There Is

[browning.com](http://browning.com)



# Perfection Redefined...



## Model "Imperial"

- ♦ Self-opening action.
- ♦ Locking screws fitted throughout internally.
- ♦ Bone charcoal case hardening.
- ♦ Hand detachable pin with locking stud.
- ♦ Finest hand picked engraving.
- ♦ Exhibition quality walnut.
- ♦ Diamond Chequering.
- ♦ Locked hinge pin.

AYA's Imperial shotgun embodies the very highest level of quality you have come to expect from AYA. The Imperial boasts exquisite hand picked engraving, bone charcoal case hardening, and exhibition quality walnut, making it one of the most elegant shotguns available today. AYA has also taken great care to ensure the Imperial functions as beautifully as it looks. Crisper trigger pulls, smoother opening, and lively handling are to be expected from this masterpiece. The Imperial has not been made to a price, but to a level of fit, finish, and function unmatched in Spanish gunmaking.

AYA USA • P.O. Box 647 • Old Saybrook, CT 06475 • 860.388.3989  
[www.aya-fineguns.com](http://www.aya-fineguns.com) • [aya-usa@aya-fineguns.com](mailto:aya-usa@aya-fineguns.com)

New England Custom Gun Service, Ltd. • Plainfield, NH • 603.469.3450  
[www.newenglandcustomgun.com](http://www.newenglandcustomgun.com) • [bestguns@comcast.net](mailto:bestguns@comcast.net)



# CLASSIFIED

**HAND ENGRAVED DOG PORTRAITS** What better way to pay tribute to your beloved hunting partner than with a Hand Engraved Portrait on your favorite shotgun? [www.en-gravedsportingguns.com](http://www.en-gravedsportingguns.com), E-mail: [bellabaddog@myfairpoint.net](mailto:bellabaddog@myfairpoint.net), Call: (207) 963.2525

**MASTER CANINE ARTIST** ORIGINAL ART-WORK AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE CONTACT BRUCE PRENTICE (215) 674-2488 HATBORO, PA E-MAIL: [birdogbruce@yahoo.com](mailto:birdogbruce@yahoo.com) OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.birdogbruce.com](http://www.birdogbruce.com)

**RGS/STAMPS:** All nine mint with die-cut board ready for framing Fits std 11 X 14 frame \$195 00/full set w/ stamp savers **TO ORDER: 1 (888) 361-4344 or [jfreimuth2@comcast.net](mailto:jfreimuth2@comcast.net)**

## BOOKS/TAPES/ETC.

**Grouse Dogs: A Professional Trainer's Journal and Training Your Pointing Dog For Hunting and Home** by Richard D. Weaver, \$19.95 each [www.grousedogs.com](http://www.grousedogs.com) or call (717) 385-5417.

## DOGS

**BAYVIEW SETTERS:** linebred 50 years, resulting in natural, consistent foot-hunting grouse & woodcock dogs These are dogs with excellent dispositions, style and noses They make great companions, as described in Joe Augustine's book, *Feathered Tales*. **CALL: (845) 223-5546 EVENINGS. E-MAIL: [bayview56@aol.com](mailto:bayview56@aol.com).**

**BONASA KENNEL:** Dual Type English Setters at Stud Excellent Bloodlines. Outstanding Grouse and Woodcock Dogs **JOHN BERNARDI, SARANAC, NY. (518) 534-4191.**

**Dark Hollow English Setters** – Summer litter of our natural, companion grouse dogs, Dark Hollow Shade X Dark Hollow Corey Serious inquiries at (717) 385-5417, (717) 369-3595 or [www.grousedogs.com](http://www.grousedogs.com).

**English Setter Pups:** litter due mid April '09 Home mid June '09 Hunting fall '09 Wicksall bloodline **Call: (810) 687.2563, [www.pageweb.com/dogwood](http://www.pageweb.com/dogwood)**

**WHISPERING PINES SPRINGERS** - WE HAVE 18 YEARS EXPERIENCE RAISING AND TRAINING FIELD BED ENGLISH SPRINGERS OUR PUPPIES ARE OUT OF PROVEN FIELD TRIAL DOGS AS WELL AS GUN DOGS, OUR PUPPIES ALL COME WITH A 3 YEAR GUARANTEE, WE ONLY SELL QUALITY DOGS PUPPIES AND TRAINED DOGS AVAILABLE NOW CONTACT LARRY HENNESSEY AT 715 546 2418 WEB SITE [www.whisperingpinespringers.com](http://www.whisperingpinespringers.com)

## FOR SALE

[www.MunitionsToGo.com](http://www.MunitionsToGo.com) BEAT THE HIGH COST OF AMMO BY BUYING IN BULK. [www.MunitionsToGo.com](http://www.MunitionsToGo.com)

**"GROUSE WON'T ALWAYS FEED ON ASPEN": Gordon Gullion.** Add winter feed diversity to your hunting areas Contact COLD STREAM FARM, 2030D FREE SOIL ROAD, FREE SOIL, MI 49411 (231) 464-5400.

## HUNTS

**NORTH DAKOTA/WILD PHEASANTS** – Also Huns & Sharptails CHEAP \$40 per night Public PLOTS land maps & "Private Land-Access Bulletin Board" available **1 (866) ROOSTER or [tailfeatherinn@aol.com](mailto:tailfeatherinn@aol.com)/[www.tailfeatherinn.com](http://www.tailfeatherinn.com).**

**FABULOUS UPLAND EXPERIENCE:** Unlimited Highbush Cranberry patches loaded with ruffies and sharptail Minimum of 10-20 flushes an hour in light cover and easy walking. Three days \$850 First-class meals and lodgings **CONTACT PETER MARTIN AT (705) 335-3163 or E-MAIL [pwmartin@ontera.net](mailto:pwmartin@ontera.net).**

**HUNT NORTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE** for grouse and woodcock this fall. The vast timberlands of NH's Great Northern Woods is the perfect habitat for the elusive ruffed grouse We offer comfortable cabin accommodations, true northern hospitality and professional guide service for bird hunting and fly fishing. Orvis-endorsed fly-fishing outfitter **LOPSTICK LODGE & CABINS, FIRST CONNECTICUT LAKE, PITTSBURG, NH 03592. (800) 538-6659; [www.lopstick.com](http://www.lopstick.com).**

**HUNT PALMQUIST FARM IN NORTHERN WISCONSIN** Trek through 800 private acres of forest & 10,000 additional acres of public forest & grouse trails After bagging the birds, leave the woods for a comfortable cabin Palmquist Farm strives to make your hunt successful & enjoyable. We prepare lunches for the field & home cooked meals are scheduled to accommodate your hunt schedule We welcome dogs & provide professional guides Call for packages and rates <http://www.palmquistfarm.com/activities/hunting/>; (800) 519-2558

**NORTHERN MAINE GROUSE & WOODCOCK HUNTING:** Classic cover on 100,000s of acres of commercial timberland and 1,000s of miles of logging roads Sweeping river valleys and abandoned farms offer good woodcock cover. You will experience some of the most consistent grouse hunting in the country. Professional guiding, quality pointing dogs, lodging, meals & transportation Packages by day, 1/2 week or full week **ALLAGASH GUIDE SERVICE, (207) 398-3418, [www.allagashguideservice.com](http://www.allagashguideservice.com)**

**UPLAND HUNTING ADVENTURES** in beautiful Adirondack Mountains and Lake Champlain Valley Hunt successional growth covers containing aspen, oak, hickory and beech along with apple, cherry, dogwood, sundry berries and plenty of young conifers for security Covers right out of Spiller's *Grouse Feathers* and Harnden Foster's *New England Grouse Shooting*. Scenery reminiscent of a Schaldach print or a Lynn Bogue Hunt sketch It all comes together with great habitat and beautiful scenery in the Lake Champlain Valley **ADVENTURE GUIDE SERVICE (WILLSBORO, NY), (518) 963-4286, [www.adventureguideservice.com](http://www.adventureguideservice.com).**

## REAL ESTATE

If you're PASSIONATE about hunting, this Northwoods lodge with garage on 300+ acres has abundant wildlife! Diverse tract offers creek, food plots, seeded trail system, and tree stands w/shooting lanes Priced well at \$525,000 Call Jody at RE/MAX New Horizons Realty, 715.820.1923 or view [www.newhorizonsrealtywi.com](http://www.newhorizonsrealtywi.com)

**PHEASANT HUNTING LODGE** SW North Dakota 6000+ sq. ft Fully furnished \$595K (928) 606-0604

# ADVERTISING

## TO PLACE YOUR CLASSIFIED AD

- \$.50 a word for single insertions.
- \$.45 a word for multiple insertions.
- Allow 34 characters per line including punctuation marks and spaces
- Allow 24 characters for bold type.
- 2009 Closing Dates - January 15, April 1, June 15, and September 15, 2009.
- 3 line minimum
- **Send payment & ad copy to:**  
Editor/Ruffed Grouse Society, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044 • [editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org)

### MAINE GROUSE & WOODCOCK

*Specializing in Grouse.  
(Your Dogs or Ours!)*

Call or Write for Free Information

### FOGGY MOUNTAIN

Guide Service  
Wayne A. Bosowicz, Master Guide  
(207) 564-3404

131 Ladd Road  
Sebec, Maine 04481

[www.maine grouse.com](http://www.maine grouse.com)



### HUNT NORTHERN ONTARIO'S BEST-KEPT SECRET - RUFFED GROUSE

Millions of acres of prime habitat with huge grouse populations. Easily bag your daily limit. Enjoy your stay in beautiful lakeside cabins in the grandeur of the northern bush country with an ultimate ruffed grouse hunting experience. Six-day hunt package \$595.

Write or call

### CALL OF THE NORTH

Box 697 Hwy 11 Geraldton, Ontario P0T 1M0  
Photos & information at [www.callofthenorth.com](http://www.callofthenorth.com)  
(807) 854-1371 Toll Free (800) 801-4080



### GROUSE & WOODCOCK SHOOTING

BATTENKILL LODGE BATTENKILL LODGE  
Shushan, New York



*in the beautiful Battenkill Valley*

3 Hours from New York City.

Over 1,000 Acres Managed for Grouse with 15 Miles of Trails and Edge Cover.

Private Suites.

Trips can be Combined with Trout Fishing (no extra charge).

Close to 4,000+ Acres of State Lands.

Late Season - February Grouse Shooting.

**CAPT. BOB STORC**  
22 VILLAGE SQUARE  
GLEN COVE, NEW YORK 11542  
1 (516) 671-7690

[www.battenkilllodge.com](http://www.battenkilllodge.com)

## RGS Travel Now Open

RGS members and others may now book their travel needs through RGS. As a means of expanding and diversifying RGS' income stream, the Society is now in the travel business with its own websites, [www.RGSTravel.org](http://www.RGSTravel.org) or [www.RGSTravel.com](http://www.RGSTravel.com).

Both will take you to the same website that will appear in your browser address window as: <http://www.ytbtravel.com/ruffedgrousesociety>.

The site is maintained by YTB Travel network and powered by World Choice, a segment of [Travelocity.com](http://Travelocity.com).

[www.RGSTravel.org](http://www.RGSTravel.org)

or

[www.RGSTravel.com](http://www.RGSTravel.com)



## Hunt with your best friend

...and make a few new ones with NAVHDA  
North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association members are hunters, breeders and trainers dedicated to helping you get the most out of your versatile hunting companion. We maintain the only registry in North America specializing in versatile pointing dog breeds.  
[Learn more about us on our web site at www.navhda.org](http://www.navhda.org)

Best Buy Membership - Only \$78.50 US funds, S&H included (IL Residents add sales tax)

A Full Year NAVHDA Membership

Informative Monthly Magazine

60 Minute Training DVD

In Depth Training Book

Testing Rules Booklet

Member Decal



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Breed of Dog(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to NAVHDA or use your credit card:

\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Card# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: NAVHDA • PO Box 520 • Arlington Heights, IL 60006

PURINA



Alan Derrick is a nature artist currently residing in Gurley, Alabama. Since 2001 he has been creating unique larger than life metal sculptures inspired by the common bird feather.

by *Terr L. French*

# Fine art takes flight.

Derrick's education and background are in interior design, graphic arts and sculpting. In 2004 he sold his custom design and home renovation business to become a full-time sculptor.

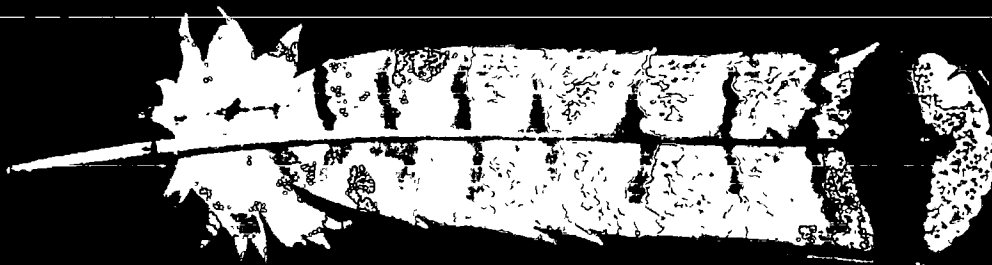
"I am driven to create. My work before had become centered around production rather than creation. I now get to create in ways no one else in the world can. I take great pleasure in that fact," he said.

Derrick says the coloration and light-refracting qualities of feathers are unequalled elsewhere in nature. He duplicates and enhances these qualities in his studio, situated on 10 wooded acres at the base of a mountain, employing a multi-step process involving specifically designed

tools and techniques.

"I press, hammer, bump, chase, file and bog the metal with a variety of odd tools until it reveals flowing lines," he said. The process also involves welding components together to achieve a three dimensional final product. Then he applies 25 to 30 layers of pearlescent and translucent paints built up over several days. He sprays, mists and splatters the paints to achieve the desired effect, hand sanding in between the layers.

Said one admirer, "I'll never look at a feather or a piece of metal the same way again. Alan Derrick has transformed them both." Not only are Derrick's pieces one of a kind fine art



sculptures, but also true investments that will appreciate in value.

A sculpture especially designed and created by Derrick for members and supporters of the Ruffed Grouse Society entitled "Drumbeat of Conservation" will soon be available to receive bids on eBay. The auction to benefit the RGS will begin on August 9<sup>th</sup> and end on August 16<sup>th</sup>

at 9:00pm EST.

Organizations dedicated to the preservation of birding are encouraged to contact the Alan Derrick Studio for fund raising consideration. To view more of Alan Derrick's work

or obtain information on the upcoming auctions, call (256) 776-4762 or visit [www.Derrick.com](http://www.Derrick.com).



*"I am driven to create. My work before had become centered around production rather than creation. I now get to create in ways no one else in the world can. I take great pleasure in that fact."*





FOR MWV,  
SUSTAINABILITY IS  
MORE THAN A GOAL.

IT'S A GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

As a leader in our industry and as a responsible partner to our customers, MWV builds sustainability into every decision we make, from business strategy to forest management that provides a habitat for wildlife. Sustainability shapes everything MWV does — and every packaging solution we create for customers and consumers around the world. [mwv.com](http://mwv.com).

**MWV** MEADWESTVACO

# Support the Ruffed Grouse Society and Take Part in One of These Exciting Offers!



## RGS Special Life Sponsor Shotgun Promotions

Sportsmen and women who pay half upfront and the remainder within 6 months will qualify for a limited time offer. This special shotgun offer is a choice of a Caesar Guerini Magnus, a Kimber Valier Grade II or an AYA Model 4/53.

### Caesar Guerini Magnus

The Magnus shotgun has been designed to appeal to the discriminating hunter who appreciates a classic firearm with timeless features.

Over-and-under

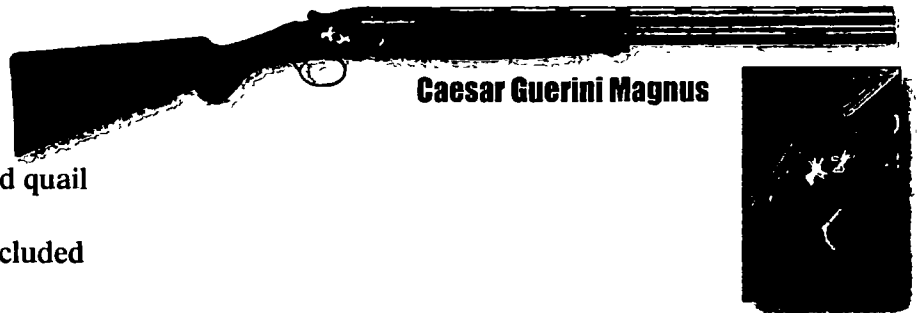
Choice of: 12- or 28-gauge  
with 28" or 30" barrels, or 20-  
gauge with 26", 28" or 30" barrels.

Gold inlays of grouse, pheasant and quail

Lined lockable hard case

Five precision flush choke tubes included

\$3,850 retail value



### Caesar Guerini Magnus

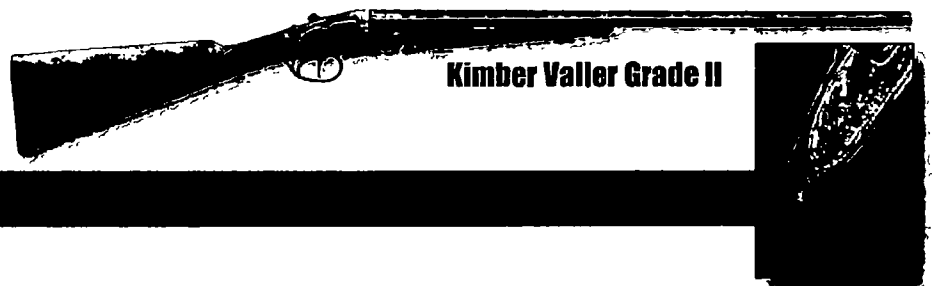
Kimbers are still available, but only for a short time. Please hurry, the number of guns is limited.

Side-by-side

20-gauge, 28" barrels

Double trigger

\$5,000 retail value



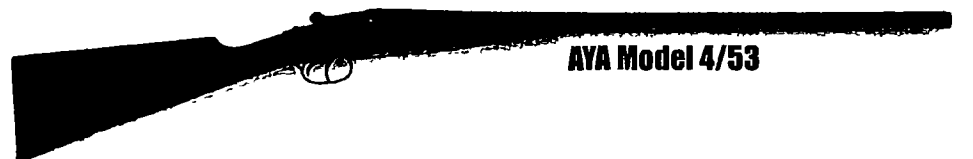
### AYA Model 4/53

Side-by-side

Choice of 20-gauge with  
28" barrels, or 28-gauge  
with 27" barrels

Double trigger

\$3,700 retail value



An RGS Life Sponsor may also elect to pay sponsorship dues over four years in installments totaling \$10,000. However, those who choose this payment method do not qualify for a shotgun.

## RGS Centurion Membership

An RGS Centurion membership is available for \$1,000. Purchase a centurion membership today, while Kimbers are still available, and you will receive a ticket. For every 10 Centurion memberships sold, there will be a drawing for a Kimber Valier Grade II.

As a new Centurion member, you have a one in 10 chance of winning one of these coveted shotguns.



## Are you ready for a blower with power?

STIHL has a blower that's right for you. We offer an entire line of backpack and handheld blowers, including low-noise and electric models. Ask your STIHL Dealer which blower is right for you.

[stihlusa.com](http://stihlusa.com)

**STIHL**®



# RUFFLY SPEAKING

## Brood Encounters

by Paul Carson

Nature is in the middle of setting the stage for fall. We're usually not that involved as preparations perk along. But sometimes we get a glimpse into the early groundwork for the upcoming wild autumn extravaganza.

Long years ago, in a woody corner of our property, I flushed a grouse from her nest against some tree roots on the bank of a shallow gully. I arranged my schedule so that I could check progress at the nest – chock-full of eggs – almost every day. To keep from disturbing the hen or marking a trail to the nest for the convenience of predators, I found a spot across the gully where I could watch through binoculars.

One day as I was glassing the nest, I thought I saw movement, a tiny flick of yellow. So I gathered up my camera, suobe and tripod and eased my way across to the nest side of the little ravine. I was working my way carefully toward the nest when the hen flushed. She'd been sitting so low, apparently brooding her chicks, that I couldn't see her even with binoculars.

I cautiously peered over the rim of the nest, and found myself staring at a couple of handfuls of dried fluff; the chicks were just about ready to leave for good. Then from the drift of tiny twigs and dead leaves just outside the nest I heard a plaintive peep. It came again and then again. Remarkably, the hen out in the woods heard it too. She jumped up on a branch and began hopping up and down and rattling off grouse-sized curses in my direction. I carefully pulled leaves and twigs away to discover a little fuzzy ball lying on its back with its two incredibly fragile looking legs stuck skyward. Mom's takeoff had apparently tumbled the chick into a crack in the layer of forest debris.

I worked two fingers under the chick and brought it up in my hand. He (or she) seemed more annoyed than afraid. I put the chick back in the nest, got a couple of pictures of the clutch and then retreated across the gulch. Ten minutes later as I watched through the glasses Mom came back to the nest.

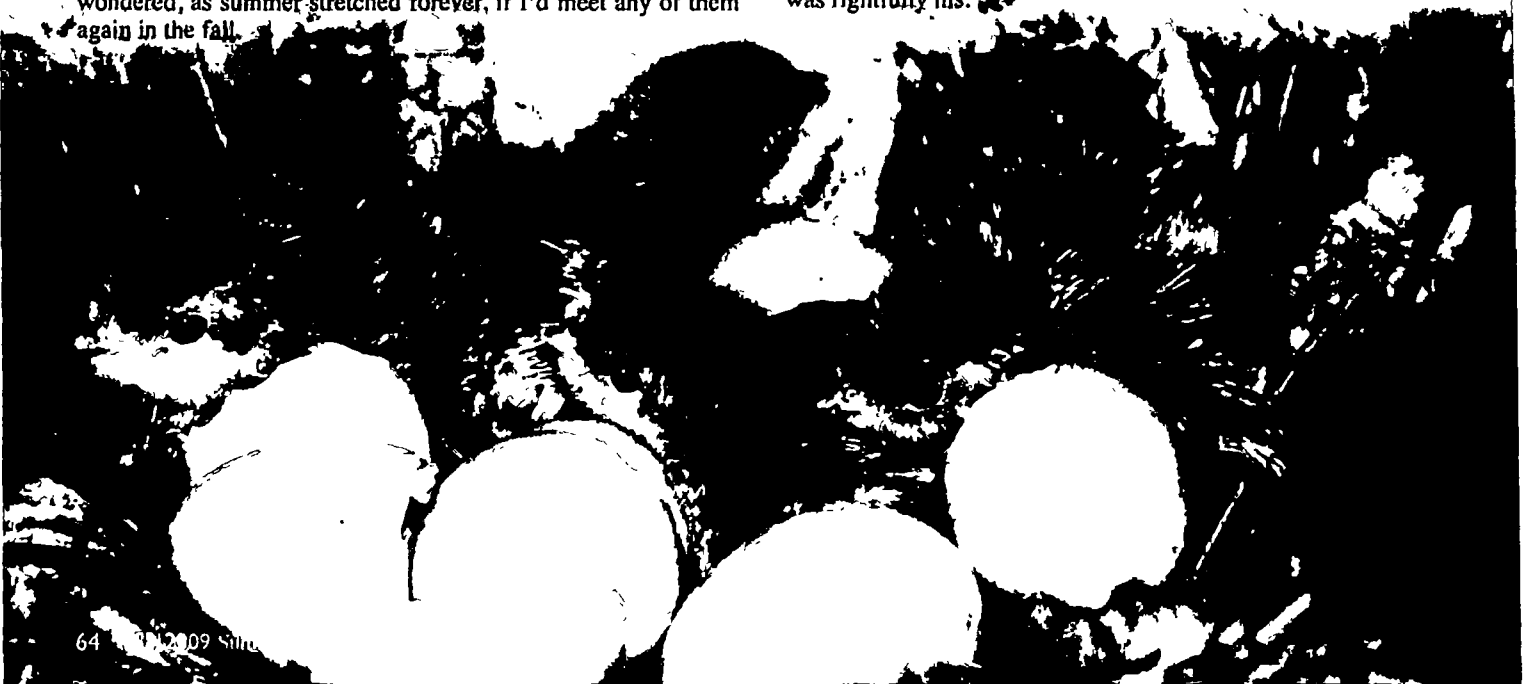
I flushed the brood three times that summer. They hung out in a little cove that harbored a spring seep on my neighbor's farm. I wondered, as summer stretched forever, if I'd meet any of them again in the fall.

It would be the first hunting season for our first English cocker, a black and tan number who looked more like a hairy cannonball than a dog as he ripped into cover. I really wanted to get Joel a grouse as his first wild game. So, we naturally went to the spring seep first chance we got when the season opened. And – no surprise – found nothing.

We were about to head for a promising hawthorn thicket on along the hillside when Joel made game. He shot up the slope, tearing through thick spice bush and, it seemed to me, ricocheting off trees. Then the birds flushed from higher up the hill above the dog – the brood members that had survived the summer. They swooped down the slope toward me, and even allowing for summer fatalities, there was an excess of targets. I was close to a panicky flock shoot when I gritted my teeth and made myself focus on one hurtling body. I knew I was going to have to take him as an in-comer; I'd discovered years ago turning and firing at an outgoing bird was not something I did well. By the time I fired, my back was bent into a curve I've never been able to duplicate since and the grouse was pretty much straight overhead. He thumped down hard.

Joel rushed past, barely missing clipping my leg and plowed to a halt with the grouse inches from his nose. He just stood there staring, as if his wild, hot little eyes couldn't believe what they were seeing. I walked over and gently picked up the grouse, and for an instant I wondered if it was the second time I'd held the bird that year. There was no way of telling, and I didn't want to get all maudlin about it. Anyway, I didn't have time to dwell on it because just then Joel came unhinged as he realized I was stealing his bird. By the time we got home he had clipped me at least twice in the back of the knees, determined to get "his" bird back.

Joel turned out to be a passionate hunter and great companion. He finally came to understand that I really hated it when he tried to knock me down and take a bird. But for all the drills we went through after that first hunt, until the day he died, he did sulk - at least a little bit - every time I carried a bird home that he thought was rightfully his.



*Want birds?*



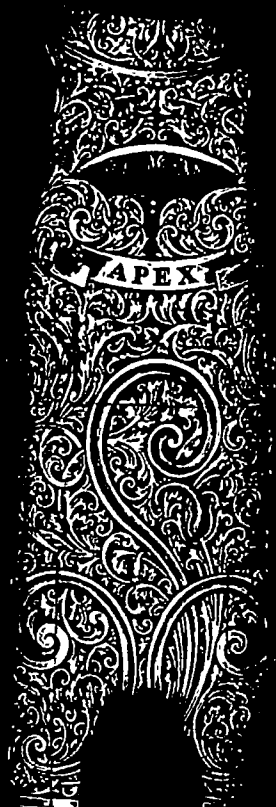
Hunt with an **Ugly Dog**  
and support the **Ruffed Grouse Society.**

Please join us in keeping the covers thriving and the birds flying.



The Ugly Dog Hunting Company has serious gear for you, your dog, and the hunt  
-- rugged, hunt-tested field gear  
-- men's and women's upland clothing and boots  
-- dog kennels, gear, vests, and training equipment  
Shop online at [www.uglydoghunting.com](http://www.uglydoghunting.com) or call toll-free for a catalog 877-982-7054

This is the *Apex*



The new Apex is the synthesis of art and function. Our exclusive long tang trigger guard is notably missing any screws or pins blending seamlessly into a classic skeletal grip cap. The lines of the Apex recall famous British guns with a Prince-of-Wales grip and rounded fore-end. Additionally, the 12 gauge version features our Maxis bore barrels and choke system. At Caesar Guerini we are consistently striving to redefine the Apex of the gun maker's art.

 CAESAR  
GUERINI

410.901.1131

[www.gueriniusa.com](http://www.gueriniusa.com)



Fall 2009 • Volume 21, Issue 3

**HEAT STRESS?**  
**NOW** to Avoid  
Overheating  
in Your Bird Dog

**Solving**  
the Plight of the  
American Chestnut

**Close-up**  
**of the King:**  
Ruffed Grouse  
Photo Essay



# WHEN NUTRITION COUNTS

*The birds are scarce, but he continues his search working the ditches and fence rows quartering through the field. He slams on point and you say to yourself, "this is what it's all about."*

His breeding, your training/conditioning combined with high-quality nutrition have made this possible.

Give him the high-quality nutrition that helps keep him in the field when other dogs are heading for the truck. Feed what many top field trialers feed — Purina® Pro Plan® Performance Formula.

brand DOG FOOD

- Real chicken is the #1 ingredient, for a high-quality protein source to help support muscle mass for strength and provide energy
- VO2 max optimizes oxygen metabolism so dogs burn fat more efficiently
- Natural sources of glucosamine for joint health and mobility
- High levels of antioxidants to help support a healthy immune system
- Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, including EPA and DHA
- Highly palatable

For more information of interest to sporting dog enthusiasts, visit [www.proplan.com/sportingdog/mag](http://www.proplan.com/sportingdog/mag)

Purina is a proud sponsor of:



*Quail*

**PURINA**

**PRO PLAN**

brand DOG FOOD

**FUEL THE CHAMPION WITHIN™**

The Purina Company, Société des Produits Nestlé S.A., Vevey, Switzerland



**PRO PLAN**



**ALL LIFE STAGES**



The Eyes of a Predator  
will be **Your Advantage.**



STEINER

PREDATOR

10x42 Predator C5

12x42 Predator C5



STEINER

PREDATOR

### New Steiner Predator<sup>®</sup> C5 10x42 and 12x42

Eyes sensitive to the color of game, even in low light, is the privilege of one of the world's most skilled hunters. After years of trying to match a predator's natural ability to hunt in darkness, we have developed lens coatings that maximize light transmission from game animals in the brownish range and hold back light from foliage and surroundings. The result is astounding contrast with highest light transmission and is featured on the new Steiner Predator C5.

*Nothing escapes these eyes.*



**STEINER** ▼  
GERMANY  
[www.steiner-binoculars.com](http://www.steiner-binoculars.com)

SHOTGUNS

# 7 Ruffed Grouse Society SERIES

SKK promotes presents a limited  
edition of 20 and 28 gauge over  
& Unders. Available in 28 &  
26 Gauges. Featuring the  
American Black Walnut  
Steel and forged Auto  
matic Locks. Manual  
Safety, selective  
Trigger Brakes  
Choke Tubes.

The Ruffed Grouse Society  
depends upon members, volunteers,  
landowners and corporate sponsors  
to insure that this and future generations can  
enjoy ruffed grouse, woodcock, songbirds, water  
and on any other types of wildlife that depend upon  
young forest habitat.

[WWW.SKB.SHOTGUNS.COM](http://WWW.SKB.SHOTGUNS.COM)

**FIELD-TESTED  
FIELD-PROVEN**

**TRUST OUR GEAR**

For more than 100 years, Cabela's has been the world's most trusted name in outdoor gear. We've spent over \$1 billion on research and development to create the most durable, reliable, and comfortable gear you can find. Our gear is built to last, and it's built to perform. So you can spend more time in the outdoors and less time in the store.

**Cabela's**

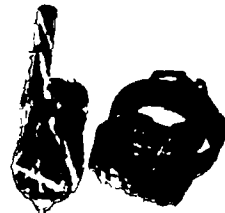
WORLD'S FOREMOST OUTDOOR

Shop Online • Request a Catalog • Find a Store

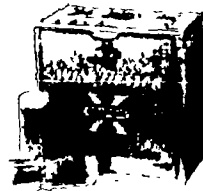
1-800-4-A-CABELA • 267-241-9999



Cabela's Upland Service Coat



Field Trainer SD-400



Guns Leads

**TOP-OF-THE-LINE BRANDS**

WATERFOWL • BIRD • TRAP

Proud partner of





project POTICO

Fostering Sustainable Forests in Indonesia  
A WRI AND NEWPAGE PARTNERSHIP

World Resources Institute and NewPage

## YOUR COMPANY CAN SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION OF RAINFORESTS IN INDONESIA

NewPage has made a three-year, multi-million dollar commitment to the World Resources Institute (WRI) to fully fund the initial phase of Project POTICO. We invite you to participate with us in this important global undertaking to preserve rainforests in Indonesia and protect local communities and species that depend on them.

For more information, please visit [www.projectpotico.org](http://www.projectpotico.org). And to learn how to get involved, please contact Shawn Hall at NewPage Corporation at 937.242.9375. Together, we can make a difference!

 WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

 NewPage

- 6 Editor's Log**  
On the Nature of Reading  
*By Anna Stubna*
- 8 Letters to the Editor**
- 10 Executive Director's Report**  
Leading the Charge to Evolve  
Public Sentiment  
*By Mike Zagata*
- 12 Purely Dogs**  
Ways to Avoid Overheating  
in Working Dogs
- 20 RGS Canada**  
Project Brush Pile  
*By Jeff Helsdon*
- 26 Junior RGS**  
The Lure of Trapping
- 33 Seasons of the Grouse**  
Autumn in the East
- 38 Home Covers Calling**
- 42 Chapter Spotlight**  
Conservation for the Common Man  
Ohio Hills Chapter, Lancaster, Ohio
- 54 Wild Flavors**  
Gourmet Game Dinners
- 56 News Updates**  
RGS Supports Maryland's  
Proposed Forest Plan
- 60 Gear and Gadgets**  
New Product Reviews  
*By Harvey Bauer & Gary Zimmer*
- 64 Classified Ads**
- 68 Ruffly Speaking**  
A Clear Case of Being Railroaded  
*By Paul Carson*



## FEATURES

- 16 Hunting Early Season Ruffed Grouse**  
Tips for your hunt – *by Doug Stamm*
- 22 Remington's Premier® Over-and-Under, the RGS Edition**  
Light grouse guns examined – *by Nick Sisley*
- 24 Essay and Poster Contest Results**  
2009 winners announced
- 28 The Fellowship**  
Exploring the kinship of grouse hunters – *by Tim Flanigan*
- 44 The Return of the American Chestnut**  
Blight-resistant variety is on the horizon  
– *by Jeff Mulhollem, Chuck Gill and Mark Banker*
- 48 Not Your Usual Bird Hunt**  
Perdiz hunting in Argentina – *by Nancy Anisfield*
- 50 King of the Game Birds**  
A ruffed grouse photo essay – *photos by Tim Flanigan*
- 58 Lucille**  
The trials of owning a free spirited bird dog – *by Art Wheaton*

About Our Cover – This issue's cover, which features a detail from *Watchful Grouse*, is by Scott Zoellick. As a Wisconsin wildlife artist, Zoellick has a passion for the outdoors that is reflected in his art. His paintings are masterful works that effortlessly capture a moment in time. He has been a major supporter of RGS for many years, and every year one of his paintings is showcased at the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

Zoellick's work has graced the covers of over 25 major magazines, and he has illustrated books for a long list of publishers that includes Charles Scribners & Sons, Raintree Publishing Company and Willow Creek Press.

Zoellick studied illustration, painting and print making at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, following three years of study at the College of Natural Resources in University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point. In 1992 he founded Thunder Mountain press in order to market prints of his wildlife paintings. To find out more visit: [www.thunderart.com](http://www.thunderart.com).



# EDITOR'S LOG

## On the Nature of Reading

by Anna Stubna

It has always seemed to me that the world is composed of readers and everyone else. Growing up I was a certifiable reading junkie. The library was my Mecca – of sorts – and it seemed that no matter how many books I checked out, I always finished them long before it came time for another trip. I'm not claiming to have read the most instructive or informative books available. Thankfully, my rather poor memory has allowed me to forget at least half of the nonsense I've consumed over the years. The allure that books have for me, however, has continued unabated.

In the frantic pace of life these days, the amount of time allotted to accomplish tasks seems to have shortened dramatically. I suppose it's only natural that reading follow a similar course. The magazine, with its abbreviated features, allows for the luxury of completing an article in just a few minutes. Because a single issue can contain such a diverse amount of articles, it's also more than likely you'll find something of personal interest.

This issue we have several notable articles, including the popular gun review by Nick Sisley, a hunting story from Argentina and an update on the American chestnut. Yet my favorite part of this issue is not an article by a guru, wordsmith or field expert, it's this year's Junior RGS essay contest.

The theme was "Who has taught you the most about the outdoors?" and the responses were both thought provoking and inspiring. The respect and appreciation each entrant revealed for their mentor was moving. Their words, written with such sincerity, were deeply compelling.

This year's winning essay, by 13-year-old James Krantz of Chanhassen, Minnesota, is included in this issue. His words cut to the heart of the matter, and illustrate just how well his father has taught him. "My dad has taught me how to do a lot of things, but the most important thing he has taught me about the outdoors is that we should always take care of it so other people will be able to enjoy it too."

Sharing the experience and conserving the wildlife and forests for those that follow in our footsteps are really what it's all about. Time spent in the effort to instill these lessons in our youth will be time well spent.

In addition to thanking each one of our entrants, I'd like to extend a thank you to all the mentors of these youth. In reading their words, it was evident to me that your efforts to share the sporting heritage with them have been successful. 🍀

# ruffed GROUSE SOCIETY

### MEMBERSHIP RATES:

Junior membership (16 and under) .....	\$10
Timberdoodle (Web access only) .....	\$15
Regular membership .....	\$25
Conservation membership .....	\$50
Sustaining membership .....	\$100
Sponsor membership .....	\$250
Centurion (life) membership .....	\$1,000

### Officers and Staff

#### OFFICERS

D. Wayne Jacobson, Jr. ....	President
Gaylen J. Byker ..	Executive Vice President
Denis S. Kamosky .....	Vice President & Treasurer
Scotty Searle ..	Secretary

#### DIRECTORS

Larry Brutger	Bruce Ogle
Joe (Leon H.) Chandler M.D.	James H. Oliver
Edwin H. Gott, Jr.	John C. Oliver
Jim Hayent	Stephen F. Quill
Joe R. Irwin	George Rich
D. Wayne Jacobson, Jr.	Scotty Searle
Butch Johnson	Terald J. Wilson
Denis S. Kamosky	

#### DIRECTORS EMERITI

S. Prosser Mellon
Sally B. Searle
David V. Uihlein

#### HEADQUARTERS STAFF

Dr. Michael D. Zagata
Executive Director/CEO
Ronald P. Burkert
Information Systems and Webmaster
Anna Stubna
Editor & Special Projects
Margie Vollmer
Controller
Tracy M. Greene
Director of Banquet Operations
Julie Caugherty
Director of Membership and Marketing
Rudy Mamula
Accounts Payable
Kim Swisher
Accounts Receivable
Leatha M. Veilock
Information Systems Assistant & Mailroom
Shirley Rice
Membership Services
Alison Kelley
Administrative Assistant
Wallace L. Chevront
Staff Assistant - Shipping & Receiving
Dick Nelson
Publicist

#### CONSERVATION POLICY

Dan R. Dessecker .....	Director
------------------------	----------

#### BIOLOGISTS

Mark E. Banker .....	Senior Biologist
Gary Zimmer .....	Senior Biologist

**Northwoods Bird Dogs**

- Gun dog and field trial training on wild birds.
- Puppies and started grouse dogs available
- Proven producers at stud.

For more information, call Jerry Kolter at 320-245-6988 and please visit our website.

[www.northwoodshirddogs.com](http://www.northwoodshirddogs.com)



**Sugarloaf Smooth Bore's**

**New & Used Shotguns**

Buying and selling collector quality shotguns from American manufacturers including Browning, Fox, Parker, and Ithaca. Large selection of hard to find pieces. Guns shown by appointment only. Contact Dave Sizemore at:

**606-780-2329**

[www.sugarloafsmoothbores.com](http://www.sugarloafsmoothbores.com)



### REGIONAL DIRECTORS

Mark D. Fouts . . . Director of Regional Operations  
& AK, MO, MN, OR, WA  
Bruce Wojcik . . . MI & northwestern IN  
Dave "Swede" Johnson . . . WI, far western UP of MI,  
Twin Cities, MN; IA, & IL  
Boyd Cooke . . . ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT  
Dave Hansroth . . . NJ, eastern PA, MD, portion of VA  
Lisa M. Rossi . . . IN; OH, western PA, northern WV  
Don Mallicoat . . . GA, KY, LA, NC,  
TN, VA & southern WV

### FIELD EDITORS

H "Bumper" Bauer  
Paul Carson  
Jeff Helsdon  
Art Wheaton

### FIELD PHOTOGRAPHERS

Nancy Anisfield  
Timothy Flanagan

### NATIONAL OFFICE

Ruffed Grouse Society  
451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044 • Toll Free (888) 564-6747  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)  
E-MAIL [rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org)

### RGS CANADA

Contact Gary McWilliams  
RGS Canadian Coordinator  
PO Box 272, Cobourg, ON K9A 4K8

To report RGS-Canada chapter news contact Jeff  
Helsdon, Canadian Field Editor, [jhelsdon@bellnet.ca](mailto:jhelsdon@bellnet.ca),  
(519) 842-8468 in RGS-Canada

### MAGAZINE DESIGN

Ed Ramaley, Art Director - Marcomnordic Printing

### ADVERTISING

Scott Cherek  
Cherek Group, Inc. (307) 635-8899  
E-mail, [cherekgroup@bresnan.net](mailto:cherekgroup@bresnan.net)

The Ruffed Grouse Society is the one international non-profit 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. It was incorporated as the Ruffed Grouse Society of America on October 24, 1961 in Monterey, Virginia. National headquarters is located in Coraopolis, PA. Donations and gifts may be tax deductible.

RGS is a quarterly publication of the Ruffed Grouse Society, and is published seasonally in the spring, summer, fall and winter. Positions or views expressed by advertisements and articles which appear in the magazine may not reflect those held by the Ruffed Grouse Society.

**EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS:** Letter, article and photo submissions are welcomed. No responsibility is assumed for unsolicited materials. Please address emails to

[editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org).

**UNWANTED MAIL ALERT:** Occasionally we make our member listing available to select organizations whose services or products may interest you. If you prefer not to share your name and address, you can simply remove your information from our mailing lists by contacting our membership department at [juliec@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:juliec@ruffedgrousesociety.org). Also contact our membership department if you receive multiple magazines to your household and wish to consolidate your memberships.

### CHOICE HOTELS INTERNATIONAL

Special rate identification number 00802089

© Copyright 2009 Ruffed Grouse Society All Rights Reserved



# The Ruffed Grouse Society 2009-2010 National Raffle

## Winchester Model 21

## 28-Gauge Shotgun

This one of a kind gun features 28" barrels choked IC/M with two beads, a straight English stock crafted from AAA fancy feathercrotch walnut to a checkered butt, and a 14 1/2" LOP.

The DAH is 2 3/8", DAC is 1 1/2", pitch is 5" and the cast is neutral.

The beavertail forend has an ebony insert in the tip. It has a single selective trigger and the RGS logo is engraved in gold on the bottom of the receiver.\*

Approximate retail value:

Winner to be drawn on  
**June 30, 2010**  
at RGS headquarters in  
Coraopolis, Pennsylvania.

Winner responsible for applicable taxes.  
Actual gun not pictured.

To purchase raffle tickets call  
1-888-564-6747.

Donation for each ticket is \$100.00.  
Up to 1,500 tickets to be sold.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Share your thoughts, opinions and questions with us. Send emails to: [editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org). Letters should be mailed to: Attn: Editor, Ruffed Grouse Society, 451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108. Submissions should not exceed 150 words, and may be edited for content and length. Name and address must be included.



Cheyenne Minton

## Gunnin' for a Good Time

I attended your banquet this year in Crandon, Wisconsin. I really enjoyed it, my favorite part was when I won a gun! I won a Charles Daley youth shotgun. I plan to take a hunter's safety course this summer and then use the gun for turkey hunting next spring.

I hope to attend the banquet again next year. Thank you for your support in getting youth involved in wildlife and hunting

Thanks,  
Cheyenne Minton  
Whitewater, Wisconsin

*Editor's Note: We're thrilled that you enjoyed the banquet, Cheyenne. When youth accompanied by a paying adult present a hunter's safety certificate at one of our banquets, RGS will cover the cost of the youth's dinner ticket! (Note that the certificate must be dated no more than one year prior to the date of the banquet.) Best of luck, and be sure to keep us posted on your success next spring.*

## Light Gun Review Response

Mr. Sisley,

I wanted to say thank you for the articles on light shotguns in the last two RGS magazines. The first, on light guns in general, was the best I've read on this topic. The pros and cons were balanced, and very informative. The Benelli article was a good follow up to the first article, and was also very informative.

I hope you'll cover my personal favorite among the light guns, the Beretta Ultralight. I own and like the older S686 model. In fact, I prefer it to the current 687. There is a more open grip on the 686 that I find much more comfortable. That, along with the field style and not the Schnabel type forend, makes for a better design in my opinion. Personally I prefer the more subdued finish on the 686, too.

I'd also like to ask your opinion on the old Ithaca/SKB model 100 side-by-side. It's a fairly light gun in 12-gauge.

I got started as a bird hunter in my 30's and read Frank Woolner's grouse hunting book to begin. He advocated a light gun, so I got the Beretta in 1995 and didn't know that short, light guns were not the way most articles said to go. I didn't know any better, but it's worked out fine. I'm glad to hear that others are finding them useful too.

Thanks again and I hope to see more articles on this topic in the future.

Rick Harding  
Jackson, Maine

Rick,

*In the last 15 or so years I have probably shot more grouse with a 686 Ultralight than any other bird gun, so I'll write about it eventually. I, too, prefer the more subdued looks of the old 686. Mine*

*has 28-inch barrels but still weighs only 6 pounds 1 ounce.*

*The upcoming magazine will cover the guns by Remington, SKB and AYA – that's all I have scheduled right now. Thank you for writing.*

Good shooting,  
Nick Sisley

## Upland Bird Fever

I want to extend my thanks to the hard working folks at RGS. I know how hard the organizers work in my local chapter to keep members actively pursuing conservation, so that we (and future generations) can enjoy our days in the woods.

I'm somewhat new to the sport of grouse hunting but am addicted in less than three seasons. I will continue to make myself available to attend RGS events, including banquets, fundraisers, days afield, and plantings. I am also the fortunate and very proud owner of a beautiful SKB RGS edition shotgun, which I won at this year's banquet. The gun and upland enthusiasm will hopefully remain in my family forever.

Thanks again,  
Spencer Young  
Abington, Virginia

## On the Hunt for an Economical Light Shotgun

Mr. Sisley,

I saw your article on the recent Benelli Ultra Light in the spring issue of the RGS magazine. I have been carrying a Ruger Red Label 20-gauge, but am getting older and find the 7 +/- lb gun increasingly not in the ready carry position when I am afield.

While I really prefer two barrels, my wallet won't provide for a super light with two tubes, and I have been thinking about a single barrel under 6 pounds. The only two I know about are the Benelli (which unfortunately has a cost akin to the doubles) and the Franchi 48AL. The Franchi is an older design, but weighs in well under six pounds and costs about half the price of the Benelli. Do you have any experience with the Franchi? Do you perhaps have a miraculous candidate for an under 6 pound double for less than a thousand dollars? I would appreciate any light you might shed on this matter.

Fr. John A. Wingert  
Delmar, New York

Fr. John,

*I have a lot of experience with a Franchi 48AL as a grouse gun. I used one for decades, and I recommend them wholeheartedly. Try and visit a dealer who has one so you can handle this gun, if you have not already done so.*

*Another suggestion I have is to visit [www.czusa.com](http://www.czusa.com). Look at their over-and-unders and side-by-sides. The 20-, 28- and .410 gauges are all very light. I actually own five of them.*

*Don't forget the used market for a 20-gauge Franchi 48AL. Try [www.gunsamerica.com](http://www.gunsamerica.com) or [www.gunbroker.com](http://www.gunbroker.com), these are just two of such sites out there.*

*I hope one of these options works for you – keep me posted on what you decide!*

Good shooting,  
Nick Sisley



## Chapter Spotlight Omission

The Chapter Spotlight column in the summer issue of the Ruffed Grouse magazine featured the H.C. Edwards RGS Chapter, but did not mention the contributions of Mr. Eddie Back. Eddie has been our president and banquet committee chairman since August of 2000 and he has been a member of our banquet committee since the beginning of the chapter.

Eddie usually sells more tickets and brings in more sponsors than any of our banquet committee members. His efforts have resulted in sponsors that donate up to \$1,000.00. In addition our chapter has an annual exhibit at the Western Virginia Sportsman's Show, a three-day event in February, and Eddie always volunteers to work the booth for at least two days. This year he was there for all three days.

His efforts are critical to the success of our chapter, and we would like to thank him for his outstanding contributions.

H.C. Edwards  
Staunton, Virginia

## Wildlife Biologist Encourages Discussion

Sometime last week I started receiving telephone calls and emails from grouse hunters and retired natural resource folks I have crossed paths with over the years. The communications were regarding *The Other Silent Spring*, my article in the summer issue.

It seems the article has touched a nerve with several of our more avid sportsmen and others. Hopefully this is not short-lived and rekindles some energy in spreading the word to address the real issues of habitat loss and wildlife population declines.

Many thanks,  
Steven E Backs

Wildlife Research Biologist, Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Mitchell, Indiana

## Weighing in on Woodcock Hunter Survey Results

I read with interest, but decry the outcome, of the recently conducted woodcock hunter survey, particularly as it pertained to a federal woodcock stamp (The article, *Woodcock Hunter Survey: Weighing in on the Data*, appeared in the Summer 2009 issue.) In 2007 I began the stamp initiative in collaboration with Pointing Dog Journal Editor Steve Smith, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources Director Frank Jezioro, and fellow RGS member Tim Lintz of Michigan.

I applaud RGS Executive Director Mike Zagata for taking the initiative and pursuing the idea, along with RGS Director of Conservation Policy Dan Dessecker

While those of us who desired the outcome to reflect strong support for a stamp, we must accept the results of a well-conducted survey. We at its origins take pride that this is as far as the question of such a stamp has ever been taken, and we thank RGS for taking the lead in carrying the matter to what by all appearances is a fair and logical conclusion.

Dennis LaBare  
Upper Tract, West Virginia

Dennis,

Your hard work in initiating the woodcock stamp idea is much appreciated. RGS was proud to take part in the process of exploring the idea. As believers in the importance of creating habitat for American woodcock, we are always searching for innovative ways to fund the Woodcock Initiative, including – but not limited to – the proposed woodcock stamp.


Mike Zagata  
RGS Executive Director and CEO



**RGS RUFF  
Capital Campaign**

Over \$2 million dollars  
pledged or received.  
Help us reach our goal  
of \$5 million dollars.

**1-888-564-6747**




*Strideaway*

The online publication dedicated to the  
great American sport of pointing dog  
Field Trials!

**www.strideaway.com**

**Looking to Complete Your Collection?**



Back issues of RGS are now available. At a cost of \$5.00 per issue, plus an additional \$2.00 for shipping, you can catch up on issues you may have missed over the last five years. No guarantee all issues are available, stock will be sold on a first request, first served basis.

Write to [editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org) to place your order

Park Falls  
"The Ruffed Grouse  
Capital of the World"  
and Price County  
welcome you!

**2009 Spring Drumming Counts up 6%!**



Ruffed Grouse Season  
runs Sept. 12, 2009 until  
January 10, 2010

For your FREE Grouse Hunter's  
Packet, contact:  
Price County Tourism  
1-800-269-4505  
[www.pricecountywi.net](http://www.pricecountywi.net)

. Park Falls . Fifield . Phillips . Prentice .

**WISCONSIN**  
*Lives So Good*



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Mike Zagata  
Executive Director/CEO

## Leading the Charge to Change Public Sentiment: Why it's necessary to cut trees

It will soon be time to visit the skeet or sporting clays range, round up your hunting gear and, if you hunt over a dog, begin conditioning you both for the time you plan to spend in pursuit of the king of game birds and his sidekick, the timberdoodle. Based upon the feedback we've received from our field staff and state agencies, bird numbers should be up this fall in areas where there is suitable habitat.

With the majority of media focus on climate change and forest fragmentation it is easy to miss what is happening right under our noses. Our forests are aging and early successional forests are in rapid decline. As a result, ruffed grouse, American woodcock and many species of neo-tropical songbirds are having a difficult time finding a suitable home.

I fought side by side with other conservationists in the '70s to curb some of the abuses associated with timber harvest. Well, remember that old adage "be careful what you ask for as you may actually get it"? Right about that time a groundswell of public sentiment to protect our environment occurred, resulting in our first Earth Day, the formation of environmental groups focused on saving planet earth and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires an assessment of the potential environmental impact of a proposed action, but doesn't mandate an equal assessment of the impact of not taking the proposed action, as in the case of a timber harvest.

It's safe to say that back then I never expected to be in a position to call for an increase in the timber harvest rate on both public and private lands! Yet, as the pendulum has swung too far to the preservation side of the land-management equation, I find myself doing just that.

The forces of nature are still capable of causing change upon the landscape by means of floods and blow-downs, but one of the primary methods of forest renewal – wildfire – has been severely limited in northern hardwood forests due to the intervention of mankind.

Periodic wildfires, though beneficial to the ecosystem of forests, can be costly to us. Thus, in order to intervene on Nature's behalf and mimic the outcome of those wildfires new means for managing forests had to be discovered. Aldo Leopold, father of wildlife management and author of *A Sand County Almanac* was among the first to formally propose these new methods. He cited controlled burns, plow, cow and axe (in today's times that would be a chainsaw or a mechanical tree harvester) as the means to promote a healthy mix of different stages of forest.

Our last issue of RGS featured an article by Steve Backs entitled *The Other Silent Spring*. Steve is a biologist with the Indiana Fish and Wildlife Department of Natural Resources. His sage observations with regard to the loss of early successional habitat in Indiana mirror those losses that have been observed across the northern hardwood states, from Minnesota and eastward.

If RGS is going to have any chance of fulfilling its mission with regard to grouse and woodcock, then we must take an active role in

educating the public with regard to the ecological truth surrounding the management of our forests. Preservation as a primary management strategy is not an ecologically sound practice. A powerful confirmation of this fact is found when you consider the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires in the western regions.

Following the passage of the Wilderness Act in the 1960s, we set aside or preserved millions of acres by designating them as wilderness. Unfortunately we violated the very tenets of wilderness by putting out natural, forest-renewing, fires. Over time the fuel load built up and when fires began of natural causes we were unable to put them out because of their intensity. Fueled by decades of downed debris, they burned so hot that complete stand replacement, and not forest rejuvenation, occurred.

Today, roughly 50% of the Forest Service's budget is used to fight fires. Other programs have suffered as a result and conservationists have banded together to address that issue. Sadly, unanimity within this community with regard to the management of forests to create young trees by cutting old ones is still lacking, and there is a reluctance to increase the harvest of mature trees, especially in National Forests.

It is my sincere belief that RGS in a prime position to take the lead in changing that mind-set. *The Other Silent Spring* is the first step, in what will hopefully become a series of steps, taken to educate the general public about ecologically sound forest management. Reprints of the article will be widely distributed in the coming year. A second article, *Impact on Wildlife from Ignoring Ecological Principles*, will be distributed and available on our website. As a third step, with urging from RGS, the Wildlife Management Institute will hold a session on the importance of early successional habitat at its 2010 North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference – a meeting that will be attended by habitat management professionals from universities, state agencies and federal agencies across the country.

Over the course of the last year, RGS has taken some additional steps in the direction of affecting real change in the public mindset. With the help of a Wisconsin law firm, RGS and other like-minded groups were successful in blocking a legal action that would have seriously impacted the ability of the Forest Service to manage the Superior National Forest in Minnesota.

We've also worked hard to improve our contact with you, our members, by utilizing e-mail alerts that serve as a call to action for issues that impact the creation of young-forest habitat. We must rely heavily upon the willingness of each of you to become involved. Your right to vote is a powerful voice. Though you may be tempted to dismiss one vote as being minor, consider your vote combined with an additional 999,999 votes from sportsmen and women that hunt grouse and woodcock, and you'll realize we have the potential to be a strong political force. Join RGS and spread the message amongst friends and family. Help us speak with one strong, united voice on behalf of these magnificent birds that are unable to speak for themselves. ✦

MIKE



IT'S OUT THERE. GO GET IT. )



THE PERFECT SHOT DOES EXIST. THERE'S NO WAY OF KNOWING WHEN IT WILL APPEAR. BUT WHEN IT DOES, BE SURE YOU'RE READY. SUCCESS OUT THERE BEGINS RIGHT NOW. OUR WING SHOK® LOADS ARE FAST, AND FEATURE COPPER PLATED LEAD AND EXCELLENT PATTERNS. THEY GIVE YOU THE ADVANTAGE OVER EVEN THE ELUSIVE RUFFED GROUSE. WITH WING SHOK, WILD FLUSHES ARE FOLLOWED BY A BIRD IN HAND—NOT JUST AN EMPTY GUN AND A DISAPPOINTED LOOK FROM YOUR FAVORITE BIRD DOG.



PROUD SPONSOR  
OF RUFFED GROUSE  
SOCIETY HABITAT  
PROJECTS

FEDERAL  
PREMIUM

FEDERALPREMIUM

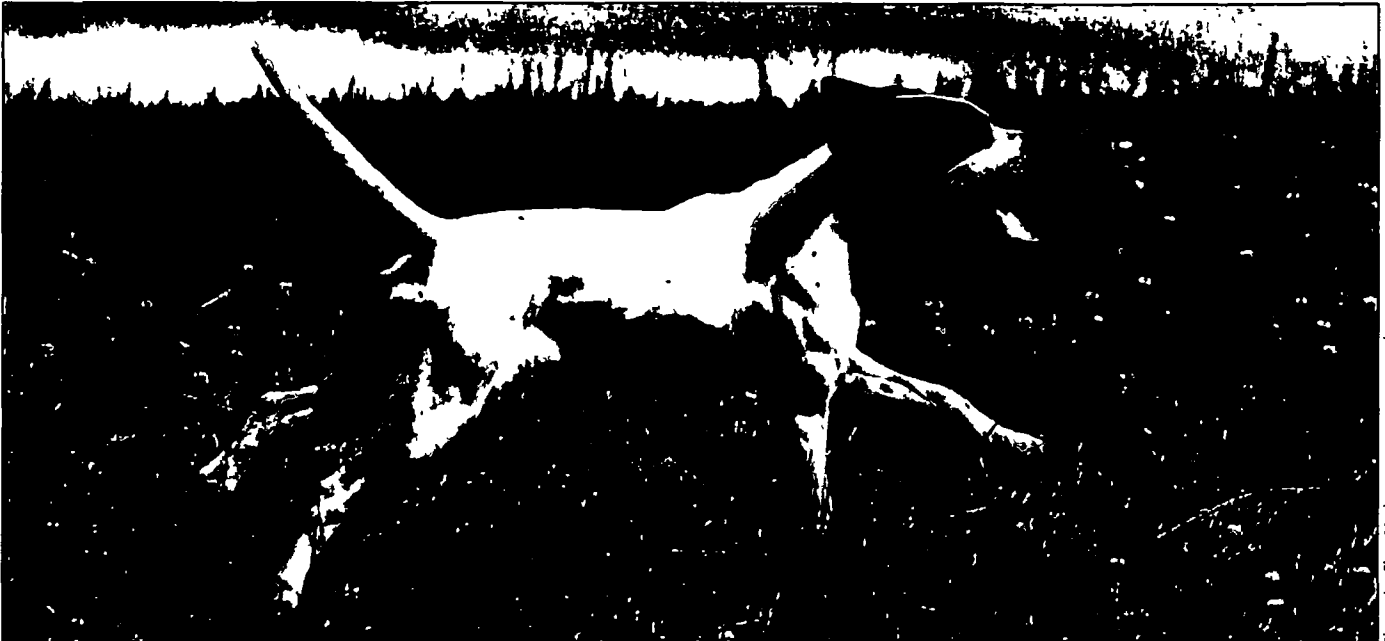
Federal Arms Company



# PURELY DOGS

## Ways to Avoid Overheating in Working Dogs

Reprint from Purina Pro Club Working Group Update January 2005 newsletter,  
with permission from Nestle Purina PetCare.



Photos by Chris Mathan, [www.sportsmancabinet.com](http://www.sportsmancabinet.com)

Dogs' desire to please, coupled with intense prey drive, can cause them to run harder and faster than conditions allow. Owners should be aware of this tendency and watch closely for signs of overheating.

If you've ever seen a dog sprawled out on a tile floor in the middle of a hot day, you've witnessed a dog's instinctive means of cooling down.

"Dogs really aren't very efficient at cooling themselves off," says Purina Nutrition Scientist Arleigh Reynolds, D.V.M., Ph.D., DACVN. "Their whole cooling system is aimed at keeping their brain at a safe temperature at the expense of making their bodies warmer. Basically, they have a short-term safety system when it comes to overheating, and once it's overloaded, they are in real trouble."

Heat illness in dogs is similar to heat-induced illness in humans. Heat exhaustion is defined as lethargy and inability to perform work due to extreme heat. Headache, vomiting, tachycardia (rapid heart activity), mental confusion and hypotension (low blood pressure) may accompany heat exhaustion. Heatstroke, a more severe form of heat illness, is characterized by central nervous system (CNS) signs ranging from fainting to coma.<sup>1</sup>

"When a dog maintains too high a body temperature for too long a period of time, it can cause brain damage," Reynolds says. "Once that damage occurs, the dog will regain some ability to regulate its own body temperature but he or she will never be as good as before. For example, a dog that could previously work for hours on a 65-degree day will overheat within a few minutes at that temperature."

### Regulating Body Temperature

The part of the brain damaged in overheating is the hypothalamus, where the dog's temperature control center or thermostat is located. Robert Gillette, D.V.M., M.S.E., director of the Sports Medicine Pro-

gram at Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine, explains that the hypothalamus regulates a dog's body temperature based on information from temperature recognition sites in the skin and throughout the body. These cold and hot receptors send signals to the hypothalamus that set into motion the processes that help to maintain body temperature at a functional level.<sup>2</sup>

A dog cannot regulate body temperature by sweating, because he only sweats around the pads of his paws. Instead, panting is how a dog begins cooling down. "The act of panting causes the dog to salivate. As the fluid evaporates, it cools the blood going into the brain in order to maintain CNS function," Reynolds says. "While this is an effective short-term solution, in the long run it is an inefficient method of lowering body temperature because in itself the act of panting uses energy and that generates additional heat."

Another way a dog's body regulates temperature in extreme heat is to redirect the flow of blood. Warm blood from the body core is directed to vessels under the skin, where it can be cooled by air or water flowing over the skin – hence dog's fondness for cool tile floors in hot weather. A dog also follows logic when he is hot by seeking out cooler locations such as shade or water, decreasing his workload, and even lying down or sitting during an activity.<sup>2</sup>

"There are dogs that will not follow this thought process, however, because they have a strong drive to do whatever their job is," says Reynolds, who trains sled dogs. "Whether it's a sled dog's desire to run or a hunting dog's prey drive, there are dogs that will run harder, faster and further than they should under certain circumstances. Owners need to recognize this trait in their dogs and watch them closely for overheating."

## Inability to Cool Down

Despite the best efforts, a dog's ability to cool down may be negatively influenced by both internal and external elements. Just as the act of panting generates internal heat, so does the use of a dog's muscles. "Muscles generate heat during increased levels of activity, which also contributes to higher body temperature," Reynolds says.

Gillette notes that 20 to 30 percent of the energy expended by muscles is used for work and 70 to 80 percent is released as heat.<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to how it appears, under some conditions double-coated dogs probably are more protected from heat than single or short-coated dogs, Reynolds says. "The hair acts something like insulation, keeping the coated dog cooler for a longer period of time than the short-coated breed where the sun and heat penetrate to the skin more rapidly," he explains.

While it is normal for a dog's body temperature to increase during activity, environmental conditions can contribute to overheating risks. Higher temperatures than a dog is accustomed to can take a toll, as does humidity. The increased amount of moisture in the air hinders saliva evaporation as a dog pants, thus reducing the cooling efficiency of panting.

## A Normal Temperature

The average canine body temperature is 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit, with a normal range between 98.5 to 102.5 degrees. The temperature of well-conditioned working dogs can safely reach 105 degrees during exercise, but anything above that temperature may signal trouble, Reynolds says.

"If you take the temperature of most working dogs while they are active, it's usually between 103.5 and 105 degrees," he says. "What's key is that as soon as a dog stops working, its temperature should begin to drop rapidly. I've seen dogs after exercise whose temperatures were as high as 109 degrees, but within two minutes their temperatures dropped to 104, and then two minutes later they were 102.5. These were exceptional cases, however. Any sustained temperature over 105 is cause for concern."

Reynolds urges owners, trainers and handlers to carry a thermometer with them so they can check their dog's temperature regularly when training or working in warm conditions.



Panting is inefficient in the long run for lowering body temperature, care must be taken to avoid overheating.

## Preventing Problems

An important defense against dogs overheating is knowledge and awareness by those involved in their care. "You should always know your dog's level of tolerance to heat," Reynolds says. "This can be determined by exercising the dog for short periods in warm conditions and taking his temperature at regular intervals to see how the dog is reacting."

Keeping an eye on a dog's physical cues is another way of avoiding trouble. Panting generally is the first sign a dog will exhibit indicating it could be at risk of overheating, Reynolds says. This frequently is followed by a change in gait or posture, and eventually an unwillingness to continue performing. A change in a dog's attitude or behavior may also indicate a problem. If panting escalates to hard, labored or forceful panting, activity should cease immediately.

"Even moderate panting can indicate a dog is having difficulty maintaining a level of performance," Reynolds says. "A slight case of overheating will cause discomfort for a dog. But if not attended to immediately, the situation can move to serious health problems such as circulatory collapse, kidney impairment, brain damage, and in extreme cases, heart damage."

Access to water is another means of preventing overheating in a dog. A water deficiency can result in severe consequences to a dog's health and can occur quickly. "A well-hydrated dog has good circulation and blood volume, which means it is better equipped to adjust to the demands of its work," Reynolds says. "It is important to offer a dog water every five to 15 minutes during strenuous activity. Pouring water over a dog before an activity begins is another way to keep him cool."

Reynolds also recommends keeping a dog at the optimal body weight. A dog that is too heavy not only has to exert more effort to move, the added insulation means it gains heat more rapidly, and it takes longer to dissipate the heat generated during exercise. "It's never good for a working dog to carry too much extra weight because of the stress on its joints. The weight increases the risk of injury," he says.

Another consideration is a dog's energy and electrolytes. Energy is es-

*PURELY DOGS continued on next page*



Frequent hydration is key to avoiding heat exhaustion.

## Russell Moccasin...Proud RGS Corporate Sponsor

Russell Moccasin Company is proud to be a corporate sponsor of RGS. Russell has been making fine custom fitted hunting boots by hand from the finest leathers available for more than 110 years. Legions of satisfied customers can attest to Russell's quality, fit and comfort.

The Signature South 40 Birdshooter, far right, is the finest upland bird hunting boot made...waterproofed leather, triple vamp construction for all day comfort and support and light as a feather. Judy's Boot, (below, center) is a more lady-like boot made with buttery soft heirloom French Veal leather... lightweight with exceptional water resistance. A significant portion of the proceeds from both boots goes to RGS to help support vital grouse habitat.

For ordering instructions and measuring form see the Russell Moccasin website, [www.russellmoccasin.com](http://www.russellmoccasin.com), click on Order Form and Fitting Instructions

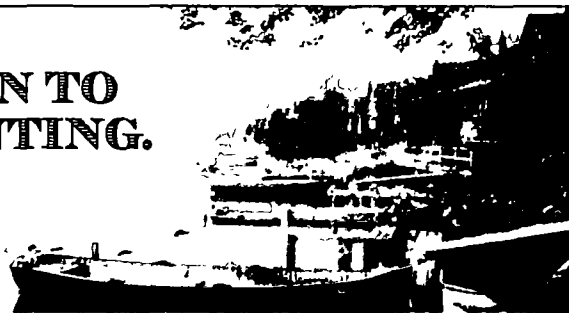


Russell offers two of its most popular models...the Signature South 40 Birdshooter and the lady's Judy's Boot in special RGS-brand versions



285 S. W. Franklin • PO Box 309 • Berlin, WI 54923  
920-361-2252 • Fax: 920-361-3274  
[www.russellmoccasin.com](http://www.russellmoccasin.com)

## OPEN TO HUNTING.



Grant's Kennebec Camps, long renowned for the largest fly-fishing-only waters east of the Mississippi — has opened thousands of acres of prime cover to hunting. Hunt migratory birds or partridge and grouse with experienced guides and either our dogs or yours.

Well-appointed lakeside cabins. Serving three hearty meals daily,

including your pack lunch. Refrigerated game lockers.

*Hunter/Fishermen; ask about our "Cast & Blast" Special!*



GRANT'S KENNEBEC CAMPS

P. O. Box 786 • Rangeley, Maine 04970

Toll-Free 1-800-633-1815

[www.grantscamps.com](http://www.grantscamps.com)

## PURELY DOGS *continued from page 13*

sentinal for a dog's body to perform the functions regulating its body temperature, and electrolytes aid in maintaining the appropriate amounts of fluids in the kidneys, muscles and other organs, Reynolds says. A lack of adequate fluids impairs the ability to dissipate heat.

"Fortunately, a good, quality dog food will give a dog the electrolytes it needs," he says. "It is unusual to see an electrolyte deficiency in a dog fed a complete and balanced quality dog food."

## Handling an Emergency

When overheating is suspected, the first step is to move the dog out of the sun and into a cool area. If the dog can drink, a few sips of water should be given. Pouring cool – not cold – water under the dog's armpits, in between the legs and on the belly will also help.

If a dog does not respond, a switch to rubbing alcohol may be more effective because it evaporates quickly and pulls heat out more rapidly than water. Whenever possible, wetting down a dog before transporting to a veterinarian will result in evaporation and have a cooling effect. Driving with the windows open or placing the dog near an air conditioning vent can also enhance evaporation.

"A trip to the veterinarian is necessary anytime you think there may be a problem," Reynolds says. "It's always better to err on the side of safety than to wait too long and have the dog suffer irreversible damage or even die." ❖

<sup>1</sup> Macintire DK. Heatstroke in Canine Athletes. *Sports Medicine Program* newsletter. Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine. Spring 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Gillette RL. Temperature Regulation of the Dog. *The Athletic & Working Dog*. Vol. 1, Issue 1.



GEAR THE WAY YOU'D DESIGN IT™

*Lance Tracy and "Ripley"*  
SportDOG Brand Director



The SportHunter™ 1825 Remote Trainer

DESIGNED BY FOLKS AS  
**BIRDY AS YOU.**

SPORTDOG.COM

# Hunting Early Season Ruffed Grouse

Bagging birds in the early season can be the most rewarding part of hunting this upland legend.

*by Doug Stamm*



This is the time of year ruffed grouse hunters dream about. The nights are cooling, and the colors of autumn are starting to appear. From the Rocky Mountains in the west and across the Great Lakes region to Canada's maritime provinces in the east, anticipation of a good grouse season is high as many natural resource agencies are reporting ruffed grouse numbers are on the rise after several years of being in the tank at the low end of their 10-year population cycle. After years of little interest in hunting low grouse numbers, this year marks the return of many veteran hunters to the grouse woods and the introduction of many new hunters to the ruffed grouse, America's prized game bird of the upland forest.

Opening morning for ruffed grouse has, for many of us, the same excitement as opening morning for big game. With dogs at the ready, hearts racing in anticipation, we'll step into the grouse woods at first light looking for that first bird of the year. As prepared as we may be, this is also the toughest time of year to be a grouse hunter. With leaf cover still as thick as summer, we'll hear the thunderous take off of many more birds than we'll ever see. But a few basic tactics of early season grouse hunting will up your odds of that first bird in the bag.

Millions of acres of ruffed grouse cover are available to American upland hunters in state and national forests, county forests and paper company land. Canadian hunters will find similar public land in national forests and Crown land. With thousands of square miles of land available, it's important to first narrow down areas where birds will be most abundant in the early season.

Whether you hunt a National Forest in Minnesota or a county forest in Pennsylvania, you are wise to go online and search out information on boundaries, walking trails and ruffed grouse management practices of a particular forest. Without leaving your house you can do some pre-season research and find good ruffed grouse habitat on land managed by your state or provincial natural resource agency, the U.S. Forest Service or the Ruffed Grouse Society. If you find a forest that's managed for ruffed grouse and also provides a map of hunter walking trails, you likely have a good place to hunt without ever seeing it first.

When old and mature forests are logged, cleared or burned, wildlife-friendly aspen naturally takes its place to the benefit of ruffed grouse populations. In forests managed for ruffed grouse, blocks of timber are periodically logged to encourage and maintain the prime grouse habitat of young and older age aspen mixed with conifers. Forest managers know where these areas are and you will too if you ask.

Ruffed grouse are primarily native birds of the young northern forest, superbly adapted to follow the cycles of aspen on which they depend year round. The densest grouse populations in the early season are found in and around the edges of aspen stands around 10 years old, when an individual tree is as thick as your wrist or a little smaller. Grouse thrive in this kind of cover where food is abundant and where they can raise their young in relative safety from

avian predators that do the most damage to grouse numbers. No matter where an upland forest is, the best habitat is the same. Once you pick your forest, look for blocks of golden aspen where the grouse hen has been raising her brood all summer and where they will still be on opening day.

Once the right habitat is found, the grouse will be there, but getting a shot at them is the biggest challenge of all. Being a successful grouse hunter now means staying on trails and roads. Leaf cover is too thick in the early season and prime aged aspen is often too dense to navigate off trails. Most sand, gravel and two track forest roads through public land are legal to hunt and offer an open and easy walk through good cover. Forests managed for ruffed grouse will often have their walking trails seeded with clover, a favorite food of grouse early in the fall that brings birds to the trails and trail edges.

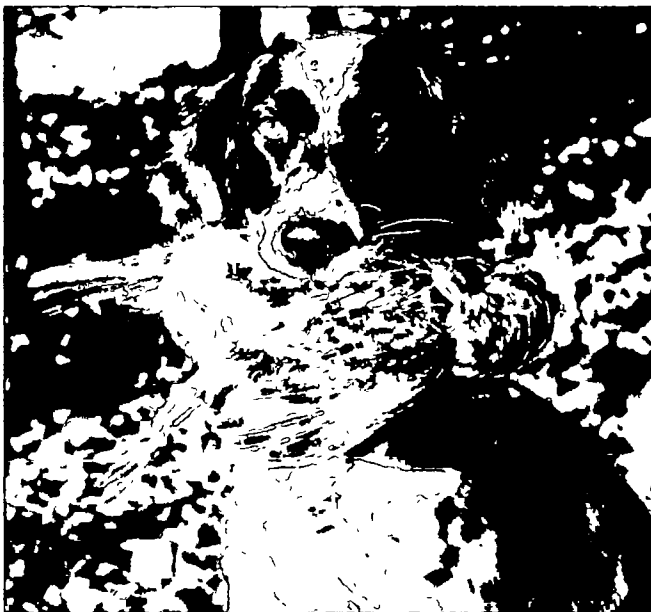
Many forests managed for grouse also gate their hunting trails to ATVs, to the benefit of walking bird hunters. Snowmobile trails in northern forests offer more early season opportunities and maps are usually available through a local chamber of commerce. Trail maps are recommended even if you have a GPS. A straight line back to your vehicle may look like the shortest route, but you may find a lake or swamp in the way, so stick to the trails. Later in the season when leaves drop you can walk around the clear cut edges and wander off the beaten path but now is the season to

stay on trails and roads. The birds are there.

Whether on a trail or road, this open corridor forms an edge through cover that grouse prefer and offers early season hunters the best opportunity for an open shot at a bird. Grouse often flush at the road edge and head for that open corridor to escape. Under the best circumstances a grouse is visible and in range for only a few seconds and a grouse flying down or crossing your open road is the best shot you'll get this time of year.

Some grouse trails are large circles that can bring you back to a starting point and others are dead ends that require a return trip down the same path. Don't avoid the dead end trails. Grouse are ground wanderers and some times more birds are found along a trail on the return trip. Grouse are also known to hang out in specific areas or coverts day after day, even year after year. Something in an area, maybe wild grapes or a raspberry patch, brings them back to a predictable spot. If you flush some birds one way down a trail, be ready for that spot on the return trip.

If you find a drivable road through good cover and you hunt with a friend, leap-frogging into the wind will help your dogs find birds and keeps you in fresh cover all the way. Drop your friend off at the start of good cover and park your vehicle half way. Your friend can hunt to the vehicle and pick you up down the road. Simple but effective. Other areas, in addition to roads and trails, can offer corridors through thick grouse habitat. Good maps like DeLorme's state



Having a good retriever like this English setter, Tess, is key to locating birds downed in heavy, early season cover

HUNTING EARLY SEASON *continued on next page*

gazette  
public  
tances  
burds li  
Ab  
huge to  
Many  
hunter  
them o  
Ma  
hunting  
patches  
periods  
next to

In a  
advise  
load re  
actuall  
ing gro  
needles  
chokes  
perfect  
The sh  
the nor  
you'd i  
a box.

A d  
cially i  
than w  
shots w  
are qui  
often w  
we hit  
knowin  
ways h  
makes i  
hunting  
love to  
golden  
a dog t  
bird in  
early se

Hun  
edg  
retr  
ear

FELLOWSHIP *continued from page 28*

indeed a rough, worn veteran of the field. "This ol' gal's had a hard life," I thought to myself, as I reached down to heft her. The action rattled loosely at my touch, but I handled her with reverence. Unable to resist tossing the gun to my shoulder, I found it to be perfectly balanced and so quick handling that it seemed strangely possessed of life. There was no doubt that here was a true bird gun.

I had no knowledge at the time of Doc's wing shooting ability, but this gun indicated that he was an old hand. Just then Doc exited the house with Nikki, a bouncing chubby female Brittany, clearly excited about the upcoming hunt. She greeted me like an old friend, and turned out to be a no-nonsense bird hunting machine who pointed successive timberdoodles with skill and obvious delight in the thorny jungle that surrounded Doc's home. We quit that day with four birds each, just shy of the five bird limit.

The following morning I met Bud, a long time hunting buddy of Doc's, for a Canada goose hunt on Maryland's historic Eastern Shore. Doc opted out of the pit blind that day because the "inane activity" didn't have enough action for him, and the

shooting was "far too easy." Between flights of honkers Bud pressed me for the particulars of the previous day's woodcock hunt. In particular he wanted to know the ratio of shots fired to birds bagged.

When he learned that Doc had fired seven shots to bag four woodcock and that I'd gone four for four he convulsed into laughter, clapped his hands and shouted, "Oh my God! Oh my God! Doc will be beside himself! I love it!" Throughout the remainder of our hunt Bud would periodically slap his thigh and chortle, "I love it. Ha ha haaaa, I love it! Wish I could have been there!"

Later that day, as we were trudging out of the corn field with a limit of geese slung over our shoulders, Bud explained his amusement. "Nobody out-shoots Doc; he takes extreme, and I mean EXTREME pride in his wing shooting and he is never out shot by anyone. I'll guarantee you he's completely paranoid right now. Mark my word, he'll insist on knowing your shooting history and he'll demand a rematch."

Bud certainly knew his man. The next morning when Doc and I piled into the cab of his old pickup to find another bird cover, an unmistakable tenseness attended our conversation. Finally, unable to contain his curiosity, Doc threw pride aside

and a burning question erupted from within his soul, "Alright, dang nearly shouted, "I have to know thing." Turning to glare into my eye demanded, "Where in the hell did I learn to shoot?"

The intensity of his inquiry was by the knowledge that the birds I'd had offered only fleeting opportunity had demanded instinctive, snap shot Doc's emotional questioning Bud's prediction and made me Honestly, more luck than ability bagged those birds, and my amusement infuriated Doc as he repeated the question with increased anxiety and volume.

"Doc," I replied, between chuckles, "I've been hunting woodcock and since I was twelve years old and international style skeet twice a week."

"I knew it! I knew it," he boomed, pounding the steering wheel. "I know you had some kinda training, nobody shoots me. All that stuff about 'Oh, I know a woodcock if one got up in my eye' - dang you! You got me, you got good, but I want a rematch! You woodcock coverts up your way?"

From this initial hunt a companionship of like minds grew, one that has thrived through many seasons during which we have applauded one another's successes and laughed at our misses. We exulted in our son's first grouse and mourned the loss of fellow gunners and beloved covers. We've trod many secret and treacherous paths together.

Over the years I've marveled at Doc's deadly accuracy and lightning reflexes. I have seen him make shots on a grouse that were literally impossible. Uncommon misses were prime opportunities for some good natured teasing. Doc gave no quarter himself in a critique, it was only fair. When I'd bagged a grouse and yell "Got 'em!", Doc would growl "Huh, dang near missed I!"

Through the years I've remained awestruck at Doc's shooting ability. Nothing has ever changed the wing shooter's skills like experience. Few men have bagged the nunupland birds that have fallen to Doc Remington. Although Doc now hunts the finest and fastest wing shot ever known.

I am eternally indebted to Doc for introducing me to the fellowship of wing shooters - a fellowship of men whose hearts cherish full bag memories and eagerly welcome new recruits. 🐾

RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



# LOGOED MERCHANDISE

**Boyt Signature  
Series Case with  
Accessory Pocket**

**\$101.00**

RGS-GC21WC



**1.800.550.2698 • WWW.SHOPRGS.COM**



Remington

105  
CTi II

MODEL 105 CTi II

THAT FEELING  
WHEN THE BIRDS  
SEEM TO FOLD THEMSELVES ...  
WE BUILT IT.

THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED  
AUTOLOADER. At a mere 7 lbs. and generating 48%  
less recoil, the Model 105™ CTi II is our lightest, softest-shooting  
semi-auto 12 gauge ever. Its four-part dampening process reduces  
rearward force to a gentle push. And the first-ever titanium  
shotgun receiver is also home to the world's only semi-auto bottom  
feed and eject mechanism. This fall, the shot may feel effortless,  
but toting your game bag will be another story altogether.

REMINGTON  
WINGMASTER HD™

The Drop-Dead Better heavy-density  
payload, and the ultimate amino to feed  
our new autoloading masterpiece. They're  
packed with the roundest, truest-flying denser-than-lead pellets  
we've ever produced. And the results are truly devastating.



Remington

Remington

C O U N T R Y

www.REMINGTON.com/105CTi II

## Project Brush Pile

by Jeff Helsdon

Every once in a while a grouse hunter finds an area that consistently produces flushes. Usually these prime coverts have everything a grouse needs and are part of an early successional forest.

A few years ago, I came across one of these coverts that didn't fit the typical mold of prime grouse cover. Ontario Hydro – the provincial electricity utility as it was known then – had just put through a high-voltage line not too far from Tillsonburg. The new path for the power lines cut a swath through a conservation authority bush open to hunting.

A year or so after the construction was complete, I was hunting in the area and discovered it had quickly become a grouse honey hole. The area was mostly mature forest. Some edge habitat was created next to the power corridor, but it wasn't grown into the thick edge cover grouse love. Instead, as my springer spaniel quickly discovered, the grouse had taken a liking to brush piles built by construction crews.

It was a surprise the first time the dog flushed a grouse out of one of the brush piles. I had flushed grouse out of brush piles before, but not in such an open area. These piles were more what one would think of as a home for rabbits.

These brush piles weren't typical stand-alone piles, but smaller piles of brush built around the base of mature trees. It was perfect for hunting. The brush piles weren't large enough to make it difficult for the dog to bust the birds out, but just perfect for a small springer to wiggle under in pursuit of grouse scent.

I can't remember if I flushed grouse every single time I went to that area, but my record was pretty good. Usually hunting for only a half-hour to an hour could produce a flush or two. Helping the flush rate was the fact my hit rate at that time wasn't too impressive. It took me a few years after this to save the money for my dream 20-gauge over-and-under that actually improved my shooting ability. Still, there had to be several birds in the area.

The recent logging in the area didn't produce a noticeable increase in stem density. Besides the brush piles, the cover really was mature. Young succulent plants would have provided a food source for the grouse.

In a year, or maybe it was two, I stopped finding grouse in those particular brush piles. I'm not sure if it was the start of a downward population trend that our area still hasn't recovered from, or if it was just the brush was aging and not as great for a grouse to hide under anymore.

Brush piles have often been a part of habitat improvement initiatives of the North Shore Ruffed Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society. After logging has been completed on Long Point Region Conservation Authority property, RGS has paid for crews to make brush piles out of the tree tops.

While grouse piles are generally thought of as rabbit habitat, really it provides appropriate hiding places for any forest wildlife. During the season or two I flushed so many grouse out of the aforementioned area, I only flushed one rabbit. I remember it clearly



Brush piles, like the one these youth are building, can create excellent habitat for many types of wildlife.

because the dog went in one side, the rabbit out the other and I watched it run away – as I'm not a big rabbit hunter. The dog came out of the brush pile, looked back at me and barked as if saying "What are you doing? Why didn't you shoot?"

The creation of brush piles in a woodlot can enhance habitat conditions for ruffed grouse, rabbits and other wildlife," said Dan Dessecker, director of conservation policy for RGS "The protection provided by brush piles can be especially important to wildlife in situations where there is little other cover, such as in a small woodlot with a very open understory"

Although our chapter has been doing its best to improve grouse habitat, I was thinking recently what we could do to make landscape level changes. Certainly encouraging transitional forest is one step, but taking advantage of the tree tops for brush piles is another. I have noticed woodlots are generally pretty clean after most logging. Perhaps it's time for a large-scale educational campaign encouraging landowners to instruct loggers to leave the tree tops and make their own brush piles.

Dessecker advised when constructing brush piles, it's important to remember to use the large diameter logs and branches as the base and pile the small branches on top. This practice increases the number and longevity of hiding places for wildlife.

The other great thing about building brush piles is it's an activity RGS chapters can involve youth in. Groups such as Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, and youth conservation groups can be involved in these hands-on conservation activities. Something as simple as collecting used Christmas trees for brush piles can be a great activity. Assisting to build brush piles after logging is completed can also be a rewarding effort.

RGS chapters could then go one step further and use their dogs to flush birds or rabbits out of the brush piles down the road. The youth would see how their work paid off and made habitat better for forest wildlife. 🐾

# L.L.Bean—Official Boot Sponsor of the Ruffed Grouse Society



We've been outfitting wingshooters for over 97 years with gear that stands up to the rigors of the field. Our upland boots are crafted from tough yet supple kangaroo leather and rugged canvas that can take the punishment of pushing through brush without weighing you down. They're lined with waterproof, breathable Gore-Tex® and cushioned for long-lasting comfort.

Bean's Gore-Tex Kangaroo Leather/Fabric Cap-Toe Upland Boots Available in Men's whole and half sizes Medium D and Wide EE 7 to 12, 13. Women's Medium B 6 to 11.

**FOR A FREE CATALOG**

Call 800-791-8164 or [shop llbean.com](http://shop.llbean.com)

# L.L.Bean



L.L.BEAN IS PROUD TO BE THE OFFICIAL BOOT SPONSOR OF THE RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



## Remington's Premier® Over-and-Under, the Ruffed Grouse Society Edition

The forend is small and slim,  
with the Schnabel flare at the end.

By Nick Sisley

Remington's entry in the made for the Ruffed Grouse Society shotgun is the Premier®, a 20-gauge lightweight that swings nearly featherlike and carries similarly. It's an over-and-under with all the embellishments any ruffed grouse and woodcock hunter would demand or want, and underpriced when you compare it to other lightweight upland over-and-unders of similar quality.

I've been having a lot of fun with this smoothbore, though I'm banging away at clay targets instead of real birds, since the testing is being done in the spring. Yes, I would dearly love to carry this one in the October woods. I'm betting you would too! Perhaps you have seen the Premier® Ruffed Grouse Society Edition at one of the banquets. If there is a banquet coming up in your area, be sure to check out this over-and-under.

Offered solely in 20-gauge, which serious grouse buffs are leaning toward more and more these days, I predict this one will function reliably in the long-term and hold up well into the next generation. No one will deny the gun's good looks. Both deeply blued receiver sides are embellished with the Ruffed Grouse Society logo – a flushing grouse and a twittering woodcock in gold – plus above this logo you read "Ruffed Grouse Society." On the bottom of the receiver is the Remington "R" logo – again in gold – with "Remington Arms" in print above and "Premier" below.

As well as I like the distinctive gold birds and gold "R", I think I like the engraving pattern even better. It consists of an intricate floral, rose and scroll pattern on both receiver sides, and there's even more of this same engraving on the receiver bottom. All in all, it's about as close to 100 percent receiver coverage as you can get. It might not be hand engraving, but it still looks great. In fact, it's pretty tough to tell this engraving from the real thing. The "buttons" (outside of the trunnions) are engraved – as are the opening lever, the top tang and the trigger guard. Getting back to the opening lever, its serrated or checkered on both sides, which makes operation of that lever easy for southpaws as well as right-handed shooters.

I also like the general lines of the receiver. Both sides have what I call the Perazzi "scalloping" below, above and in front of the gold birds. There are very attractive

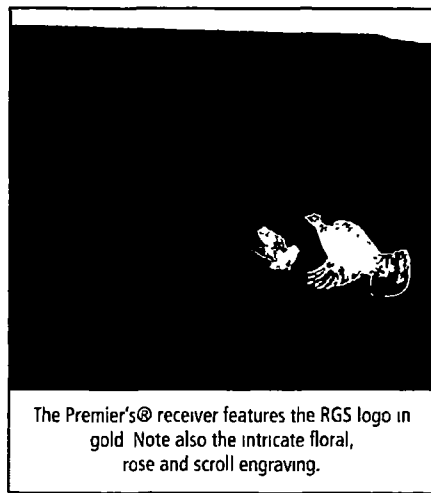
cutouts around the fences near the top of the receiver, just where the fences match up with the barrels.

The receiver wood-to-metal fit is very good, though you have to keep in mind that today's stocks are inletted on a computerized machine, so one size fits all. My test gun's stock is a nice piece of walnut, but the most pleasing part is the finish – simply oil – great for traditionalists like you and me. There's a soft rubber recoil pad about ½" thick, set off from the walnut by a black spacer. The back of the recoil pad is smooth, the edges a bit too sharp for my tastes. If this were my gun it would be easy to file those sharp edges into a more rounded shape, and thus help eliminate any potential hang-ups during the mount on a quickly disappearing grouse.

The forend has the Schnabel shape, and the butt stock has the straight grip that's usually reserved for side-by-side guns with two triggers. However, I find that when carrying a shotgun for extended periods of time without shooting, typical of grouse and woodcock sport, a straight grip sets my wrist angle a tad more upward compared to a pistol, or even a semi-pistol grip. I wonder if this slight upward change in wrist angle when carrying the gun translates into tighter stock-to-cheek contact as the gun mount is completed.

The checkering pattern on the straight grip comes well back, plus it's set off with a small checkered diamond near the front. The Schnabel-shaped forend has pretty much complete wraparound checkering coverage. I'd be very surprised if the checkering isn't done by computerized machinery – it's that good. The diamonds are slightly flat so you will enjoy carrying this one, thin gloves or no gloves. The checkering is done at 18 lines to the inch.

The trigger is gold plated. The barrel selector is a switch – move it right or left – as a part of the safety switch. The safety comes on every time you open the gun, which is always referred to as an automatic safety. I definitely prefer non-automatic safeties, but that's a personal preference. The safety is well serrated, and it slips off easily in the heat of shooting action. The trigger is relatively heavy with its 5½ pound let off, but I don't find this objectionable in grouse ordnance. The trigger does break well, with no creep. The gun has inertia, not mechanical triggers.



The Premier's® receiver features the RGS logo in gold. Note also the intricate floral, rose and scroll engraving.

At its widest point the forend is 1.66" thick. The butt stock is 1 ½" thick, and the straight grip is comfortably thin. Stock dimensions are 14¾" LOP, 1 ½" DAC and 2¾" DAH. A news release I have for this gun says the weight is 7½ pounds. Happily, this is a gross error, as my digital postal scale puts this one at 6 pounds 5.5 ounces; little wonder it handles so well and carries so easily!

Other specs include the 26" barrels (which were well struck, deeply blued and thus with no polishing marks) that heft 2 pounds 12 ounces, and the little forend goes 9.1 ounces. The rib is target style at 7mm wide with steel mid bead and white front bead. I measure the top bore at .622 and the bottom at .620. Standard 20-gauge bores have traditionally been .615 for decades, so I guess we can say that these are slightly overbored. Five ProBore 20-gauge screw-ins are provided. The one marked Skeet measures .621, the one marked Improved Cylinder is .618, the Light Modified measures .610, the Modified 605 and the Full .591. I found that the .621 and .618 chokes really smoked 20-yard targets, so despite these both being pretty open they will still be deadly on grouse at typical grouse ranges.

In closing I have to say that Remington and the Ruffed Grouse Society have a real winner with this one. You can check it out further at [www.remington.com](http://www.remington.com). A hard lockable case is included. 🐓

Nick Sisley can be contacted at [nicksisley@hotmail.com](mailto:nicksisley@hotmail.com).



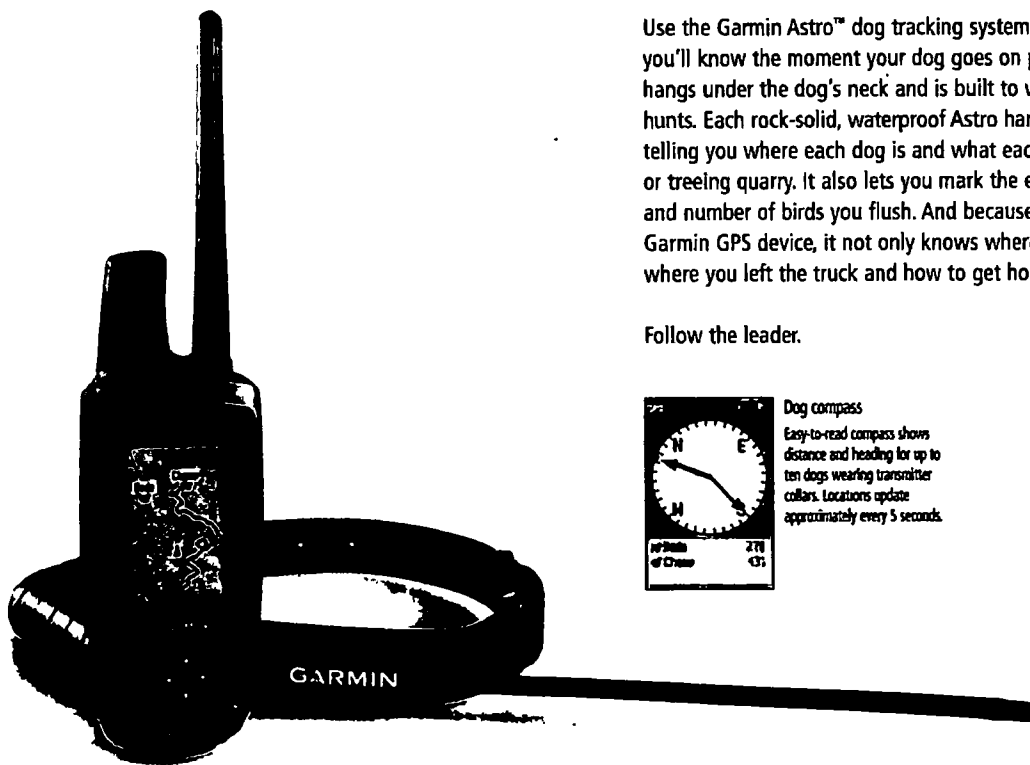
## Get to the point.

Use the Garmin Astro™ dog tracking system with the new DC 30 collar and you'll know the moment your dog goes on point. This new, more rugged design hangs under the dog's neck and is built to withstand the most challenging hunts. Each rock-solid, waterproof Astro handheld can track up to ten dogs telling you where each dog is and what each is doing: running, sitting, on point or treeing quarry. It also lets you mark the exact location, time of day, elevation and number of birds you flush. And because the Astro handheld is also a Garmin GPS device, it not only knows where your dogs are, it remembers where you left the truck and how to get home.

Follow the leader.



**Dog compass**  
Easy-to-read compass shows distance and heading for up to ten dogs wearing transmitter collars. Locations update approximately every 5 seconds.



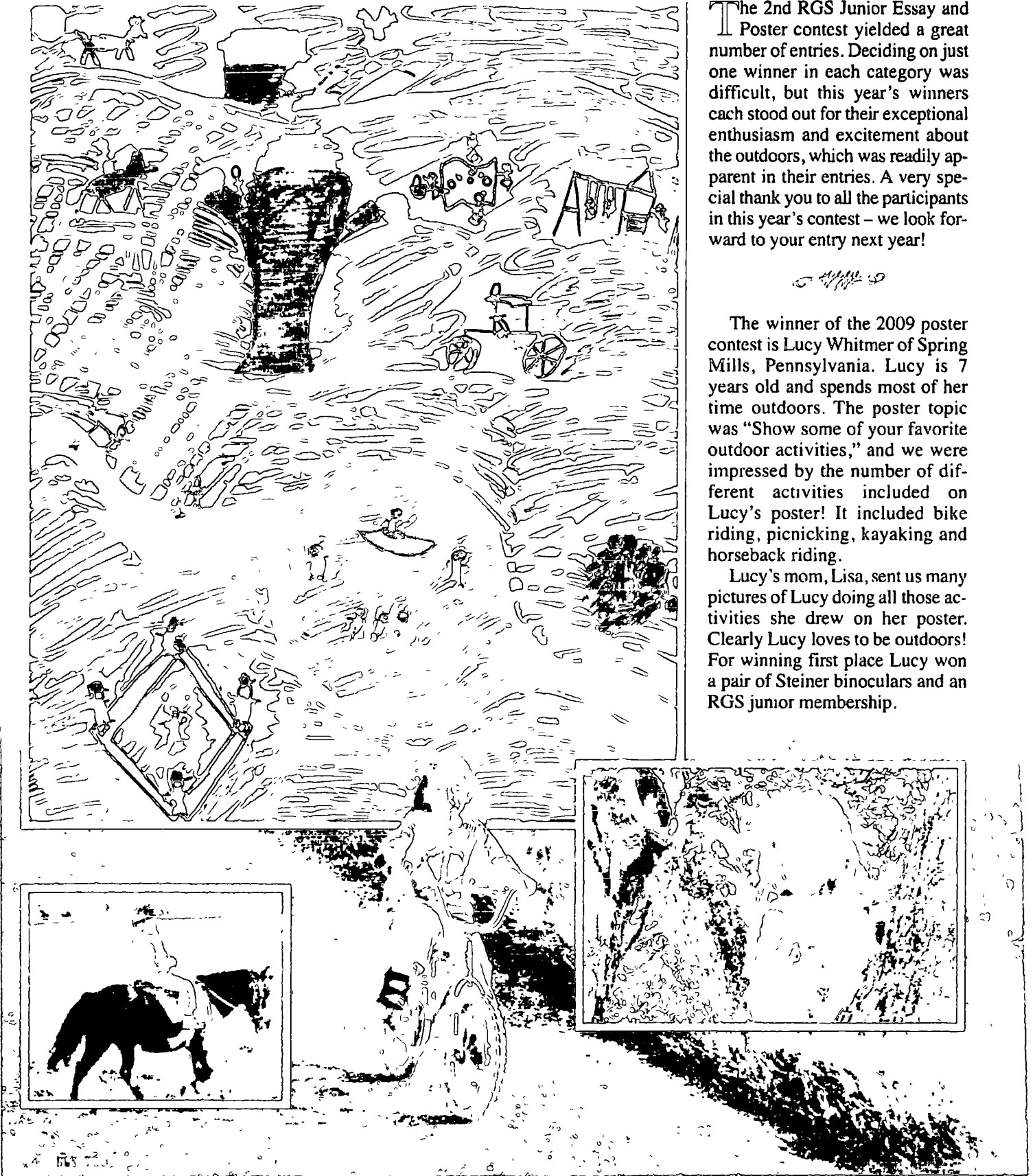
# Junior RGS 2009 Essay and Poster Contest

The 2nd RGS Junior Essay and Poster contest yielded a great number of entries. Deciding on just one winner in each category was difficult, but this year's winners each stood out for their exceptional enthusiasm and excitement about the outdoors, which was readily apparent in their entries. A very special thank you to all the participants in this year's contest – we look forward to your entry next year!

*Lucy Whitmer*

The winner of the 2009 poster contest is Lucy Whitmer of Spring Mills, Pennsylvania. Lucy is 7 years old and spends most of her time outdoors. The poster topic was "Show some of your favorite outdoor activities," and we were impressed by the number of different activities included on Lucy's poster! It included bike riding, picnicking, kayaking and horseback riding.

Lucy's mom, Lisa, sent us many pictures of Lucy doing all those activities she drew on her poster. Clearly Lucy loves to be outdoors! For winning first place Lucy won a pair of Steiner binoculars and an RGS junior membership.





This year's winning essay was written by 13-year-old James Krantz from Chanhassen, Minnesota. The topic was "What person has taught you the most about the outdoors?" and James won a Tri-Star Youth Model 20-gauge shotgun along with an RGS membership for his response.

James' essay moved us because it's clear from his words how much he appreciates nature. His father has taught him how to enjoy the great outdoors while being safe and responsible.

# The Great Outdoors and the Person Who Taught Me All About it

*by James Krantz, Age 13, Chanhassen, Minnesota*

The person who taught me the most about the great outdoors is my father. When he was a boy, his father took him hunting and camping and he learned a lot. Now he has taught me all those things.

When I was five years old, my dad got a bb gun for me and taught me how to shoot it and be safe with it. Even before that, he would put me in a backpack and take me hiking and hunting. I am glad he taught me at such a young age how to enjoy being outside.

Last year I took firearm safety training and passed the test! Most of the credit goes to my dad because of what he has passed on to me. That year I got a shotgun and on Youth Waterfowl Day dad took me hunting. It was beautiful day, and not long after opening a mallard flew by. My dad called it with his duck call and it turned and came straight in. I fired, it folded and landed only three feet away! That was my first duck. The funny thing is that it was a hen mallard, the same as my dad's first duck.

One very important thing he has taught me is how to stay warm by dressing in layers. You need to know that because hypothermia is very dangerous. Whenever we go canoeing my dad always makes sure we have our life vests on and the right survival gear. That way, in case our boat turns over and we fall in, we'll be able to get warm. Whenever we go camping, hunting or other out-

door activities, my dad always makes sure we have matches, knives and other things with us, just in case we need them.

Just recently I got a Remington 798 rifle. Not long after I got it, my dad took me to a range to site it in. When deer season came, he took me hunting. The first day out I learned the hard way about dressing in layers! I was so cold that I could barely feel the gun in my hands. That was good that it happened, because the next time we went out my dad did not have to remind me to put on better clothes! The next day I was out from 5am to 6pm and saw nothing at all, but I was warm.

A couple of years ago my Grandpa Curt, uncle Karl, cousin Connor, Dad and I went on a canoe trip down the St. Croix River. We brought our fishing rods, tents, sleeping bags, and all our cooking things. My dad and I took a 17 foot canoe. Grandpa, Uncle Karl and Connor went in Grandpa's duck boat. We paddled down the river and fished on the way. The first day we saw a bald eagle in a tree and my dad and I got really close to it! At the end of the day we pitched camp. That night, while Grandpa was sleeping under the stars, something woke him up when it licked and nibbled on his hand! He yelled, "Shoo!" and whatever it was ran away. We fished and we caught a few bass, and a couple times we had to take the boat out of the water so we could go

around a pile of logs or fallen trees.

Whenever we leave a campsite my dad taught me how to clean up the campsite before we leave so other people don't have to. We even leave some firewood for them. My dad has always made sure that we leave little or no evidence of our being there. Whenever anyone goes camping or any other outdoor activity, they should always try to leave the place better than when they got there.

My dad has taught me how to do a lot of things, but the most important thing he has taught me about the outdoors is that we should always take care of it, so other people will be able to enjoy it too. 🐾





# JUNIOR RGS AN ANIMAL THAT CREATES ITS OWN HABITAT

Some wildlife species can create their own habitat, or place that provides them with what they need to survive. One of the animals pictured below is such a creature. Do you know which one it is?

Here are a few clues: it has a big flat tail that it uses to slap the water when alarmed and large front teeth – called incisors – that it uses to cut down trees. It then cuts the trees up and uses them to build dams, usually located in narrow valleys. The dams cause water to back up behind and create ponds or wetlands. This creates the kind of place that this animal lives. Once enough water is present this animal may use the sticks it has cut from the downed trees to build a lodge where it can escape from the cold and predators.

Wetlands provide habitat for other wildlife as well. In fact the edges around the outside of the wetland are often used by woodcock as they probe the moist soil found there in search of their favorite food – earthworms. There are times, however, when the dams built by this animal cause flooding of roads and yards. When that happens, the animal may need to be caught or trapped and then the dam removed. There are several kinds of traps that can be used to catch this animal. Can you match each of the pictures below with the name of the trap they represent along with the animal most likely to be targeted by each trap? (Answers at the bottom of the page.)

<p>1</p>	<p>Foothold Trap</p>	<p>BEAVER</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Snare Trap</p>	<p>FOX</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Body Grip</p>	<p>RACCOON</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Live Trap</p>	<p>MUSKRAT</p>

Answers:

1. Cage Trap  
Raccoon

2. Body Grip Trap  
Muskrat

3. Foothold Trap  
Red Fox

4. Snare  
Beaver

# Sustainable Forestry,



All Plum Creek lands have been certified to the standards of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. This certification confirms our longstanding commitment to practicing sustainable forestry, which incorporates the perpetual growing and harvesting of trees with the protection of wildlife, plants, soil and water quality. It also confirms the diligence of our foresters who work every day to meet this commitment.



## Plum Creek

*Growing Value from Exceptional Resources*

2007  
1000  
0000

by Timothy C. Flanigan

pland bird hunters and their dogs spend the majority of the year in anticipation of the fall hunting season. In the South, bird and quail are synonymous, but in the North, bird means ruffed grouse. When grouse and woodcock seasons coincide, the time is right for bagging birds and memories afield with special friends and prized dogs. Through many bird seasons and miles of mountainside and marsh land, I've learned to cherish the intense bond that exists between serious wing shooters. It is a kinship based on the addictive challenge of upland wing shooting and intensified by a deep respect for our esteemed quarry.

To hold a ruffed grouse in one's hand is to grasp the essence of the wild. The bird's mere presence in a woodlot hallows the ground of a cherished covert. Each taking of the king of game birds is savored with bittersweet emotion tempered by the knowledge that our sport impacts their overall population very lit-

tle, while our license fees and contributions to conservation organizations like the Ruffed Grouse Society benefit them greatly.

The legendary elusiveness of the ruffed grouse and the mysterious nature of the American woodcock add to the allure of their pursuit and engender an instinctive kinship between wing shooting enthusiasts. This curious bond is cemented by the pleasure, pride and satisfaction of proficient shooting and sealed by memories of golden days afield with beloved dogs that share alike in our lives and passion for feathers on the wing.

A love of the sport generates and fuels this curious affinity among wing shooters. Perhaps such relationships are not unique; surely basketball and football enthusiasts, even motorcyclists, share something similar. Yet there are dimensions to wing shooting that no ball or motor sport can include, not the least of which is the marvelous spirit and innate wildness of our feathered quarry and the enchanting places that they call home.

For several decades, my most frequent birding companion has been Al "Doc" Geis. He is one of those truly unique characters that I feel lucky to have known in my lifetime. Our long friendship is based on an appreciation and esteem for upland birding. Shared memories of tough shots made and easy ones missed, good natured chiding of our gun handling and dog performance critiques further cement our bond.

Each bird covert contains familiar landmarks where just a glance and a smile confirm our mutual recollections of the personalities and antics of the dogs that once hunted there. We are enveloped in turn by the spirits of ol' Jake, Nikki, Ben and Shy Boy amid the tangles, where they still hunt and point just as we remember them.

A mutual friend introduced Doc and me so that I could guide him on a spring gobbler hunt. That initial hunt began several more and a spark of friendship began. That fall Doc invited me to his Maryland homestead for a woodcock hunt. "You know what a woodcock is, don't you?" he asked. I assured him that I'd probably recognize one if it flew up in front of me and happily accepted his invitation.

A rising sun was eroding the fog of a pleasantly cool October morning when I located Doc's secluded driveway. The long narrow lane tunneled through a maze of trees overgrown with honeysuckle and terminated in a clearing circled by ancient cedars. At the center of the clearing stood a gracefully aging plantation house with a massive white oak sentinel guarding its entrance, a scene eerily reminiscent of Tara.

A severely weathered shotgun leaned against the trunk of the prodigious oak. A tattered brown hunting vest of similar vintage lay in a heap beside the gun's cracked stock. Before I could ring the door bell, Doc's big voice boomed over a chorus of barking dogs. "Go ahead and gear up, I'll be right with you; got a couple of chores to do first." The condition of the old gun fascinated me and I couldn't resist handling it. I hoped Doc wouldn't mind.

I was surprised to find that it was a modern Model 1100 Remington skeet gun with a ventilated rib and dual sight beads. Its metal parts shone with a silvery, hand-polished patina. Years of use had polished away checkering and numerous cracks, dents and gouges exposed the depths of the weathered walnut. She was

FELLOWSHIP *continued on page 36*

**TO HOLD A  
RUFFED GROUSE  
IN ONE'S HAND IS  
TO GRASP THE  
ESSENCE OF THE  
WILD. THE BIRD'S  
MERE PRESENCE  
IN A WOODLOT  
HALLOWS THE  
GROUND OF A  
CHERISHED COVERT.**



indeed a rough, worn veteran of the field.

"This ol' gal's had a hard life," I thought to myself, as I reached down to heft her. The action rattled loosely at my touch, but I handled her with reverence. Unable to resist tossing the gun to my shoulder, I found it to be perfectly balanced and so quick handling that it seemed strangely possessed of life. There was no doubt that here was a true bird gun.

I had no knowledge at the time of Doc's wing shooting ability, but this gun indicated that he was an old hand. Just then Doc exited the house with Nikki, a bouncing chubby female Brittany, clearly excited about the upcoming hunt. She greeted me like an old friend, and turned out to be a no-nonsense bird hunting machine who pointed successive timberdoodles with skill and obvious delight in the thorny jungle that surrounded Doc's home. We quit that day with four birds each, just shy of the five bird limit.

The following morning I met Bud, a long time hunting buddy of Doc's, for a Canada goose hunt on Maryland's historic Eastern Shore. Doc opted out of the pit blind that day because the "inane activity" didn't have enough action for him, and the

shooting was "far too easy." Between flights of honkers Bud pressed me for the particulars of the previous day's woodcock hunt. In particular he wanted to know the ratio of shots fired to birds bagged.

When he learned that Doc had fired seven shots to bag four woodcock and that I'd gone four for four he convulsed into laughter, clapped his hands and shouted, "Oh my God! Oh my God! Doc will be beside himself! I love it!" Throughout the remainder of our hunt Bud would periodically slap his thigh and chortle, "I love it. Ha ha haaaa, I love it! Wish I could have been there!"

Later that day, as we were trudging out of the corn field with a limit of geese slung over our shoulders, Bud explained his amusement. "Nobody out-shoots Doc; he takes extreme, and I mean EXTREME pride in his wing shooting and he is never out shot by anyone. I'll guarantee you he's completely paranoid right now. Mark my word, he'll insist on knowing your shooting history and he'll demand a rematch."

Bud certainly knew his man. The next morning when Doc and I piled into the cab of his old pickup to find another bird cover, an unmistakable tenseness attended our conversation. Finally, unable to contain his curiosity, Doc threw pride aside

and a burning question erupted from deep within his soul, "Alright, dang it," he nearly shouted, "I have to know something." Turning to glare into my eyes, he demanded, "Where in the hell did you learn to shoot?"

The intensity of his inquiry was fueled by the knowledge that the birds I'd bagged had offered only fleeting opportunities and had demanded instinctive, snap shooting. Doc's emotional questioning proved Bud's prediction and made me laugh. Honestly, more luck than ability had bagged those birds, and my amusement infuriated Doc as he repeated the question with increased anxiety and volume.

"Doc," I replied, between chuckles, "I've been hunting woodcock and grouse since I was twelve years old and I shoot international style skeet twice a week."

"I knew it! I knew it," he boomed, while pounding the steering wheel. "I knew you had some kinda training, nobody out shoots me. All that stuff about 'Oh, I might know a woodcock if one got up in front of me' - dang you! You got me, you got me good, but I want a rematch! You got any woodcock coverts up your way?"

From this initial hunt a companionship of like minds grew, one that has lasted through many seasons during which we've applauded one another's successes and laughed at our misses. We exulted over his son's first grouse and mourned the passing of fellow gunners and beloved dogs. We've trod many secret and treasured coverts together.

Over the years I've marveled at his deadly accuracy and lightening reflexes and have seen him make shots on speeding grouse that were literally impossible. His uncommon misses were prime opportunities for some good natured teasing, but as Doc gave no quarter himself in shooting critique, it was only fair. When I'd wing-tip a grouse and yell "Got 'em!," Doc was sure to growl "Huh, dang near missed him."

Through the years I've remained awestruck at Doc's shooting ability and bird hunting instincts. Nothing hones a wing shooter's skills like experience, and few men have bagged the numbers of upland birds that have fallen to Doc's old Remington. Although Doc now treads heavenly coverts, he is without a doubt the finest and fastest wing shot that I've ever known.

I am eternally indebted to Doc for introducing me to the fellowship of wing shooters - a fellowship of minds and hearts that cherish full bag limits of memories and eagerly welcome new recruits. 🌿

RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



# LOGOED MERCHANDISE

**Boyt Signature  
Series Case with  
Accessory Pocket**

**\$101.00**

RGS-GC2IWC



1.800.550.2698 • [WWW.SHOPRGS.COM](http://WWW.SHOPRGS.COM)

# Get on Target

with Orvis

Custom-Fitted and  
Fine Consignment  
Shotguns.

2, #5-9 #6-6, #1-5  
Mourning Doves Killed \_\_\_\_\_  
Turkeys Killed \_\_\_\_\_

were nearly perfect and we p  
specially Luck; he  
for a change and let  
through a lot of  
nber that for SP  
Doesn't get and

## Custom-Fit and Consignment Shotguns

### *Make your days afield more memorable than ever.*

Make your days of hunting and shooting more successful, enjoyable, and memorable. A gun custom-fitted to your specific build helps you mount, swing, and get on target with greater consistency. That consistency results in more hit birds and clays and more fun afield. Choose from our selection of custom styles and models of Caesar Guerini and Arrieta shotguns—our gunsmiths of 29 years will custom fit your gun to your specifications, so you can enjoy the benefits of a custom-fit shotgun for years. You'll find that the same care and expertise put into our

custom-fit shotguns also goes into selecting our fine-grade consignment shotguns, offered to you only after close inspection and pricing advice by our master gunsmiths. Thousands of fine sportsmen receive Orvis mailings and visit our Orvis stores and website to browse our selection, so your shotgun is sure to get the attention and the price it deserves. For help with your gun selection please, contact John Rano at The Orvis Gun Department at 802-362-2580, e-mail him at [ranoj@orvis.com](mailto:ranoj@orvis.com), or visit [www.orvis.com/customshotguns](http://www.orvis.com/customshotguns)

# ORVIS

# GREAT NEW BOOKS FROM SPORTING CLASSICS



## Legend's Legacy



*Legend's Legacy* stands as an affecting commemoration of the most endearing aspects of our sporting traditions. In his poignant novella and 20 essays, award-winning author Mike Gaddis recalls the mentors who helped guide a child and how we pass along to others the lessons we learn about the outdoors.

*Hardcover with dust jacket: \$30*

*Leather-bound, signed deluxe edition: \$60*

Acclaimed for his stirring portraits of big game and waterfowl on the wing, Ron Van Gilder stands among the best wildlife artists in the world. You'll enjoy more than 125 full-color paintings and many large, detailed drawings in this 11x14-inch book.

*Hardcover with dust jacket: \$60*

*Leather-bound, signed deluxe edition with giclee print: \$125*



## Brushes with Nature

The Art of Ron Van Gilder

*Gamefield Classics* features beautiful photographs by William Headrick and insightful text by Michael McIntosh on more than 35 different shotguns and 25 rifles in this impressive 9x12-inch book. McIntosh relates the story behind each firearm, its creator and its road to success.

*Hardcover with dust jacket: \$45*

*Leather-bound, signed deluxe edition: \$90*

**(800) 849-1004 or [www.sportingclassics.net](http://www.sportingclassics.net)**

Mention this ad when ordering or enter the coupon code RGS during online checkout and get 15% off your purchase.





#### Cutting through cover

When flushed, ruffed grouse often fly low through the understory, achieving top speed very quickly. Instinct takes over quickly and many flushed grouse will place a tree between them and their pursuer – whether it be a human or natural predator like a goshawk or great horned owl. Grouse most often make for the thickest cover they see, and flight distances for adults are typically a few hundred feet to a few hundred yards – they aren't built for long distance flights.

Artwork by Christopher Smith

*Previously we followed a hen through her dangerous brooding period and examined the growth of her hatched chicks through the summer months. The chicks grew rapidly by consuming high-protein summer foods in anticipation of the coming fall.*

*The illustrator for our centerfold this year is Christopher Smith, a wildlife artist from Interlochen, Michigan. The text of this centerfold first appeared in the New Hampshire Wildlife Federation Newsletter in 2005*

Over the 18 weeks that have passed since their hatching the young grouse have completed their adolescent period and are now fully young adults. The onset of this adult phase triggers an instinctive urge for the young birds to initiate a fall dispersal – which is when the brood breaks up and members emigrate from their home brood cover to seek out and establish home ranges of their own. Although ruffed grouse have relatively small home ranges most of their lives, this fall movement is a time when grouse are most likely to be highly mobile.

The first to leave are the young males. They abandon the familiarity of the family group to seek out acceptable drumming cover for next year's breeding efforts. In general, these emigrating males will move into the nearest unoccupied drumming cover they come across because once they leave the security of the dense, productive brood cover they are exposing themselves to less than prime conditions of food abundance and protective cover.

Fall day length mimics daylight at the height of the spring breeding season, and as photoperiod is one of the primary triggers in ruffed grouse to begin drumming, you can often hear confused young male grouse drumming in the fall as newfound territorial instincts kick in. Unfortunately, this also announces their presence to hungry predators and partially explains the 45% late fall mortality rate for grouse that dispersed just a month or so earlier.

On average, males find new drumming cover within 2 miles of their original brood site, though they will continue to

## Sexing and Aging Grouse

There are several methods for sexing grouse after a bird is brought to hand. The most reliable method is by examining the cream colored "dots" on the rump feathers. Males have two dots (sometimes three), females only one.



MALE



FEMALE

search up to a 5 mile radius of their juvenile home if necessary. Once a drumming territory had been located, these males will rarely travel more than 300 yards from their newly established territory

Young female grouse leave the brood a week or so after the males, but are far more bent on moving away from their native area. Dispersing females typically travel five to six miles, but it is not uncommon for some intrepid young hens to move over 15 miles before establishing their new home range

On rare occasions the original mother hen and her brood will travel together and remain a group until as late in the winter as January. However, if you come across a group of hens and younger birds in late fall, chances are these birds came from many different broods and have been drawn together by some outside effect such as a location with high food abundance or more advantageous protective cover in an area otherwise dominated by more dangerous habitats.

### Effects of Fall Dispersal

Of course, the fewer the areas of "good cover" that exist, the easier it is for predators to focus in on those areas of prime habitat and hunt concentrated grouse flocks more effectively. This is just another reason why quality habitat management for ruffed grouse on public and private lands should seek to create a wide distribution of good cover across a management

In addition to determining the sex of a bird, hunters often wish to determine if the bird is an adult or juvenile. Though it may be easily determined a juvenile due to smaller size or downy areas, as the season progresses these indicators may not be present. The outer two primary feathers can be a good indicator. On a juvenile these two feathers are not molted until the following year, and they remain more pointed and narrow than the other eight primaries or outer two primary feathers on the adult, which are more rounded and broad.

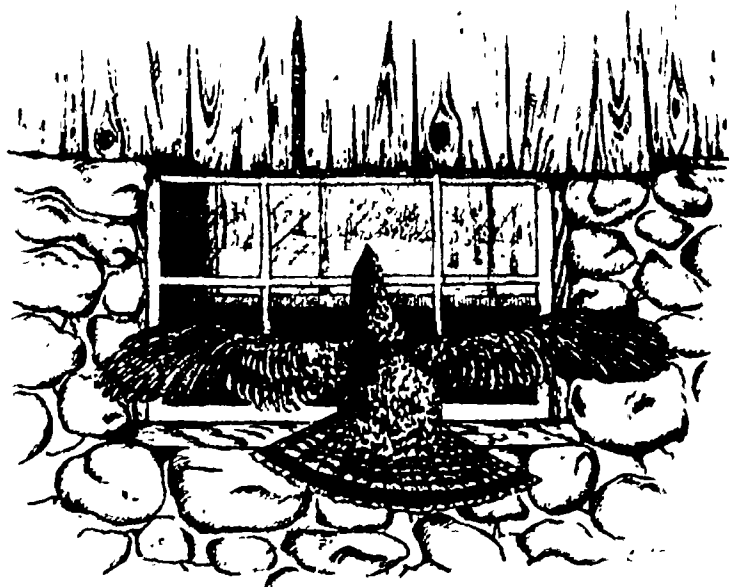
Oftentimes the outermost primary feather will be observed to have adult characteristics, but will be much shorter than the remaining nine. This happens when the bird is a year old and that primary feather is still growing in after the early summer molt.



JUVENILE



ADULT



Frequently referred to as the "fall shuffle," newly matured grouse begin to disperse from their brood in the middle of September, a practice that prevents inbreeding. Oftentimes a 17- or 18-week-old grouse will simply take flight and cover several hundred yards a day until several miles have been traversed before settling down in a preferred habitat.

As these young grouse fly through unfamiliar cover, they may come into contact with man-made obstacles, such as wires, towers, roads, or houses. Windows can prove especially dangerous. If there is another window on the opposite side of the building, a young grouse may have the illusion of a clear corridor for flight. Many grouse die each year from broken necks or lacerations from broken glass.





## The Specifics of Managing Habitat for Ruffed Grouse

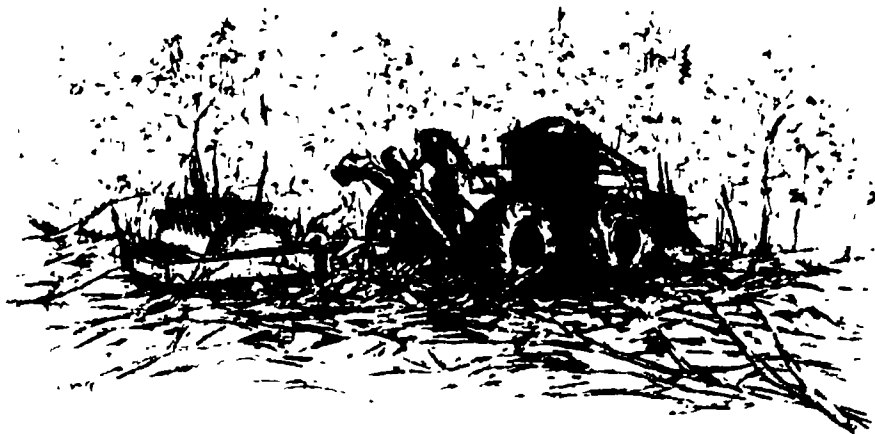
Landowners interested in supporting a diversity of wildlife and maintaining young forest components in their woodlands should consider the use of wildlife habitat management tools such as commercial timber harvesting.

Pioneer hardwood species such as aspen, pin cherry, birches and some oaks don't grow well in shade, so it's necessary to remove as many mature, overstory trees as possible within a harvested area to aid the natural development of future mature hardwood stands. As a side benefit, the pioneering tree seedlings and shrubs exposed to warm, full sunlight develop rapidly into dense, young forest stands that protect grouse and other vulnerable wildlife from predators such as hawks, owls, fox and coyote. Ruffed grouse production benefits the most by the establishment of the 5 to 40 acre patches of young forest habitat that are 1 - 15 years old.

In the hilly terrain of the Northeast, positioning cuts to restore young forest patches on south- or southeast-facing slopes exposes them to the best and warmest sunlight and can provide the best grouse habitat. Regeneration on these sites is often characterized by dense stands of tree seedlings and succulent ground vegetation which are important as protective escape cover for young chicks and additionally provide a variety of berries, fruits and other soft mast foods for grouse and many types of wildlife.

Positioning harvests lower on a slope, especially adjacent to shrub-dominated old fields or streams, can also provide grouse access to fruit-producing shrubs such as blackberry, dogwood, viburnum, elderberry, and grape which flourish in moister soils. On cooler, more northerly facing slopes, conifers like spruce, fir and hemlock can help provide winter thermal cover that grouse often use for protection from inclement weather. Densely needled conifers such as white or Norway spruce, planted in small patches, can greatly enhance ruffed grouse survival in winter.

Next time we'll continue with our discussion by exploring in greater detail the goals a landowner should strive for on properly managed land.



Heavy machinery, like that pictured above, are critical in the creation of young forest habitat through the harvesting of older forests or shrubs. The Ruffed Grouse Society currently owns and operates machinery used for habitat projects throughout the eastern US and the Midwest.



If you ask 10 game lovers about their favorite dish you'll most likely hear 10 different answers. Ruffed grouse, however, will probably be at the top of the list. The breast meat is white and the legs are darker. When roasted with an apple in the stuffing it is a tasty dish that will make that next miss on a straightaway just a little more painful.

### Coming Winter 2009

Our newly matured grouse struck out on their own this fall, and the struggle to survive has taken a toll on the young birds. As they enter their first winter they will face many new challenges. We'll chronicle this phase of their lives in our next issue.



# *The Best There Is, just less of it.*

Browning Feather models feature a lightweight, high-strength alloy receiver with an integrated steel breech face that gives you all the durability expected from a Browning, without the extra weight. There is nothing finer than spending your days roaming the woods with good dogs and great friends. Days like these are even better when you are carrying an exquisite Browning Feather over and under.

*Citori 625 Feather*  
(available in  
12, 20, 28 and .410)

*Cynergy Feather*  
(available in  
12, 20, 28 and .410)



**BROWNING**

The Best There Is

[browning.com](http://browning.com)

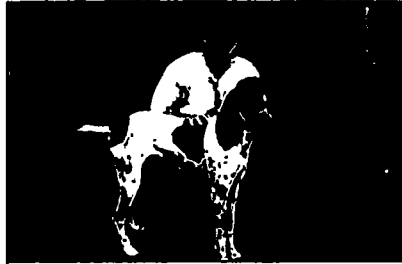
# HOME COVERS CALLING

Spotlighting the Doings of RGS People on the Ground



Members of the Chain O' Lakes RGS Chapter of Eagle River, Wisconsin gathered to plant 500 hawthorn shrubs near Eagle River in early May. This project was an initial stage in an effort to restore ruffed grouse and woodcock habitat within the Vilas County Forest along a newly constructed transmission line.

Protective fencing was installed at the planting sites to protect the shrubs from deer and snowshoe hare. Project cooperators included the American Transmission Company, Vilas County Forestry Department and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. *Photo by Larry Stevens.*



The new Backbone Mountain RGS Chapter of Maryland held an Inaugural Chukar Challenge in early May. Over 40 dogs were entered in various categories. Lisa Calhoun and German shorthair Mandy (pictured) took first place in the adult pointing dog division. Rich Skeweris and German wire-hair Jake took second, and Chad Fridley and English setter Magnum placed third.

The adult flushing division was won by Kenny Hawk and Belle. Brandon Tarquimo and Rambo took first in the puppy pointing division. First place in the puppy flushing division went to Ben Campbell and Remi.

Events also included a sporting clays shoot. Don L. Helbig and Chad Fridley tied for first place. The event was sponsored by the Wings of Challenge, which included provisions and the use of their facility.



The sporting clays station was a popular spot for the 476 attendees of the 2009 Introduction to the Outdoors, a youth education day coordinated by the West Central Wisconsin RGS Chapter of Marshfield, Wisconsin.

Some of the events offered at the all-day event included archery, dog training, hunter safety instruction, fly fishing, and wildlife management talks in addition to the sporting clays. It was held on the Les and Melody Bergdahl property in conjunction with the Quality Deer Management Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, the North American Versatile Dog Hunting Association and many others.

## Pennsylvania Wilds Upland Bird Hunt

### November 6 - 7, 2009

Information on a small number of deer open to public hunting in the Pennsylvania Wilds. Only 100 permits will be able to be purchased so get yours early. For more information, contact the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Regional Forester, District 10, 1000 State Street, Harrisburg, PA 17103. Phone: 717-733-6300. Website: www.pgc.com

The Pennsylvania Game Commission is pleased to announce that the 2009 Upland Bird Hunt will be held on November 6 and 7, 2009. This hunt is open to the public and is a great opportunity for hunters to enjoy the outdoors and hunt for upland birds. The hunt will be held on the Pennsylvania Wilds, a large area of public land in the western part of the state. The hunt is open to hunters of all ages and is a great opportunity for hunters to enjoy the outdoors and hunt for upland birds. The hunt will be held on the Pennsylvania Wilds, a large area of public land in the western part of the state. The hunt is open to hunters of all ages and is a great opportunity for hunters to enjoy the outdoors and hunt for upland birds.

Charles E. Bechtel, RGS Chapter Leader, Pennsylvania, held a day on State Game Commission. The project was coordinated by Pennsylvania Game Commission Regional Forester, District 10. Attendees assisted with the removal of over 10,000 feet of fence that was no longer needed. The fence regeneration was completed.



Fiddlin' Carson Peters and the Rockhouse String Band provided musical entertainment at the 14th annual Appalachian Highlands RGS chapter banquet held in Johnson City, Tennessee on March 28.

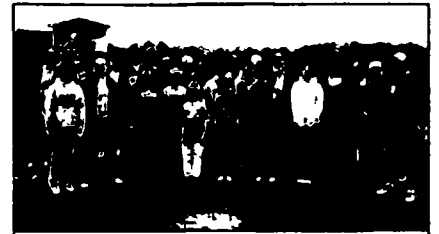
The band, which is comprised of chapter members, spouses and children, performs old-time and bluegrass music. Carson Peters (second from left) is a 5-year-old fiddle virtuoso and son of founding chapter member Jamie Peters (far left). Peters has won several regional fiddling competitions. Also pictured are fellow band members (from right) Mike and Kay Elliott, Rita Quillen, and Sarah Collins. Collins is Peters' fiddle teacher and cousin.

## Saginaw Chapter News

Bob Davis RGS Chapter of Saginaw hosted a banquet for March 18th. Davis, who served as president of RGS from 1971 to 1975, took his name off the list in 1988 in honor to raise money for contributions and current members.

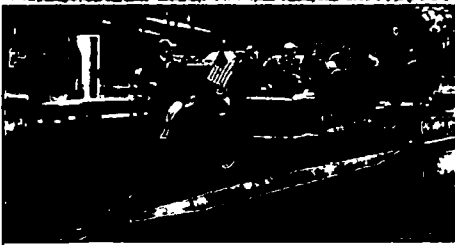


Three youth in attendance at the 2009 Albert A. Smith RGS Chapter of Saginaw Valley, Michigan banquet won 20-gauge shotguns donated by John Stevens, also pictured. From left are Justin Combs of Duck Lake, Drennan Neil of Kawkawlin, and Jerod Johnson of Saginaw.



A recent youth shoot of the Albert A. Smith RGS Chapter of Saginaw, Michigan drew many youth from the surrounding communities. The three volunteers who served as instructors at the event were: Ron Heatley (far r), Randy Almirall (2nd from r) and Jim Milete (3rd from r).

HOME COVERS cont. on next page



The first group of shooters head out to the course during the Inaugural Grouse Challenge Shoot of the South Mountain RGS Chapter of Lancaster, Pennsylvania in late March. The shoot was held at the Elstonville Sportsman's Association sporting clays course and was specially designed to simulate grouse shots. High shooter was Nick Bryant, second place went to Dan Bryant and third place was a tie between Scott Duffin and Dave Hackman.

## Dog Fun



The Robert J. Lytle RGS Chapter of Lapeer, Michigan held a Gun Dog Fun Trial in April. Pictured from the flushing dog division are: (from l) Judge Jeff Bryson; Fritz Heller and Labrador Bella, first; Dan Hartley and Labrador Kate, second; Rod Robison and English cocker Rocky, third; Mike Cuneo and Labrador Sisco, fourth; and Judge Mike Boufford.



Pictured from the pointing division are: (from l) Judge Tom Vanlerbergh, Duane Hadrich and English setter Joe, first; Mark Stephens and English setter Chip, second; Gary Sorah and English setter Jack, third; and Judge Bob Brcker. (Not pictured are Michael Harbin and his Irish setter RJ, fourth.)



## Northeast Season's Hunt

October 15-19, 2009  
Weatherby's Lodge  
Grand Lake Stream, Maine

RGS is planning an exciting fall adventure for upland hunters at Weatherby's lodge in Maine. There are 20,000 acres of habitat managed for grouse and woodcock nearby, and the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge - a center for woodcock management research open to hunting - is only a short distance from camp.

### Schedule:

- October 15 - arrival, cocktails and dinner
- October 16 - hunting, lobster or steak dinner
- October 17 - hunting, dinner, business meeting, and silent auction

Cost is \$965 per person without hunting guide. One guide for two hunters is \$1,300 per person. (Number of guides available with dogs is limited.)

and locked salmon season will still be open for those interested in fishing.

Spots will be limited to 20 two-person parties. Spots assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Book Signing

Dennis Labare, author of *Ungewahnn: The Handlocked Salmon at Grand Lake Stream* will be on hand in the evenings at Weatherby's to sign autograph copies of his book.



## HOME COVERS CALLING

continued from page 39



Pictured are the committee members of the Ohio River RGS Chapter of New Martinsville, West Virginia. The chapter held their 9th annual banquet in early April. During the event Andy Pittman, banquet chairman (front row, 3rd from l) presented a framed print to Russ Smitley, Donation and Prize Chairman (back row, 2nd from l) on behalf of the entire committee. Smitley's was recognized for his outstanding efforts in recruiting donations and sponsors for the event.



Longtime volunteer Tom Dew of Elgin, Illinois – shown here during a recent hunt – celebrates 25 years of dedicated service to the T. Stanton Armour RGS chapter of Chicago, Illinois.

## In Memoriam

### T. Stanton Armour, 1924 - 2009



T. Stanton Armour died at his home in Lake Forest, Illinois on May 18, 2009. He was 85. Armour served as President of the Ruffed Grouse Society from 1978 to 1996. Upon declining to stand for reelection, he was named Director Emeritus. An enthusiastic

lifelong sportsman, Armour was a staunch supporter of RGS for many years and the Chicago chapter bears his name.

Armour graduated from St. Mark's School in 1942, and he served for three years in the Navy during WWII. He graduated from Yale University in 1949. He had a long, successful career in the investment business. He was committed to civic service, and in addition to his service to RGS, Armour served as President and Chairman of Mitchell Hutchins and Co and as a Director of Paine Webber and UBS. He was also a Chairman of the Salvation Army Chicago Advisory Board.

Armour was an avid cinematographer, history buff and a passionate outdoorsman. Bird shooting and fishing were among his favorite activities. He traveled the world to experience anew that dawn anticipation that precedes a hunt. Camraderie of fellow hunters and close friends was a constant source of enjoyment in his life. His son, Tony Armour, noted in his eulogy "What a cast of characters my father was friends with! He was rich with friendship."

Armour is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Jean Reddy Armour, two children, Tony (Robin) Armour and Audrey Ayars, four grandchildren, a brother, Vernon Armour, and sisters, Elizabeth Hollins and Leola Macdonald

## The RUFF Capital Campaign

Ruff, or Restoring Upland Forests Initiative, will raise \$5 million dollars in the next two years.

The money will be used to fully endow the RGS team of biologists and to reduce overhead costs by purchasing a headquarters building.

The Campaign is off to a great start. To date over \$2 million dollars have been pledged to the cause.

Make a difference today by calling:

1-888-564-7474

or visit:

[www.ruffedgrouse.org](http://www.ruffedgrouse.org)

*Help us build a road into a brighter future.*

### Merritt Downing, 1921 - 2009

Merritt Downing, avid outdoorsman and WWII veteran, died on April 4, 2009 in Washington, Pennsylvania. Downing was 87. Throughout his life Downing was an active supporter of RGS, he was a founder and three-time president of the Pennsylvania Grouse Association, which has since merged with RGS. Downing was also a longtime volunteer for his local chapter, and donated many items over the years.

In WWII Downing was a dive bomb pilot and maintenance engineering officer. He was awarded the WWII Victory Ribbon and the American Area Campaign Ribbon. He is survived by his wife Betty of 64 years, two sons, David (Tana) Downing of Marietta, Ohio, and Paul Downing of New Freeport; a daughter, Susan (Dan) Lancy of Columbus, Ohio; and four grandchildren





*Welcome*  
**FISHERMEN,  
 HUNTERS,  
 AND  
 OTHER  
 LIARS.**

Welcome, outdoorsmen! We built it just for you. It's true. Your local Bass Pro Shops® store is the only one of its kind. Sure, you'll discover in all our stores the same Low Price Guarantee, expert sales associates, and the best selection of outdoor products around. But the specific gear you'll find is unique to each location, because we understand that the Kansas grasslands are very different from Ohio hardwoods. And that's no lie.



Shop online at  
[basspro.com](http://basspro.com)

For a FREE catalog  
 1-800-BASSPRO

For an adventure in itself  
 Visit Our Stores Nationwide

# Ohio Hills Chapter of Lancaster, Ohio

## Conservation in the The Conservation Plan



A family tradition: three generations of the Borah family have a passion for grouse hunting and conservation.

The story of conservation in America is often one of weighty policy changes, political bigwigs and heavyweight organizations with far-reaching clout. There exist, however, a host of stories that tell a different story – those that concern everyday individuals with a passion for the environment and the wildlife that depend upon it. The Ohio Hills chapter of Lancaster, Ohio has one such story.

The Borah family has a tradition of grouse hunting. Terry Borah Sr. bought a .410 for his son, Terry Borah Jr., when Terry was 5 years old. "I learned gun safety early, and passed it on to my son. Grouse hunting has been a big part of what our family enjoys doing," the elder Terry explains.

It was only natural, then, that when the younger Terry had a son, Rob, he passed the tradition on to him. The passion the three share has spilled over into their family – wives, sisters and friends share alike in their belief that the creation of habitat is critical to a stable grouse population.

This February the chapter held their 6th annual banquet. The event, which draws around 75 attendees, is the cooperative effort of not only the Borah family, but also a few other driven individuals in the community.

The chapter hosts annual fun shoots with an average of 30 participants in early fall. It's an event that enables members to introduce friends to RGS. "Last year my son Terry's son-in-law brought eight new people to the shoot. All the guys then showed up to our banquet in February. The fun shoot often enables us to recruit new members," explains the elder Terry.

**"We are all part of RGS because we believe in the perpetuation of grouse habitat."**

The chapter also has hopes of beginning a youth program, perhaps in conjunction with a Pheasants Forever event that is very popular. "They would absolutely welcome us," the elder Terry says with conviction. "and it would be a great way to expose the public to RGS."

Rob is currently serving as banquet chair, and at 29 he is the youngest chair in his region, if not the country. "I have the full support and years of knowledge from my dad and grandpa to help me so it's been fairly simple," he explains. "I enjoy work-

ing with our committee as well as Lisa Rossi (RGS Regional Director) each year to set up events and our banquet." His father is prize chairman. The elder Terry, who is enjoying taking a backseat to his son and grandson, is treasurer and ticket chair. "I enjoy watching them take the lead – I've done those things before and I like to see them getting this experience," he says.

The younger Terry is quick to point out that the chapter relies upon the contributions of all participants. "A lot of credit also needs to be given to the ladies in our family. My three daughters and daughter-in-law help at our functions. Cori & Mandie run the money tables. Khristeen and her friends work the raffles and Jeannine is always there for set-up." The elder Terry's wife, Mona, and his son's wife, Lori, are both active participants in the chapter as well. The event is, quite clearly, a family affair.

Lisa Rossi finds the chapter's enthusiasm inspiring. "It has been a privilege to work with them – as a group they are very dedicated to RGS' mission. Rob is the youngest chairman I have ever worked with, and he really helps the committee to look at things in a different light. Both the elder and younger Terry step up to accomplish whatever needs done. The entire committee's respect and commitment to one another and RGS have created a wonderful group of people that it is a pleasure to work with."

The elder Terry views the commitment of his entire family quite simply. "Even though the grouse numbers in Ohio aren't as great as they were when we were younger, we still enjoy grouse hunting – and we enjoy it as a family! We are all part of RGS because we believe in the perpetuation of grouse habitat." And when the earnest convictions of just one person are powerful enough to carry through multiple generations, it becomes a story of conservation worth hearing. 🦌

The Ohio Hills RGS Chapter is a core of committed volunteers. Pictured (from l) are Mike Stout, Terry Borah Sr., Rob Borah, Terry Borah Jr. and Lyndon Danison. Key committee members not pictured are Tim Waibel, Steve Buckley, Tom Barnett, Lewis Garver, Pat Weirs, Lori and Mona Borah.



# Fall... It's not just about color!



Marquette Michigan  
has been named  
in the nation for  
hunting & fishing by  
Outdoor Life Magazine

Each season brings its own unique blend of recreation and relaxation to Marquette country. Come experience family fun, great restaurants, unique attractions and quality lodging anytime of the year.



**MARQUETTE COUNTRY**  
IN MICHIGAN'S UPPER PENINSULA  
DISCOVER HOW CIVILIZED OUR WILDERNESS CAN BE

**PURE MICHIGAN**  
Your trip begins at [michigan.org](http://michigan.org)

For a free visitors' guide call 1-800-544-4321  
or visit [www.marquettecountry.org](http://www.marquettecountry.org)

# The Return of the American Chestnut: Blight-resistant variety is on the horizon

By Jeff Mulhollem, Chuck Gill and Mark Banker

Mature American chestnuts are large, stately trees that dominated the landscape in the Eastern United States until the mid 1900's. Plant explorers inadvertently introduced an Asiatic blight fungus (*Cryphonectria parasitica*) when they imported plants from across the ocean in the late 1800's. Just fifty years later the fungus had spread across the land and decimated the American chestnut population – as a result the tree was nearly wiped from our forests.

Today there is hope that in the near future the American chestnut will once again regain a place of prominence in the forest – at least according to experts from Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences

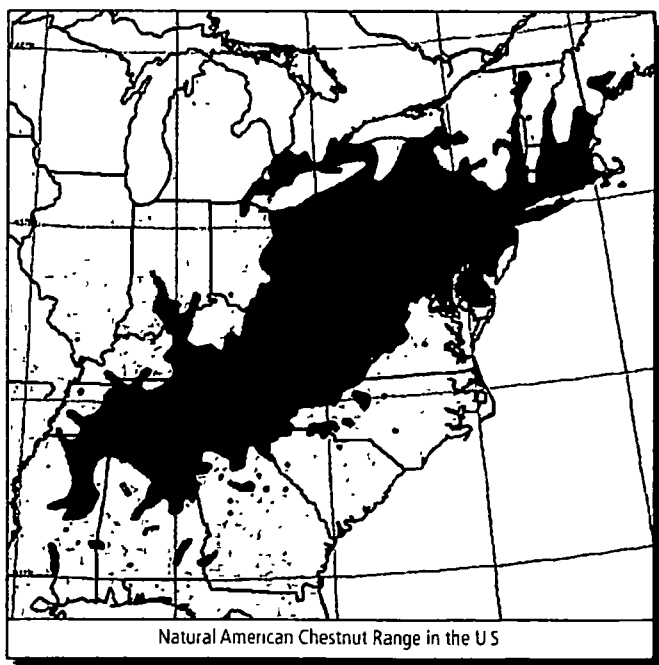
Hybrid trees, created by cross-breeding the blight-resistant Chinese chestnut trees with American chestnuts, are backcrossed with American chestnuts again in order to select de-

sirable form and traits of the American chestnut. It is a process that takes years and appears to be close to completion. "We have a six-generation breeding program – we

think that will be adequate for both full American character and blight-resistance," said Sara Fitzsimmons, Northern Appalachian regional science coordinator for the American Chestnut Foundation and a research support technologist in Penn State's School of Forest Resources

"The fifth generation trees are currently planted at the Penn State Arboretum and at our Meadowview facility in southwestern Virginia. We collected seed from those trees last year and we actually have sixth-generation plants growing in pots right now at Penn State."

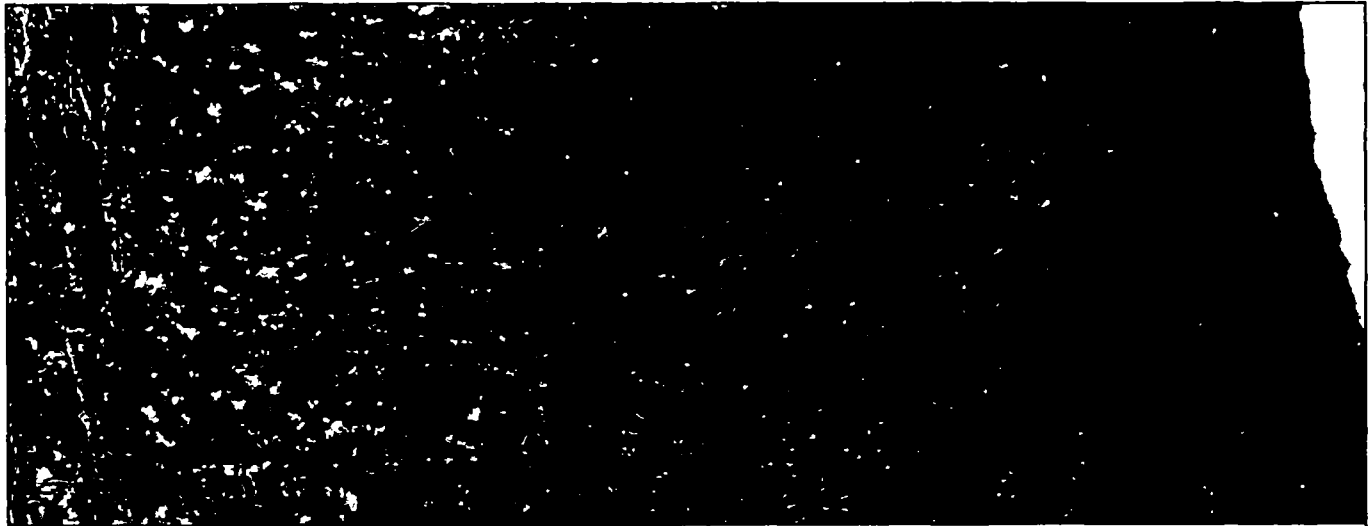
According to Fitzsimmons these trees should be blight-re-



Natural American Chestnut Range in the US



American Chestnut Foundation employees Bryan Burhans (l), executive director, Tom Lasdon, intern, and Sara Fitzsimmons, senior scientist, discuss the progress being made in creating a hybrid blight-resistant American Chestnut.



American chestnuts will exhibit cankers, like the one pictured, when they have the Asiatic blight fungus

sistant, but it will be years until researchers are able to verify it conclusively. "Does this process work? Honestly, we don't know," she said. "But we will be testing it in the next 10 years to be sure the blight resistance is there."

Half of the chestnut foundation's sixth-generation seedlings will be given to the US Forest Service. The trees will be planted in federal forests where they will be monitored for blight resistance. The first areas to receive the trees will be Jefferson National Forest in Virginia, Cherokee National Forest in North Carolina and Daniel Boone National Forest in

Kentucky because the hybrid trees are currently being grown in the south.

"It may take 100 or 150 years to see these trees restored to Eastern forests on any sort of large scale," Fitzsimmons said. "But it might not be much more than 10 or 15 years until folks can go to local garden stores or nurseries and buy blight-resistant chestnut trees. That's exciting!"

AMERICAN CHESTNUT *continued on next page*

## Fantastic Flushes!

In northern Minnesota, grouse hunting is world class in habitats of predominantly upland aspen mixed wood stands meticulously harvested over many years. These parcels have never been offered for public sale, but are now part of Wellson Group, Inc.'s Fall 2009 Sealed Bid Land Auction. Sealed bids due November 10, 5:00 p.m.

Call today for a full color catalog or visit [www.wellsongroup.com](http://www.wellsongroup.com)

**WELLSON GROUP, INC.**

LAND AND FORESTRY SERVICES

*Cabela's*  
**PROPERTIES**

Wellson Group, Inc. is a privately held real estate broker and licensed auction company located at 5709 60th St. in the State of Minnesota.

# HEARING LOSS IN HUNTERS CAN BE AVOIDED

## CUSTOM FIT ANALOG & DIGITAL HEARING PROTECTION



electronic shooters protection

(800) 767-7791  
ESP @ USA.NET  
WWW.ESPAMERICA.COM

### The Ecological Impact of American Chestnuts

American Chestnuts occupied a very important place in our forests prior to their disappearance. Their range spans from Maine to Georgia, and before the blight fungus they often constituted a substantial part of these forests. In Pennsylvania alone 25% of the hardwood trees in forests were American Chestnuts.

Mature trees average 5 feet in diameter and 100 feet tall, though many instances of even larger specimens have been recorded. Such large trees naturally produce vast quantities of nuts, which would significantly impact the food supply of many mast-supported species.

It is likely that grouse within the range of the American chestnut relied on the plentiful nuts to some extent, but it is hard to say how important chestnuts were in the highly variable grouse diet. "In years where production of other nuts and fruits were low, chestnuts may have been very important," notes RGS Senior Biologist Mark Banker. "Fortunately grouse were probably not heavily dependent on chestnuts, though it will be a bonus when they return to our forests."

Today American chestnuts have continued to survive, though in a much humbler state. Because they regenerate from the root collar the tree can be found in our forests today, though they rarely achieve more than 20 feet in height. The blight fungus typically kills stems before they reach maturity, and as a result the trees are unable to achieve their former towering majesty.

"Though hundreds of thousands of sprouts are thought to exist throughout the original range, recent Forest Inventory Analysis data suggest a reduction in overall number of chestnut stems throughout the eastern United States' forests," said Fitzsimmons.

The introduction of the blight-resistant species has the potential to change the current plight of the American chestnut and have a corresponding effect on the species which use the mast for food. There is good evidence that grouse in the southern Appalachian Mountains rely heavily on acorns. Grouse population fluctuations seem to be strongly tied to the annual acorn crop. The return of the chestnut could help stabilize southern grouse populations by dampening the effect of acorn production as long as good cover is maintained in the meantime. 🐿️

Source: *Blight-Resistant American Chestnut Trees Near Reality*. Published December 9, 2008 on *GantDaily.com*.

## Shoot with the Best

10 gauge 2 7/8" & 12 gauge 2"  
Shells Available!



PAPER HULLS AVAILABLE  
12, 16 AND 20 GAUGE

RST manufactures PREMIUM 2 7/8" and BEST GRADE 2" - 2 7/8" shotgun shells. Whether enjoying the soft recoil for clay targets or the superior patterning on upland game, RST shotshells will give you **THE BEST PERFORMANCE MONEY CAN BUY.**

570-553-1651 • WWW.RSTSHELLS.COM

# Some Natural Resources Power Our World, Others Require Our Energies to Survive.

A leading producer of coal and natural gas, CONSOL Energy also maintains a corporate policy of developing or donating surplus property for wildlife enhancement, recreational use and conservation.

CONSOL Energy is also exploring innovative ways to improve food and cover to benefit a variety of wildlife throughout its operating areas.

By partnering with leading wildlife and conservation groups, such as the Ruffed Grouse Society, CONSOL Energy dedicates time and resources to environmental stewardship, sustainable forestry programs and related initiatives.

COAL

NATURAL GAS

*Responsible coal-mining benefits the land and all those who make it their home.*

 **CONSOL ENERGY**  
America's On Switch.

**Using Our Energies to Give  
Wildlife a Boost.**

# NOT YOUR USUAL BIRD HUNT

by Nancy Anisfield

Perdiz hunting in Argentina has many things in common with ruffed grouse hunting in the U.S., most notably that when the dog goes on point, hearts start to pound.

Perdiz are often referred to as partridge because they are hunted in ways similar to many of our northern hemisphere's upland birds, but they are actually a member of the family *Tinamidae*, which encompasses 47 species in the southern hemisphere. Perdiz themselves are found in the southern half of South America.

Although perdiz are smaller than our partridge, they interact with their habitat similarly, and taste just as good. Found in open grasslands, a perdiz' mottled color camouflages well in winter wheat, corn plots or natural mixed grass. The hunting is best early, before the midday heat sets them to loafing in cooler spots.

Perdiz hunting has the same unpredictability as grouse hunting. Wind direction needs scrutiny. The birds are



Photos taken at Los Ombues Lodge in  
Entre Rios Province, by the Parana River.  
(Anisfield Photography © 2009)



usually found as singles or in a pair, flush with startling surprise and fly very fast. A good walk can produce many shooting opportunities or just a few. And when the dog locks on point and the hunters move cautiously through the grass straining their eyes for movement or a glimpse of a bird, the excitement is the same.

That being said, if you go to Argentina to perdiz hunt, don't expect to be telling the usual tales while sipping your bourbon that evening. You probably started the day by filling your 20-bird duck limit in less than an hour, with so many ducks pouring in that you could indulge your best 4 a.m.-freezing-in-the-marsh fantasy by choosing to shoot only male rosey-billed pochards decoying from the left (or right or center, depending on your preference), letting the hundreds of rosey hens, tree ducks, Brazilian teal, ringed teal, cinnamon teal, red shovelers and fulvous whistlers pass by. That adventure would begin around 6:30 or 7:00, which is a very civilized time to hunt. The temperature at that hour in the early Argentine fall would be in the 40-50° F range, another unusual comfort for northern duck hunters. Your tale would most likely include a description of squadron after squadron of eccentric looking ibises, criss-crossing the sky, dipping their long curved beaks to check out your blind.

Keep in mind, too, that while you were duck hunting, if the ducks weren't retrieved (by guides, not dogs) within a reasonable amount of time, the piranha would eat them, tearing at them from below in grade B horror film style.

Your standard grouse hunt tale probably also wouldn't mention spending the previous late afternoon engineering a handsome purple bruise on your upper arm while bringing down a hundred or more eared doves. And it's worth a megabucks bet that you hadn't fished for wide, bright yellow, razor-toothed piranha or a few shimmering 5-10 pound dorado using chunks of those doves as bait and chum.

Other points of local color? If you are lucky while perdiz hunting, you may shoot a big old hare as it cruises by. Similarly, while dove shooting, you may be encouraged to pop the pretty little green parrots which are major pests in the area. Autumn is in May, the Southern Cross is overhead in the night sky. The German shorthairs have long tails and the dogs speak only Spanish.

Nope.

Not your usual day grouse hunting. ❀

RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



# EMBROIDERED APPAREL

**Bob Allen  
Vented Mesh-Back  
Shooting Shirt**

**\$41.00**  
RGS-142K




**1.800.550.2698 • WWW.SHOPRGS.COM**

## The most excitement you can have without a shotgun!



With a history dating from the 1830s,  
Bowen Lodge has been one of the  
premier fishing resorts in Minnesota for  
a very long time. Whether for families or  
fishermen – our unique location on Winnie  
and Cutoff Sioux Lakes – in prime hunt-  
ing country, Bowen's is the place to visit.



**Deer River, MN [www.bowenlodge.com](http://www.bowenlodge.com) 1-800-331-8925**



# King of the Game Birds:

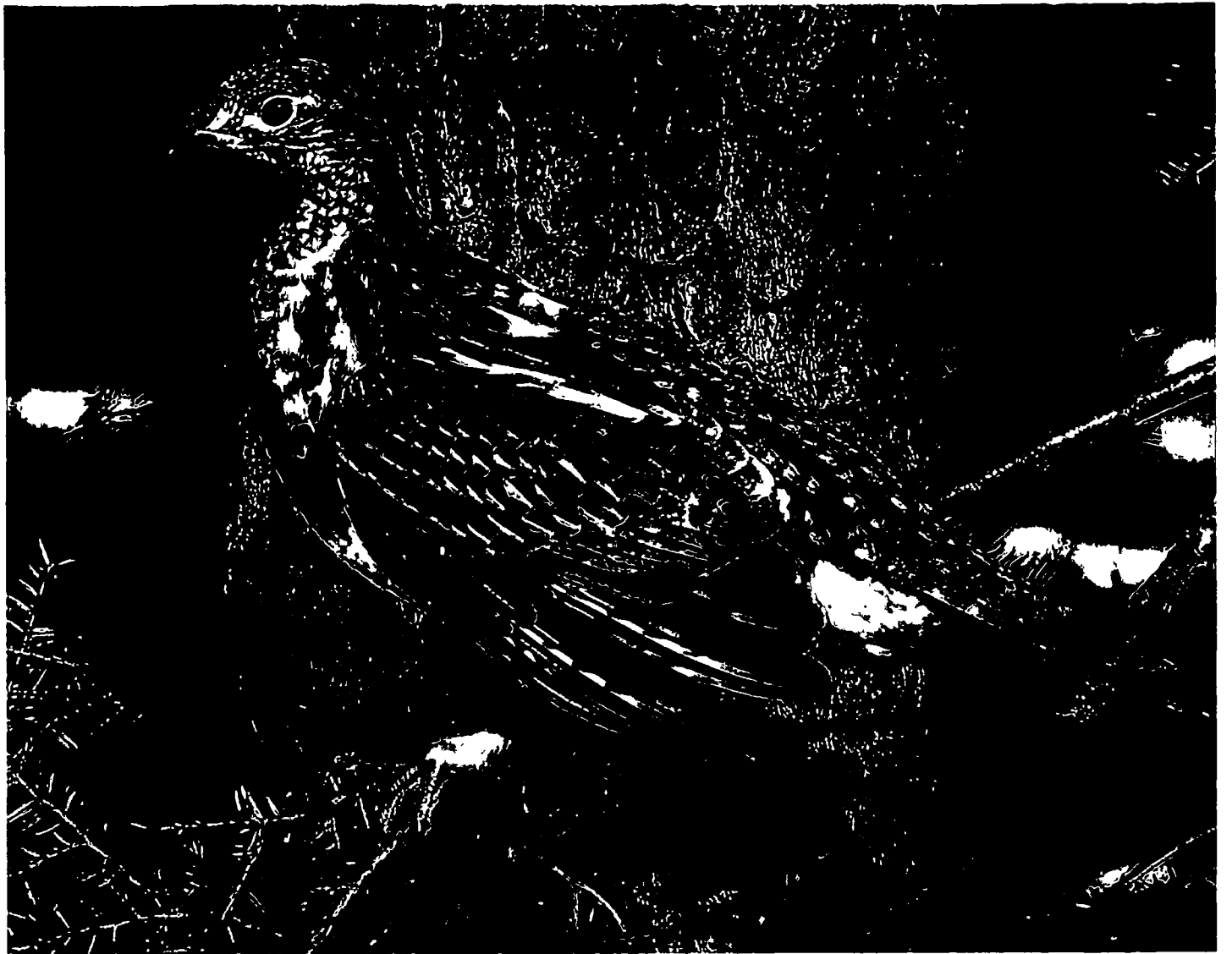
**An inside look at the  
elusive ruffed grouse**

*Photos by Tim Flanigan*

Ruffed grouse carry the title of the king of game birds, perhaps due in part to their low, thrilling drumming that can be heard and felt every spring. Another distinctive feature of the bird is their neck ruff, which when fully extended, give them an undeniably dignified air. Their wide, fanned tail and feathery crest complete the portrait of a royal woodland presence.







During a 30-year career in the outdoors, Tim Flanigan has captured images both beautiful and provocative with his camera. His photographs and writing have earned numerous national, regional and state awards.

He is a south-central field editor for the Pennsylvania Outdoor Times, and a field photographer for the Ruffed Grouse Society. His photographs have been published in Wildfowl Carving, Upland Almanac, North American Whitetail and many other publications.

Tim and his wife Debbie operate Nature Exposure, an outdoor writing and photography marketing enterprise in Bedford, Pennsylvania that specializes in supplying copy and photographs to outdoor publications. Nature Exposure also showcases limited editions of Tim's art photography. In addition, his work is exhibited and sold at various art galleries, art shows and festivals.

For more information visit [www.natureexposure.com](http://www.natureexposure.com). Tim can be reached at [tim-natureexposure@comcast.net](mailto:tim-natureexposure@comcast.net), or by phone (814) 623-7865.





## Introducing Non-Hunters to the Hunting Heritage

It often happens that seemingly ill-matched pairs have the most synergistic results, consider: peanut butter and jelly, Harold and Maude, and honey and lemon. Add to this list business partners Joe Lasher and Allen Dye.

Lasher heads a special event management and catering business, M7 Event Solutions, with Dye's help as head chef in Asheville, North Carolina. In addition, the two also collaborate on game dinners held several times a year. The dinners are nonprofit events that began initially out of Lasher's love for the outdoors.

The game dinners were originally a Lasher family tradition and were small events held at Joe's father's restaurant. Hunters in the Lasher family, as well as several friends, used the event as an opportunity to empty their freezers of the game meat they had harvested the prior season. It was a friendly gathering with a casual atmosphere and good food. Dye was a genius at using the variety of meat he was given to create interesting, appetizing dishes.

The success of the event meant that it grew every year. Gradually Lasher decided to sell tickets to the event in order to cover the cost of the food preparation. "The main mission of my work in doing these events is to introduce non-hunters to professionally prepared game meats, and subsequently to our lifestyle. They are meat eaters and they try the food and like it, therefore they are

interested in hunting," Lasher explains.

As the event grew Lasher realized the potential it had for raising money. It was important to him that money raised from the event stay in western North Carolina, so he found a non-profit that met this requirement. Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry (FHH) collects and processes game meat and then distributes the meat to pantries and food banks. "I selected them because 85% of the money they raise stays right in this county, and they work with local hunters."


This year the annual game dinner drew 300 attendees, and included a large wildlife display, several raffles to benefit the FHH and live music. "It's really a large event with professionally prepared foods," Lasher notes.

Lasher, who is kept busy by M7 Event Solutions, three children and pursuing his passion for hunting and fishing, also finds time for two additional game dinners throughout the year. The second event is a family-oriented affair held every September with picnic style food. The focus is on sharing the hunting tradition with youth, and the event features a large cook out and activities like archery, wing shooting, an air rifle range and pond fishing. "It's our duty to introduce kids to our lifestyle," Lasher explains, "and they love it!"

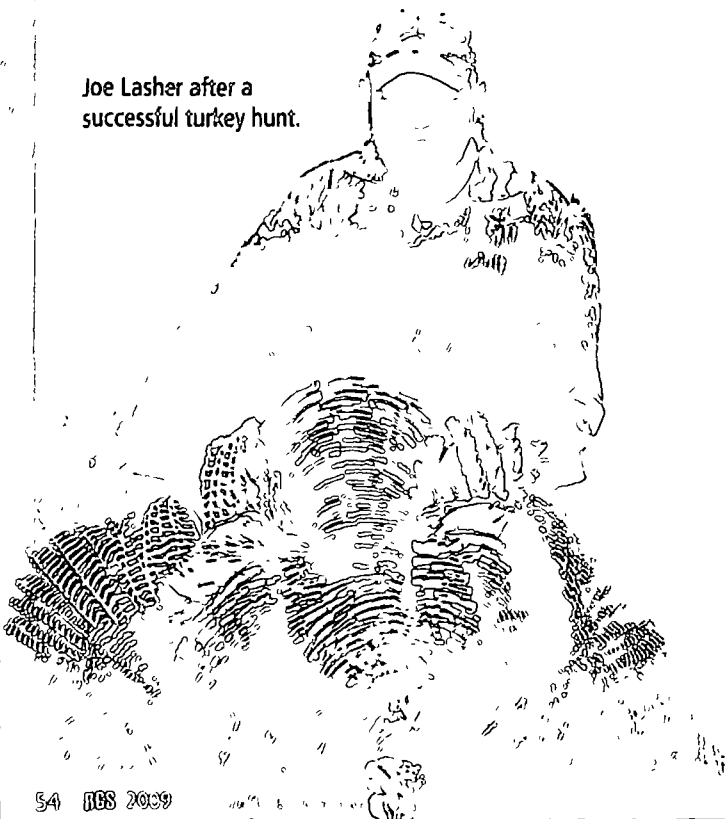
The third annual event has yet another different spin from the others – it's a big game and beer tasting event held in conjunction with the Highland Brewing Company. It's also a popular event that draws a different crowd from the more traditional game dinner and the family-style picnic dinner. Having such different venues allows Lasher to share his love of the outdoors with diverse groups of people through good food and good company.

Don Mallicoat, RGS Regional Director, has worked with Joe and M7 solutions on several different occasions. "I've attended several [game dinners] and they all provide a family friendly atmosphere and the food is great! Through M7, Joe is very receptive to working with conservation groups like RGS to host successful fundraising events. Joe's interests span the outdoor world and his support for conservation organizations proves it," Mallicoat says.

When asked about the future direction of his game dinners, Lasher reveals the creative enthusiasm that has allowed his part-time passion to take on a life of its own. "There's been talk of making a video ... or perhaps publishing a quarterly newsletter. Our website is also really popular." Yet whatever the future may hold, Lasher is committed to keeping the core philosophy unchanged. "The unique thing about these dinners is their ability to break down social barriers. It's a common thing to have people who are accustomed to giving court depositions and those used to going to court sharing the same table!"

Read about Allen Dye, the culinary genius and other half of the game dinner equation, in our upcoming Winter issue. 

Joe Lasher after a successful turkey hunt.





For more information about Lasher's game dinner events, visit [www.gamedinner.com](http://www.gamedinner.com)

Lasher's M7 catering business can be found at [www.M7eventsolutions.com](http://www.M7eventsolutions.com)

Visit [www.fhfh.org](http://www.fhfh.org) for more information about Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry.

## Grilled Elk Strip Loin with Shitake Friti

Elk, like most game meats, is far leaner and more nutritious than factory produced meats. It also has a tendency to be a bit tougher than its farm-raised counterpart.

For best results, cut the steaks in portions no more than 3/4" thick and marinate overnight in your refrigerator. Before cooking make sure that your grill is clean, hot and well oiled. Have your seasoning mix handy. Grill the steaks quickly over high heat to medium-rare. (If you prefer well-done meats, I would suggest that a stew or roast might be more appropriate.) After grilling, allow the steak to rest for 5 minutes before serving. Top with Shitake Friti.

### Game Marinade

1 c vegetable oil  
 1/2 c red wine vinegar  
 1 c red wine or beer  
 5 or 6 crushed garlic cloves  
 3 T Worcestershire sauce  
 2 t salt  
 2 t sugar

### Seasoning Mix

1/2 c salt  
 3 T cayenne pepper  
 1 1/2 T white pepper  
 1 1/2 T black pepper  
 1 1/2 T basil  
 1 1/2 T thyme  
 2 t oregano

### Shitake Friti

1 lb shiitake mushroom caps, washed and sliced  
 2 c all-purpose flour  
 1 T salt  
 1 t black pepper  
 1 t garlic powder  
 4 eggs  
 1 c milk

### 2 c Italian bread crumbs

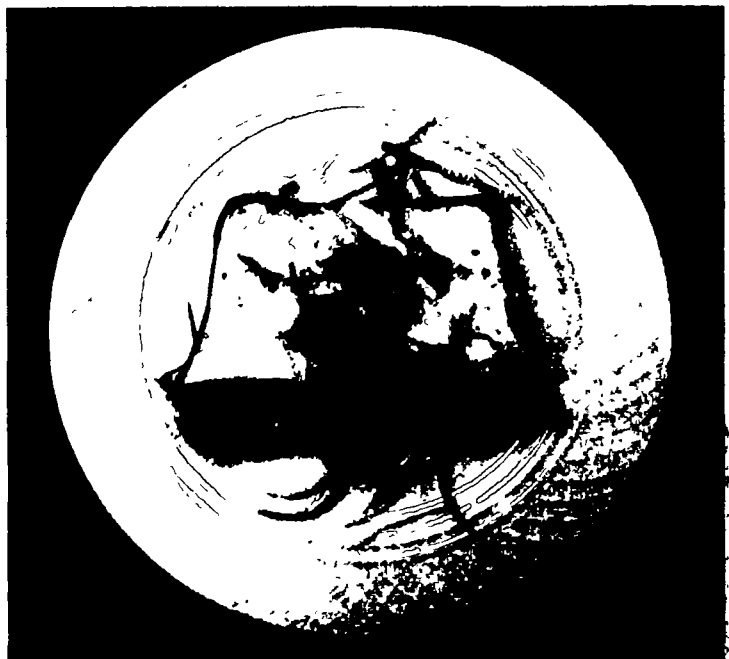
Blend flour with salt, pepper and garlic powder. Whisk eggs with milk. Set three medium bowls on counter; place flour mixture in first bowl, egg mixture in second and bread crumbs in third. Toss sliced mushroom caps in flour, dip them in egg and toss well with bread crumbs. Fry breaded mushrooms in hot olive or vegetable oil until golden brown.

## Seafood Terrine

1 1/2 c vegetable broth  
 1/2 t salt  
 1/2 t white pepper  
 1/2 lb fresh seafood, any type  
 1/2 lb medium sea scallops, if necessary remove the tough muscle from side of each  
 1 egg white, lightly beaten (2 T)  
 6 T mild olive oil

Put oven rack in middle position and preheat to 325°. Lightly oil loaf pan. Purée scallops and seafood with salt and white pepper in a food processor until smooth. Add cooled vegetable broth and blend well. While continuing to blend, add oil in a slow stream. Transfer purée to oiled terrine with a rubber spatula and smooth top evenly.

Cover surface of terrine with an oiled piece of wax paper or parchment (oiled side down). Put loaf pan in larger baking pan. Bake in a hot water bath until terrine is just cooked through, it will be firm to the touch and separate easily from sides of pan.) This should take about 30 minutes. Let stand in loaf pan on rack for 15 minutes before unmolding.



# RGS News

## ■ New Machines Mean Habitat Work in Midwest

The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) recently received three grants, totaling \$182,000, to purchase heavy equipment for managing ruffed grouse and woodcock habitat in the Midwest. Two ASV/Terex PT-100 Forestry loaders with mulching heads were purchased with grant funds from the R.K. Mellon Foundation, the Frey Foundation of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the Charlevoix County Community Foundation of East Jordan, Michigan.

The new pieces of machinery will service Michigan, Wisconsin and surrounding states. The versatile equipment will allow RGS to help public and private partners aggressively manage neglected aspen, alder and brush habitats for ruffed grouse, woodcock and many other species. Co-operative projects with similar equipment have been in progress in the Northeast for several years with excellent results.

"These pieces of equipment are important tools to help the Ruffed Grouse Society target habitat improvements for woodcock in habitat, like alder, that is not being managed by commercial harvests," says Gary Zimmer, RGS Senior Biologist in the Western Great Lakes Region. "With this equipment RGS will be one of the primary implementers of the Upper Great Lakes Woodcock and Young Forest Habitat Initiative."

Zimmer recently joined several Michigan RGS chapter representatives at a training session held to instruct Michigan Department of Natural Resources



John Frey, (l) representing the Frey Foundation and Charlevoix County Community Foundation and Gary Zimmer, RGS senior regional biologist, alongside the new ASV PT 100 forestry machine RGS purchased for use in Michigan. Frey was instrumental in obtaining grants to fund the purchase of the equipment.

personnel on use of the machines. Al Stewart, Michigan DNR Upland Game Bird Specialist, was also on hand to answer questions about the work the equipment will be used for in the future.

## ■ RGS Supports Maryland's Forest Service Proposed Work Plan

This past spring the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) was asked to participate in the support of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Service's proposed 2010 fiscal year work plans for the Green Ridge, Pocomoke, Potomac-Garrett, and Savage River State Forests.

According to John Denning of RGS Backbone Mountain Chapter, the public input from RGS members would help to ensure that our State Forest resources are prudently managed for the benefit of all our citizens, the forest resource itself and all the wildlife that depend upon the various stages of forest development to provide them with the habitat they rely upon for survival. The young forest stage, which results from the harvest of mature trees, is rapidly declining and thus the many species of wildlife, including about 43 species of neo-tropical songbirds that rely upon that stage

for their survival, are also in decline.

The invitation to RGS members is another example of a successful partnering between RGS and other organizations, including governmental, to further the creation of habitat for ruffed grouse and woodcock throughout the birds' territory.

## ■ Under Broken Wings Selects 2009 Youth Participant

Brett Sopocy, a 16-year-old from Deer Park, Illinois, was recently selected by the Under Broken Wings program to attend the RGS National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt (NGWH) this fall.

Brett is a right hemiplegic due to impairment in the anterior of his brain. His condition affects his entire right side. Brett has been accompanying his father, Daniel, on hunts since he was 4 years old. At 10 he was shooting a 22, and at 12 he took his first mallard drake, ruffed grouse and bobwhite quail. He has since graduated to a 12-gauge and used it to bag a few more ducks last fall.

Brett's passionate about upland hunting, waterfowling and fishing, as well as baseball and hockey. The rest of Brett's family, his mother Robyn, younger sister Alexandra and brother Calvin also enjoy the outdoors.

## ■ Purina Reintroduces Pro Plan® Chicken & Rice Formula

Nestle Purina and PETCO has reintroduced the original Pro Plan® Chicken & Rice Formula, which was initially discontinued with the introduction of Pro Plan® Shredded Blend formulas. The Chicken & Rice Formula will be classified as "All Life Stages." No product formulation changes were made to the original product, chicken is still the number one ingredient. It will be available at PETCO distribution centers. Additional questions may be directed to 1-800-PRO-PLAN.



## Want to put your grouse in clover? Give TRAIL MIX a Try...

The Ruffed Grouse Society is offering "Grouse Trail Mix" to address the nutritional needs of both young and adult grouse, as well as other wildlife.

Grouse Trail Mix is an AMPAC's "Wildlife Perfect" product and features four types of clover as well as birdsfoot trefoil. (Clovers are Starfire red clover, Hunt Club brand white clover, Alsike clover, Crimson clover.)

AMPAC is packaging the seed in six-pound bags for one-half acre of ground. Planting instructions are printed on the bag. One bag is \$32 plus shipping from RGS Headquarters near Pittsburgh. (The per-pound price of the Grouse Trail Mix is well below the wildlife seed mixes currently available in stores.)

RGS Grouse Trail Mix is formulated to produce high protein content all season long. It's formulated to tolerate poorer soils. Plot Enhancer brand chicory will provide continuous feed in the summer when the legumes are either producing seed heads and are less palatable or during the droughtier times, thanks to its tap root system.

For more information on AMPAC Seed Company and planting tips, visit [www.ampacseed.com](http://www.ampacseed.com)

To place an order, visit the RGS website at [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org) or call 1 (888) 564-6747. (Ask about larger quantities.)



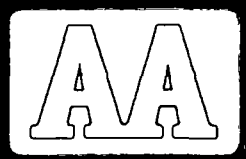


## LIMITED EDITION - AA® TARGET 100 ROUND PACK WITH OLYMPIC MEDALISTS GRAPHICS!

- FAMOUS AA® PRODUCT IN LIMITED EDITION 100 ROUND PACK.
- EXCELLENT POINT OF SALE PRODUCT (I.E. ENDCAPS & AISLE PALLETS).
- PATRIOTIC GRAPHICS.
- FEATURES 2008 USA SHOOTING SHOTGUN TEAM MEDAL WINNERS.
- EACH 100 ROUND AA PACK = FOUR INDIVIDUAL AA BOXES AND IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE AA PROMOTION.

AA® Target Loads 100 Round Pack Will Be Available June 15, 2009 In The Following Four SKU's:

AA127VP  
AA128VP  
AASC127VP  
AAHA127VP



**WINCHESTER**  
AMMUNITION



Official Ammunition of the  
USA Shooting Shotgun Team

LEARN MORE / [WWW.WINCHESTER.COM](http://WWW.WINCHESTER.COM)

# Lucille

by Art Wheaton

*Every grouse and woodcock hunter deserves at least one good bird dog in a lifetime. The hunt without a dog's faithful companionship to share loses some of its magic. Though I can't remember all the birds brought to bag over the years, I still recall in vivid detail those experiences I shared with Lucy.*

Lucille was an English setter with a mind of her own and an enthusiasm for birds that knew no bounds. One time, in a place I refer to as the cemetery cover, she went nuts with that first dose of hot scent and decided to take a tour of the back forty. In another cover that same day she decided to go to the next hill and look over the scenery. One winter she confused rabbits tracks for grouse, and following the tracks with

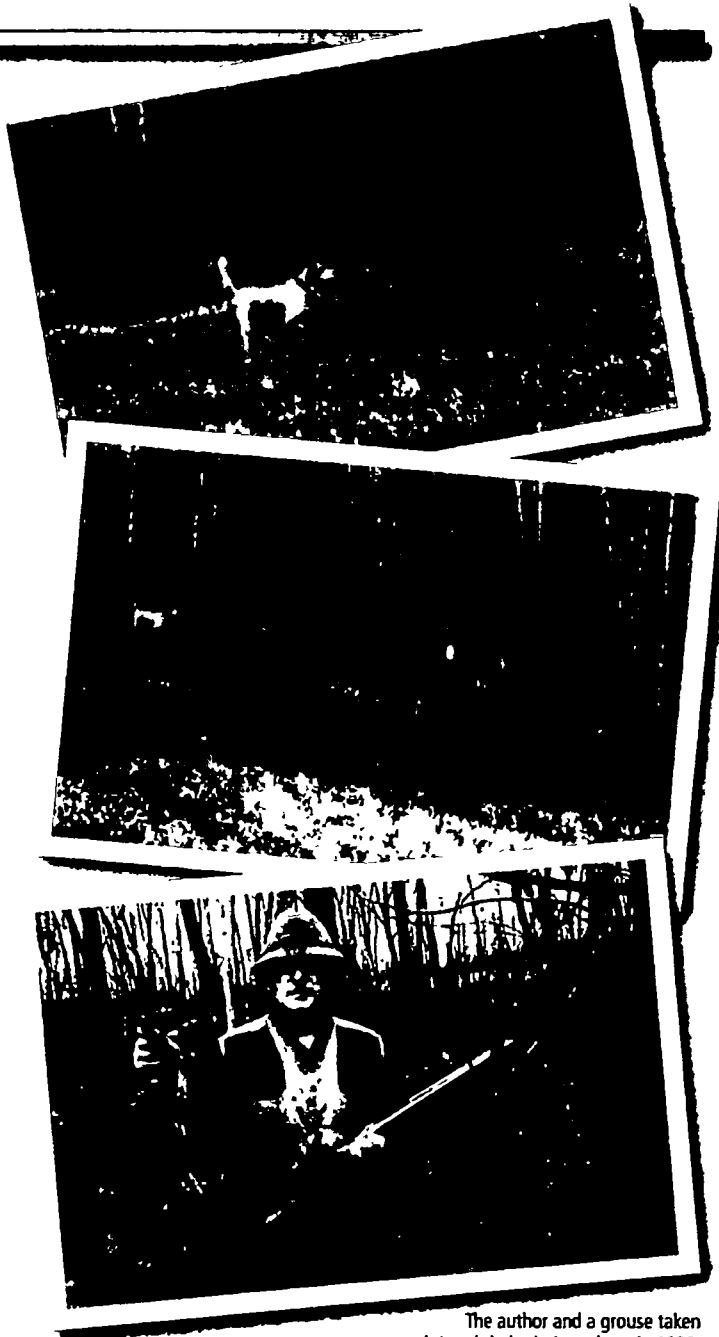
"Lucy made me proud on many occasions. Sometimes the gunner cooperated and sometimes fell a little short of the mark, but it was never a question of Lucy's scenting ability."

stubborn determination, certain that there was a grouse at the end. Another time she thought the adjacent cover was much better than the one I was hunting. My raspy voice nearly gave out using that well-known command "come!" – often in conjunction with many less than decorous adjectives. At such times her selective hearing took over and despite my energetic attempts to get her to hunt with me, she followed her own course.

At the top of her game this little setter was solid as a rock, while I, along with other Old Pat's Society members, eased through a cutover. As she made point after point I couldn't stop a sly grin from stealing across my face. We hit our limit on grouse that day.

A little later – as we regrouped around the old station wagon that served as our transport in those days – we noticed her solidly on point at the edge of the field. "So you think Lucy doesn't know what she's doing?" I thought silently to myself, and allowed myself a moment of smug reflection. It's a rare thing to have a moment of unabashed pride in one's dog, and I reveled in it.

Lucy made me proud on many occasions. Sometimes the gunner cooperated and sometimes fell a little short of the mark, but it was never a question of Lucy's scenting ability. She was a wonderful little setter than was the pride and joy of our family. A sensitive nose, great style and some good bird sense personified her performance in the 1980s. She was a fine grouse dog.



The author and a grouse taken with Lucy's help during a hunt in 1980.

I wish I could claim to be the best trainer, but in retrospect the faults she picked up over time I should have corrected had I been a little more capable. It's amazing how smart one becomes over time, much like the kid who reaches his 22nd birthday and is sur-

prised by how smart his dad has become.

Ok, I'll admit it. Lucy had a mind of her own that she enjoyed exercising with careless abandon from time to time. In retrospect, I suppose you get what you put in. In those days I had no electric collar. I even thought she deserved to relax in the off-season, just like me.

She came to me as a replacement dog. I started out with Jack, a nice 6-month-old setter from a lady in New Hampshire. When the litter arrived I decided to take two, much to my wife's chagrin. Shortly after Jack and Buttons arrived the pressure of two young setters and three youngsters tearing through the house taxed the patience of my wife to the extreme. Shortly thereafter Buttons joined my brother-in-law's family and we settled for good ol' Jack. Some bad luck came our way when Jack developed a form of dysplasia and had to be put down. A call to the breeder resulted in Lucy – a pup the breeder had initially intended to raise herself.

Right from the start Lucille knew about birds, she pointed a grouse wing instantly. I knew she would be a terrific bird dog and as fall seasons came and went, we enjoyed many a hunt together.

Yet somewhere along the way Lucy got a little lax. Perhaps it was my lack of off-season training, failure to correct some growing faults or just being too busy to do some much needed yard training. As the seasons wore

on I began to take some heat from members of the Old Pat's Society. I started to hear comments less than complimentary about my dog. Comments such as "Boy, I would have had a few more birds if we just could have kept Lucy closer" rang in my ears. Though we did manage to shoot a great many birds with her, every once in a while she would get a little crazy and hunt at her own pace, sometimes way off in the distance, after getting a real whiff of scent from a woodcock or grouse covert.

Fed up as I was with these comments, I convinced myself that a little yard training in the off-season could take care of her faults. "No sir, this is it," I promised myself. "I've absolutely had it!"

The very next spring I planned to start her training. Somehow the cultivation of the garden slowed my start in April, and then yard work took the place of my garden work and I was busy in May as well. Don't worry, I told myself, June will work out fine.

But June came and the weather got hot so fast, I just knew a dog couldn't scent in this weather. July and August came with sweltering heat and I kept the dog inside until the weather cooled. September would work nicely for a tune-up I told myself.

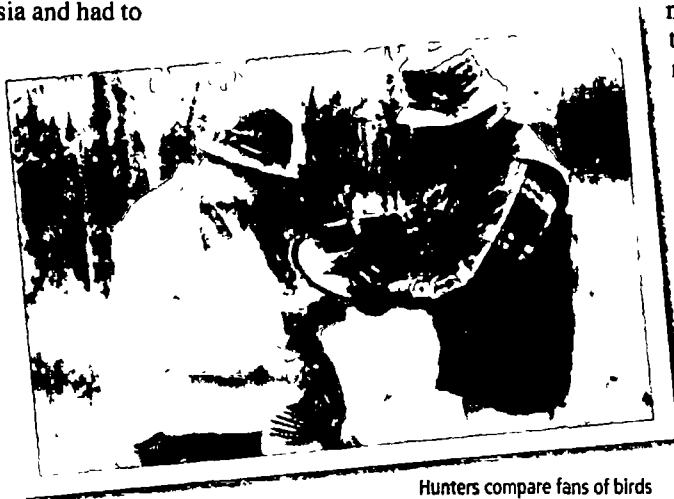
Come September work happened to take me out of town for a good part of the month. Suddenly it was the annual gathering of the Old Pat's Society around the corner and I hadn't done any work with her.

Opening day started with a bang. We'd been waiting all year for glorious October to arrive and here it finally was. Lucy was doing well in the covers. We even found a few birds and managed to connect on occasion. The woodcock were in, scent was strong and it seemed like most covers held a few birds. Grouse were near the apple trees but not holding well. It was a good year for

apples and our expectations were running high.

The next day we found some old farmland and Lucy was given an opportunity to shine. We bust our way through the brush and she got her first real immersion in grouse scent of the season. A brood of youngsters, not yet dispersed, were surprised at her sudden arrival. We knew she was on point, and a few nervous birds flushed – followed in rapid succession by our shots. "Whoa Lucy," I said, "come around, come in here." But she was in heaven, hunting by herself.

With young birds dispersed in all directions it was looking like we might have a chance to follow up with some success. We began a holler-fest to get her back near us. Everyone knows you must have a strong voice to be a dog handler!



Hunters compare fans of birds taken in Minnesota, circa 1980.

Lucy had decided to try the next rise, the next hollow, and off to my left. After some effort on my part I managed to get close enough to intercept her and finally get a lead on her collar. Needless to say, by this time the day was severely interrupted. With heavy heart, I knew whippers and flaming arrows would be in abundance back in camp. Resolutely I muttered to myself, "She's got a good nose and with a little yard training in the off-season she will be fine!"

That November it so happened that several members of Old Pat's Society were a part of an annual sales meet-

ing that I had to attend. It was a great place to replay the hunt, show pictures, talk about new guns, and declare our resolution to approach the hunt next October in better shape. You know how it goes.

At the closing session of our meeting, annual awards were given to individuals for their accomplishments of the past year. With the winding down of the program, I heard a country western band tuning up for the evening ending celebration. Suddenly I recognized the tune – is was "Lucille" – one of Kenny Rogers's old favorites. Strangely enough, it coincided with an announcement of a special award for dog training. "We want to take this moment to identify one of our own, for his untiring efforts and the outstanding training of his own bird dog. He is, by recognition of his peers, our Top Gun."

The words echoed out of the microphone eerily, and when my name was announced as a recipient of the award I wasn't completely surprised. Shouts of, "It's a fine time to leave me, Lucille" and "I will finally quit living my dreams" echoed in my ears. I stepped up to receive my Top Gun award a bit abashedly, what can a man do to reclaim his dignity? She really was a fine bird dog!

"Just wait until they see what I will do in the next off-season!" I consoled myself shortly thereafter. "A little yard work will take care of it. They'll regret those words." Ah, 1987 was indeed a fine year. 🐾

*Art Wheaton has pursued grouse and woodcock for over 40 years and missed his fair share. He can be reached at [art.wheaton@gmail.com](mailto:art.wheaton@gmail.com)*



# GEAR & GADGETS

## New Product Reviews

This year after encountering warmer than usual conditions while grouse hunting in both the regular and late season in Pennsylvania I decided it was time to look for a more adaptable hunting outfit. I needed one that could be modified to various weather conditions easily and was reasonably priced. L.L.Bean's quality and warranty made my choice relatively easy.

— H. "Bumper" Bauer, *RGS Field Editor*

### ■ L.L. Bean's Upland Briar Pants with Tick Cuff

Size: Waist 30" to 46", Inseam 29", 31" & 33"

Colors: Field Khaki

or Dark Loden

Price: \$79.00

First I chose the L.L. Bean Field Khaki Briar Pants made from a lightweight 500-denier fabric. The addition of 1,000-denier nylon polyurethane-coated chap fabric makes these pants virtually impenetrable to wind, water and briars. Bean's has also added a double layer seat, reinforced stress points, suspender buttons, two deep front pockets and two back button close pockets with flaps.

All of the above features are nice, but what really sold me on the pants was the addition of the Lycra® elastane Tick Cuff and the shirt grip waistband which helps to keep your shirt tucked inside the trousers. Ticks have been a great problem here in Pennsylvania the last couple of years and they only seem to be getting worse.

No one, including myself, needs the problems they can bring – so I feel a little added protection from the tick cuffs and the shirt grip waistband can't hurt especially when you're busting brush for grouse.



### ■ L.L. Bean's Pa'tridge Strap Vest II, Men's Ripstop Nylon

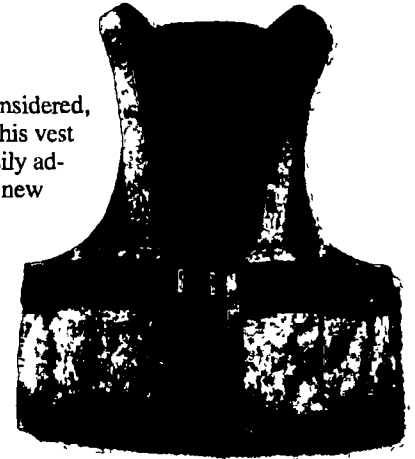
Size: M/L & XL/XXL

Price: \$59.00

Unlike similar vests I considered, L.L. Bean has constructed this vest with wide, comfortable, easily adjustable straps along with a new supportive waistband strap, which shifts any weight to the hips and lessens the stress on shoulders. The water-resistant ripstop nylon fabric is both lightweight and puncture resistant. The large rear game pocket can be easily cleaned by simply unzipping it and the front bellow-type pockets are sufficient enough to hold all the gear anyone will need for a day trip.

There are two features that sold me in particular about the pa'tridge vest. First, and most importantly to me, is that it may be quickly adjusted for wear over a hunting shirt, lightweight jacket or heavy hunting coat.

My second favorite feature is the large center zippered pocket on the back of the vest. This pocket is the perfect place to store a couple of water bottles, a light lunch and a lightweight raincoat – all of which are instantly accessible.



### ■ L.L. Bean's Jones Style Hat, in Brush brown and Hunter Orange

Size: S to XL

Price: \$39.00

I looked at this hat simply because I intensely dislike ball caps, which offer no protection to my neck and are easily pulled from my head when ducking under branches. When it rains, they offer no protection at all!

Initially I was a little leery of how the jones style hat would perform when worn in warmer weather, because it has Thinsulate™ insulation. I discovered the hat was comfortable in all of the conditions I encountered and I must attribute that to its Gore-Tex® lining, which wicks away moisture but still kept my head warm when needed.



SportDOG  
SportHunter 1825 Training Collar

Size: S to XL • Price: \$39.00



The new SportDOG SportHunter 1825 Training Collar is one of the most versatile collars I have ever worked with. While you may never need 13 different transmitter mode options, they are available in this unit and give the dog trainer a variety of options.

The vibration or tone mode presents trainers with non-electronic stimulation that may come in handy to add non-verbal commands or for those not wanting to use electrical stimulation.

The receiver comes with three stimulation ranges (low, medium and high) and is relatively simple to adjust when the collar is not in use. Each range has eight stimulation levels that can be adjusted at any time with a turn of a dial on the transmitter. When working with my Brittanys, low range at stimulation level 2 was more than adequate to get their attention.

Both the transmitter and receiver are compact and lightweight. The transmitter has a belt clip that works well along the hip or in a coat pocket. A lengthy lanyard comes with the transmitter and can be disconnected quickly from the transmitter if you desire. The collar and receiver unit weigh a mere 2.6 oz., which makes it usable on

very small dogs and during hot summer training sessions when larger units may tire out dogs. It's expandable for up to 3 dogs by purchasing additional collar receivers, and each collar on the system can be set at different stimulation ranges to match the temperament of the dogs.

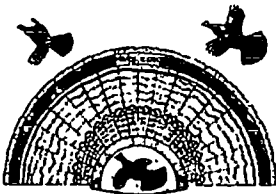
While probably not needed in most dog training situations, this system has a one mile working range so it is practical for use while hunting in open grasslands where a beeper is not needed but dog control might be. The system uses fast charging Lithium ion batteries that run a long time between charges and even when fully depleted come back to complete charge in only 2 hours. As with other SportDog collars, both recharging plugs are hooked up to one power adapter so you are not searching for "the other" cord. Unfortunately you do have to remember to bring along the charging cradle in order to recharge the receiver and can't recharge directly into the unit. However, without an available charging port on the receiver it will remain clean and waterproof. The Dry Tek Waterproof technology used in this unit is completely waterproof to a depth of 25 feet, an important factor when working with retrievers or any dogs being trained during warm weather that might seek water holes to cool off in.

The transmitter is comfortable to use and is easy to operate with one hand. All buttons are reachable by your thumb and the stimulation control dial is easy to turn but stiff enough so it won't turn on its own. While the unit comes in black or camo, I personally would have liked a blaze option as I have lost at least one transmitter over the years because it blended into the forest floor and I couldn't relocate it.

The SportDOG SportHunter 1825 Training Collar comes with a 2 year limited warranty and would be a fine addition to any dog trainer's tool kit.

— Gary Zammer, Senior Regional Biologist

RUFFED GROUSE  
TAIL - MATE



ATTENTION GROUSE HUNTERS!

Now You Can Permanently Display And Preserve Those Beautiful Ruffed Grouse Tail Fans.

- QUICK EASY SNAP TOGETHER ASSEMBLY
- EASY TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS
- AUTOMATICALLY POSITIONS & LOCKS FEATHERS IN A PERFECT FAN EVERY TIME
- TOTALLY ENCLOSES FLESHY PORTION FOR A "NO-MESS" MOUNT

Package of 3 Just \$14.95

PRICE INCLUDES POSTAGE HANDLING AND SALES TAX

Order now before the hunt as the Tail Mate works best with fresh kills!

Just killed a Grouse and no Tail-Mate? Remove complete tail fan from bird and freeze until Tail Mates arrive

SEND CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO:

BUCKSTER OUTDOOR PRODUCTS  
1612 CARVIN ROAD • CRANBERRY TWP, PA 16066

PLEASE ALLOW 2-3 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY

RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



EMBROIDERED  
APPAREL

Bob Allen  
High Prairie  
Hunting Shirt

\$35.00

RGS-HU127



1,800.550.2698 • WWW.SHOPRGS.COM

# Ruffed Grouse Society

## Doubles Club

We are announcing a new program for 2009 - the Ruffed Grouse Society

*Doubles Club.*

If you have shot a double on grouse or woodcock and would like to become a member of this unique club, please complete the application form below.

To qualify you must be a current RGS member.

You will receive an official certificate commemorating your achievement, and an exclusive honorary pin.

The RGS doubles pin is 1" in diameter and has a pewter finish. Each pin illustrates your double type - either two grouse, two woodcock or one of each. (Actual pins pictured below.)



### What is a double?

RGS defines a double as the occurrence of two grouse, two woodcock, or a grouse and woodcock (a mixed double) that are in flight at the same time, and are successfully harvested by one hunter.

*Please note. the birds must be in flight at the same time when harvested to qualify as a true double.*

To apply for membership in the Doubles Club, please complete the bottom portion of this sheet and submit to:

**Membership Services  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
451 McCormick Road  
Coraopolis, PA 15108**

You may also apply by sending an e-mail to:  
[membership@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:membership@ruffedgrousesociety.org)

Post a picture of your double online at [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

*Cut on dotted line*



## Ruffed Grouse Society *Doubles Club Application*

Indicate Double Type  
(please check one)

Grouse double



Woodcock double



Mixed double

Name (last, first): \_\_\_\_\_  
Member number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email (if available): \_\_\_\_\_

(Please check appropriate box on left to receive your pin.)

Type of double: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of double: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of double: (city) \_\_\_\_\_ (state) \_\_\_\_\_

Dog breed (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Witness (if present): \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Is witness an RGS member? (circle one) YES NO

I attest that on the date listed above, I harvested a double. I wish to apply for entry into the Ruffed Grouse Society Doubles Club.

Sign here: X \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: Ruffed Grouse Society; 451 McCormick Road; Coraopolis, PA 15108

*Perfection Redefined...*

*Model "Imperial"*

- ♦ Self-opening action.
- ♦ Locking screws fitted throughout internally.
- ♦ Bone charcoal case hardening.
- ♦ Hand detachable pin with locking stud.
- ♦ Finest hand picked engraving.
- ♦ Exhibition quality walnut.
- ♦ Diamond Chequering.

AYA's Imperial shotgun embodies the very highest level of quality you have come to expect from AYA. The Imperial boasts exquisite hand picked engraving, bone charcoal case hardening, and exhibition quality walnut, making it one of the most elegant shotguns available today. AYA has also taken great care to ensure the Imperial functions as beautifully as it looks. Crisper trigger pulls, smoother opening, and lively handling are to be expected from this masterpiece. The Imperial has not been made to a price, but to a level of fit, finish, and function unmatched in Spanish gunmaking.

AYA USA • P.O. Box 647 • Old Saybrook, CT 06475 • 860.388.3989  
[www.aya-fineguns.com](http://www.aya-fineguns.com) • [aya-usa@aya-fineguns.com](mailto:aya-usa@aya-fineguns.com)

New England Custom Gun Service, Ltd. • Plainfield, NH • 603.469.3450  
[www.newenglandcustomgun.com](http://www.newenglandcustomgun.com) • [bestguns@comcast.net](mailto:bestguns@comcast.net)

The Ruffed Grouse Society is not responsible for verifying authenticity of advertisements that appear in our magazine.

# CLASSIFIED

## ART

**HAND ENGRAVED DOG PORTRAITS** What better way to pay tribute to your beloved hunting partner than with a Hand Engraved Portrait on your favorite shotgun? [www.engravedsportingguns.com](http://www.engravedsportingguns.com), E-mail [bellabaddog@myfairpoint.net](mailto:bellabaddog@myfairpoint.net), Call (207) 963.2525

**MASTER CANINE ARTIST ORIGINAL ARTWORK AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE** CONTACT BRUCE PRENTICE (215) 674-2488 HATBORO, PA. E-MAIL [birdogbruce@yahoo.com](mailto:birdogbruce@yahoo.com) OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE [www.birdogbruce.com](http://www.birdogbruce.com)

**RGS/STAMPS:** All nine mint with die-cut board ready for framing. Fits std 11 X 14 frame \$195.00/full set w/ stamp savers **TO ORDER: 1 (888) 361-4344** or [jfreimuth2@comcast.net](mailto:jfreimuth2@comcast.net)

## DOGS

**BAYVIEW SETTERS:** Linebred 50 years, resulting in natural, consistent foot-hunting grouse & woodcock dogs. These are dogs with excellent dispositions, style and noses. They make great companions, as described in Joe Augustine's book, *Feathered Tales*. CALL (845) 223-5546 EVENINGS. E-MAIL [bayview56@aol.com](mailto:bayview56@aol.com).

**BONASA KENNEL:** Dual Type English Setters at Stud. Excellent Bloodlines. Outstanding Grouse and Woodcock Dogs. JOHN BERNARDI, SARANAC, NY (518) 534-4191.

**English Setter Pups:** litter due mid April '09 Home mid June '09 Hunting fall '09 Wicksall bloodline. Call (810) 687.2563, [www.pageweb.com/dogwood](http://www.pageweb.com/dogwood)

**English Setter Tricolor Male 4y/o** Wild bird experience on ruffed grouse, pheasant, quail and sharptails. Very close, true 25-35 yard quartering pattern. PREFER HOUSE PET HOME. **PLUMTHICKET KENNELS, 308.987.2294**

**FDSB LLEWELLIN SETTER PUPS** Parents are great hunters with certified DNA and hips. Pups will have all shots, dew claws removed. Ready early August & well socialized. Males \$600.00 Females \$700.00 Call Randy at 724-748-3810, Mercer, PA. Email. [terri-pat@hotmail.com](mailto:terri-pat@hotmail.com)

**Grouse dog for sale** - rare opportunity to own a good one. 3-year-old Elhew background English pointer male. Two seasons of wild bird hunting experience. Whistle trained,

Whoa broke, honors steady to wing and shot. Very easy to handle, will demo and train buyer. \$7500. Call Jim at 616.546.0942.

**Trained Brittany Female 3y/o** and two 9-month-old starter German shorthair females. All close working, affectionate Hunter/Pets. **PLUMTHICKET KENNELS, 308.987.2294**

## FOR SALE

[www.MunitionsToGo.com](http://www.MunitionsToGo.com) BEAT THE HIGH COST OF AMMO BY BUYING IN BULK [www.MunitionsToGo.com](http://www.MunitionsToGo.com)

**"GROUSE WON'T ALWAYS FEED ON ASPEN":** *Gordon Gullion*. Add winter feed diversity to your hunting areas. Contact COLD STREAM FARM, 2030D FREE SOIL ROAD, FREE SOIL, MI 49411 (231) 464-5400.

**GROUSE HABITAT MAPS:** Plan your grouse hunt in northern Wisconsin with a detailed grouse habitat map from KP Maps [www.kpmaps.com](http://www.kpmaps.com)

## HUNTS

**NORTH DAKOTA/WILD PHEASANTS** - Also Huns & Sharptails. CHEAP \$40 per night. Public PLOTS land maps "Private Land-Access Bulletin Board" 1 (866) ROOSTER or [tailfeatherinn@aol.com](mailto:tailfeatherinn@aol.com)/[www.tailfeatherinn.com](http://www.tailfeatherinn.com).

**FABULOUS UPLAND EXPERIENCE:** Unlimited Highbush Cranberry patches loaded with ruffies and sharptail. Minimum of 10-20 flushes an hour in light cover and easy walking. Three days \$850. First-class meals and lodgings. CONTACT PETER MARTIN AT (705) 335-3163 or E-MAIL [pwmartin@ontera.net](mailto:pwmartin@ontera.net).

**HUNT NORTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE** for grouse and woodcock this fall. The vast timberlands of NH's Great Northern Woods is the perfect habitat for the elusive ruffed grouse. We offer comfortable cabin accommodations, true northern hospitality and professional guide service for bird hunting and fly fishing. Orvis-endorsed fly-fishing outfitter **LOPSTICK LODGE & CABINS, FIRST CONNECTICUT LAKE, PITTSBURG, NH 03592. (800) 538-6659; www.lopstick.com.**

**HUNT PALMQUIST FARM IN NORTHERN WISCONSIN** Trek through 800 private acres of forest & 10,000 additional acres of public forest & grouse trails. After bagging the birds, leave the woods for a comfortable

cabin. Palmquist Farm strives to make your hunt successful & enjoyable. We prepare lunches for the field & home cooked meals are scheduled to accommodate your hunt schedule. We welcome dogs & provide professional guides. Call for packages and rates <http://www.palmquistfarm.com/activities/hunting/>; (800) 519-2558

**NORTHERN MAINE GROUSE & WOODCOCK HUNTING:** Classic cover on 100,000s of acres of commercial timberland and 1,000s of miles of logging roads. Sweeping river valleys and abandoned farms offer good woodcock cover. You will experience some of the most consistent grouse hunting in the country. Professional guiding, quality pointing dogs, lodging, meals & transportation. Packages by day, 1/2 week or full week. **ALLAGASH GUIDE SERVICE, (207) 398-3418, www.allagashguideservice.com**

**UPLAND HUNTING ADVENTURES** in beautiful Adirondack Mountains and Lake Champlain Valley. Hunt successional growth covers containing aspen, oak, hickory and beech along with apple, cherry, dogwood, sundry berries and plenty of young conifers for security. Covers right out of Spiller's *Grouse Feathers* and Harnden Foster's *New England Grouse Shooting*. Scenery reminiscent of a Schaldach print or a Lynn Bogue Hunt sketch. It all comes together with great habitat and beautiful scenery in the Lake Champlain Valley. **ADVENTURE GUIDE SERVICE (WILLSBORO, NY), (518) 963-4286, www.adventureguideservice.com.**

## REAL ESTATE

If you're PASSIONATE about hunting, this Northwoods lodge with garage on 300+ acres has abundant wildlife! Diverse tract offers creek, food plots, seeded trail system, and tree stands w/shooting lanes. Priced well at \$525,000. Call Jody at RE/MAX New Horizons Realty, 715.820.1923 or view [www.newhorizonsrealtywi.com](http://www.newhorizonsrealtywi.com)

**Maple-wooded five acre parcel with newer, quality construction 3-bedroom home.** Nice kitchen, bright interior, well-planned and cozy. Beautiful piece of property situated amongst thousands of acres of state land, managed for ruffed grouse & woodcock. Includes 8 kennels for boarding or raising dogs. 421937, \$224,000. Contact Pat O'Brien, email [pat@patobrien.com](mailto:pat@patobrien.com) Phone 231-582-1700.

**PHEASANT HUNTING LODGE** SW North Dakota 6000+ sq. ft. Fully furnished \$595K (928) 606-0604



# ADVERTISING

## MAINE GROUSE & WOODCOCK

*Specializing in Grouse.  
(Your Dogs or Ours!)*  
Call or Write for Free Information

### FOGGY MOUNTAIN

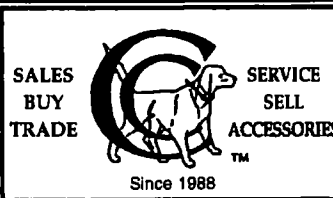
Guide Service  
Wayne A. Bosowicz, Master Guide  
(207) 564-3404

131 Ladd Road  
Sebec, Maine 04481  
www.maine grouse.com



## Collar Clinic

Your Source  
for Electronic Dog  
Training Equipment  
New & Reconditioned

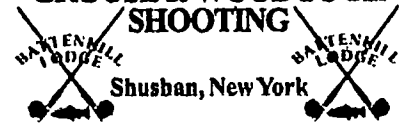


FREE COLOR CATALOG!  
Call 1-800-430-2010

Collar Clinic  
1517 Northern Star Dr.  
Traverse City, MI 49685

Visit our web site:  
www.collarclinic.com

## GROUSE & WOODCOCK SHOOTING



Shushan, New York



in the beautiful Battenkill Valley  
3 Hours from New York City.

Over 1,000 Acres Managed for Grouse  
with 15 Miles of Trails and Edge Cover.

Private Suites.

Trips can be Combined with Trout Fishing  
(no extra charge).

Close to 4,000+ Acres of State Lands.  
Late Season - February Grouse Shooting.

**CAPT. BOB STORC**  
22 VILLAGE SQUARE  
GLEN COVE, NEW YORK 11542  
1 (516) 671-7690

www.battenkilllodge.com

## HUNT NORTHERN ONTARIO'S BEST-KEPT SECRET - RUFFED GROUSE



Millions of acres of prime habitat with huge  
grouse populations. Easily bag your daily limit.  
Enjoy your stay in beautiful lakeside cabins in the  
grandeur of the northern bush country with an  
ultimate ruffed grouse hunting experience. Six-day  
hunt package \$595.

Write or call

### CALL OF THE NORTH

Box 697 Hwy 11 Geraldton, Ontario POT 1M0  
Photos & information at www.callofthenorth.com  
(807) 854-1371 Toll Free (800) 801-4080

## RGS Travel Now Open

RGS members and others  
may now book their travel needs  
through RGS. As a means of expanding  
and diversifying RGS' income stream,  
the Society is now in the travel  
business with its own websites,  
www.RGSTravel.org or  
www.RGSTravel.com.

Both will take you to the same  
website that will appear in your  
browser address window as:

http://www.ytbtravel.com/  
ruffedgrousesociety

The site is maintained by  
YTB Travel network and  
powered by World Choice,  
a segment of Travelocity.com.

www.RGSTravel.org  
or  
www.RGSTravel.com



## Hunt with your best friend

...and make a few new ones with NAVHDA

North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association members are  
hunters, breeders and trainers dedicated to helping you get the most  
out of your versatile hunting companion. We maintain the only registry  
in North America specializing in versatile pointing dog breeds.

Learn more about us on our web site at [www.navhda.org](http://www.navhda.org)

Best Buy Membership - Only \$78.50 US funds, S&H included  
(IL Residents add sales tax)

A Full Year NAVHDA Membership

Informational Monthly Magazine

60 Minute Training DVD

In-Depth Training Book

Testing Rules Booklet

Member Decal



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Breed of Dog(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to NAVHDA or use your credit card:

\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Card# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: NAVHDA • PO Box 520 • Arlington Heights, IL 60006

**PURINA**

**tri-tronics**  
Making it easier  
for dogs to learn  
- since 1983



FOR MWV,  
SUSTAINABILITY IS  
MORE THAN A GOAL.



IT'S A GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

*As a leader in our industry and as a responsible partner to our customers, MWV is committed to the every decision we make, from business strategy to forest management, that promotes a world for a more sustainable future. At MWV, we're committed to doing what's right for our customers, our people, and the planet.*

**MWV** MEADWESTVACO



## Are you ready for a blower with power?

STIHL has a blower that's right for you. We offer an entire line of backpack and handheld blowers, including low-noise and electric models. Ask your STIHL Dealer which blower is right for you.

[stihlusa.com](http://stihlusa.com)

**STIHL**<sup>®</sup>



# RUFFLY SPEAKING

## A Clear Case of Being Railroaded

by Paul Carson

Nowadays I think often about the old Baltimore & Ohio railroad that ran between Washington, Pennsylvania, and Wheeling, West Virginia. I guess it's because I'm getting older. As old geezers are wont to do, I'm dwelling more and more on the past, and that section of B&O track was a big part of my past, both for good and bad.

When we were visiting my grandparents, all the grandkids would gather in the hilly yard above the tracks and watch the evening passenger train go by. The lights in the cars glowed through the windows and you could catch glimpses of the passengers going somewhere mysterious.

Well, to a bunch of pre-10-year-olds Wheeling or Washington was downright mysterious, especially if your longest trip away from home was a ride in a pickup to the local mill for cow or horse food.

The B&O wasn't always a benign entity that cut along my grandfather's property line and through our lives. My Uncle Sherwood died on those tracks one afternoon. He tried to ease his car over the crossing where my grandparents' lane went over the tracks. A line of freight cars parked on siding rails blocked his view of the main track, and he pulled into the path of an oncoming train. The theory was he was so familiar with the railroad, along which he'd grown up, that he just took it for granted and forgot how dangerous it could actually be.

A burro named Timber died on those rails too, after escaping for the 117th time from his pasture. He wasn't my burro, but I was fond of him. I found his remains at the dark entrance of one of the several railroad tunnels. A train had apparently spooked him to the tunnel mouth. He wouldn't go into the dark, and there was nowhere else to go but under the wheels.

There were still some hoboes passing along the tracks when I was a youngster. My grandmother would mutter dire warnings when she saw one hiking along, but the grandkids thought they were kind of heroic and, of course, mysterious. We wanted out of our backwater existence so much we were jealous of hoboes and figured the tracks led to a much grander place.

We walked the tracks while they were there, and now we walk the old roadbed since the tracks have been taken up. The railroad was a natural highway to our hunting grounds, the farms that fanned out along its route. I shot what was probably my first grouse along the tracks, although it's not something I'm really proud of. The first firearm I was allowed to carry was a single-shot .22 that had been re-stocked by one of my uncles when he was a youngster.

Apparently he'd been inspired by a longer than usual piece of firewood and had carved out the stock on winter evenings sitting before the fireplace. He turned out to be a minimalist carver, so the stock looked more like a beaver-gnawed club. Actually, in a pinch, it could have served as a length of firewood and no one would have felt bad about burning it, except maybe my uncle. But I was pleased to have the use of the rifle and when a grouse peeked out

of some brambles along the track I popped him, through the head, in a blatant violation of sportsmanship.

I took my first woodcock as he crossed the tracks from one thicket to another. The beagles had flushed him into a cloudless blue sky and he flew left to right, kind of ratcheting along as if he were being pulled on a wire by a drunken stage hand. I took him with my uncle Sherwood's high-stem Browning about a quarter of a mile from where he had died.

It was about that same spot where the woodcock fell that I took the second buck of my long, and often less than sterling, deer-hunting career. I was between "good" deer rifles, and was using a little lever-action carbine with about an 18-inch barrel. It had been a long and futile day, and in the last half hour of legal shooting time on that buck opener, I decided to sit in a downed tree along the railroad and see what happened. As it turned out, hunters way back on the ridge to the west of the tracks jumped a buck and got off a couple of shots, which made the deer determined to leave the country via the deer crossing that happened to go by my tree and across the tracks.

As he pounded by, I discovered that shooting a whippy little carbine from a limb seat provided by the fallen tree about five feet off the ground, with my feet braced on a lower limb, was not the greatest thing I could have done. But then, who thought I'd see a deer after the frustrating day I'd had? One thing about that rifle, she went through shells fast. I don't know which one took the buck, but when my ears quit ringing and I could see straight again, the buck was lying between the rails and the rifle was empty.

Though the rails aren't there anymore, we still walk the roadbed coming and going to what is an ever-shrinking hunting area. It's nice to feel a connection to the past. And every once in a while we experience something new along that old roadbed.

My brother and I were coming back from a long day's hunt one October evening, and we'd just hit the old roadbed not far from where Timber had met his end when we heard a terrible, strange noise. It was coming from just over a high mound of earth along the roadbed. There was a nice little wooded area with a stream cutting through it. We guessed it must be a rabid coyote snarling as it ate its own entrails until we started picking out words. Not even a mad coyote would use some of those words, we reasoned, and concluded we were hearing rap where you'd never expect to hear it. Turns out, there was a young homeless guy who usually camped under a bridge up in Washington who would occasionally take a country vacation. I don't think he even came close to matching the hoboes of the old days. He'd pack his cutting edge mountain tent on his approximately 92-speed mountain bike and, bringing whatever music player was in vogue at the time along with other necessities, would come out to spend some quality time along the old B&O roadbed. Although my brother and I both said we'd never forsake bluegrass for rap, we were relieved that it was an actual recording and we didn't have to deal with a rabid coyote at the end of what had been an exhausting day. 🐾

*Want birds?*



Hunt with an **Ugly Dog**  
and support the **Ruffed Grouse Society**.

Please join us in keeping the covers thriving and the birds flying.



The Ugly Dog Hunting Company has serious gear for you, your dog, and the hunt

- rugged, hunt-tested field gear
- men's and women's upland clothing and boots
- dog kennels, gear, vests, and training equipment

Shop online at [www.uglydoghunting.com](http://www.uglydoghunting.com) or call toll-free for a catalog, 877-982-7054



This is the *Apex*

The new Apex is the synthesis of art and function. Our exclusive long tang trigger guard is notably missing any screws or pins blending seamlessly into a classic skeletal grip cap. The lines of the Apex recall famous British guns with a Prince-of-Wales grip and rounded fore-end. Additionally, the 12 gauge version features our Maxis bore barrels and choke system. At Caesar Guerini we are consistently striving to redefine the Apex of the gun maker's art.

 CAESAR  
GUERINI

410.901.1131

[www.gueriniusa.com](http://www.gueriniusa.com)

Winter 2009 • Volume 21, Issue 1



**TOP**  
**5** Reads to  
While Away  
Winter Nights

**TIPS**  
for Locating  
Winter Grouse

**Hunting with Kids:**

**WHY?**



# WHEN NUTRITION COUNTS

*The birds are scarce, but he continues his search working the ditches and fence rows quartering through the field. He slams on point and you say to yourself, "this is what it's all about."*

His breeding, your training/conditioning combined with high-quality nutrition have made this possible.

Give him the high-quality nutrition that helps keep him in the field when other dogs are heading for the truck. Feed what many top field trialers feed — Purina® Pro Plan® Performance Formula.

brand DOG FOOD

- Real chicken is the #1 ingredient, for a high-quality protein source to help support muscle mass for strength and provide energy
- VO2 max optimizes oxygen metabolism so dogs burn fat more efficiently
- Natural sources of glucosamine for joint health and mobility
- High levels of antioxidants to help support a healthy immune system
- Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, including EPA and DHA
- Highly palatable

For more information of interest to sporting dog enthusiasts,  
visit [www.proplan.com/sportingdog/mag](http://www.proplan.com/sportingdog/mag)

Purina is a proud sponsor of:



Quincy

PURINA

PRO PLAN

brand DOG FOOD

FUEL THE CHAMPION WITHIN™

PRO  
PLAN

ALL LIFE STAGES



FIELD-TESTED  
**FIELD-PROVEN**

**TRUST OUR GEAR**

Field testing is a way of life at Cabela's. It's the only way to make sure everything in our proven selection of quality hunting gear lives up to our high expectations. We know how much you value the time you spend outdoors, and we take seriously the responsibility that comes with outfitting your adventures.

**Cabela's**

WORLD'S FOREMOST OUTFITTER

Shop Online Request a Catalog Find a Store

1-800-761-0066



*Cabela's* Kangaroo Upland Boots



Field Trainer SD-400



Game Loads

**TOP-OF-THE-LINE BRANDS**  
 at bottom-line prices

Proud partner of



SKB  
SHOTGUNS

*Ruffed Grouse Society*  
**7**  
**SERIES**

SKB proudly presents a Limited Edition of 20 and 28 gauge Over & Unders. Available in 28" & 26" barrels. Featuring Fancy American Black Walnut Stock and Forend, Automatic Ejectors, Manual Safety, Selective Trigger, Briley Choke Tubes.

The Ruffed Grouse Society depends upon members, volunteers, staff, landowners and corporate sponsors to insure that this and future generations can enjoy ruffed grouse, woodcock, songbirds, deer and many other types of wildlife that depend upon young forest habitat.

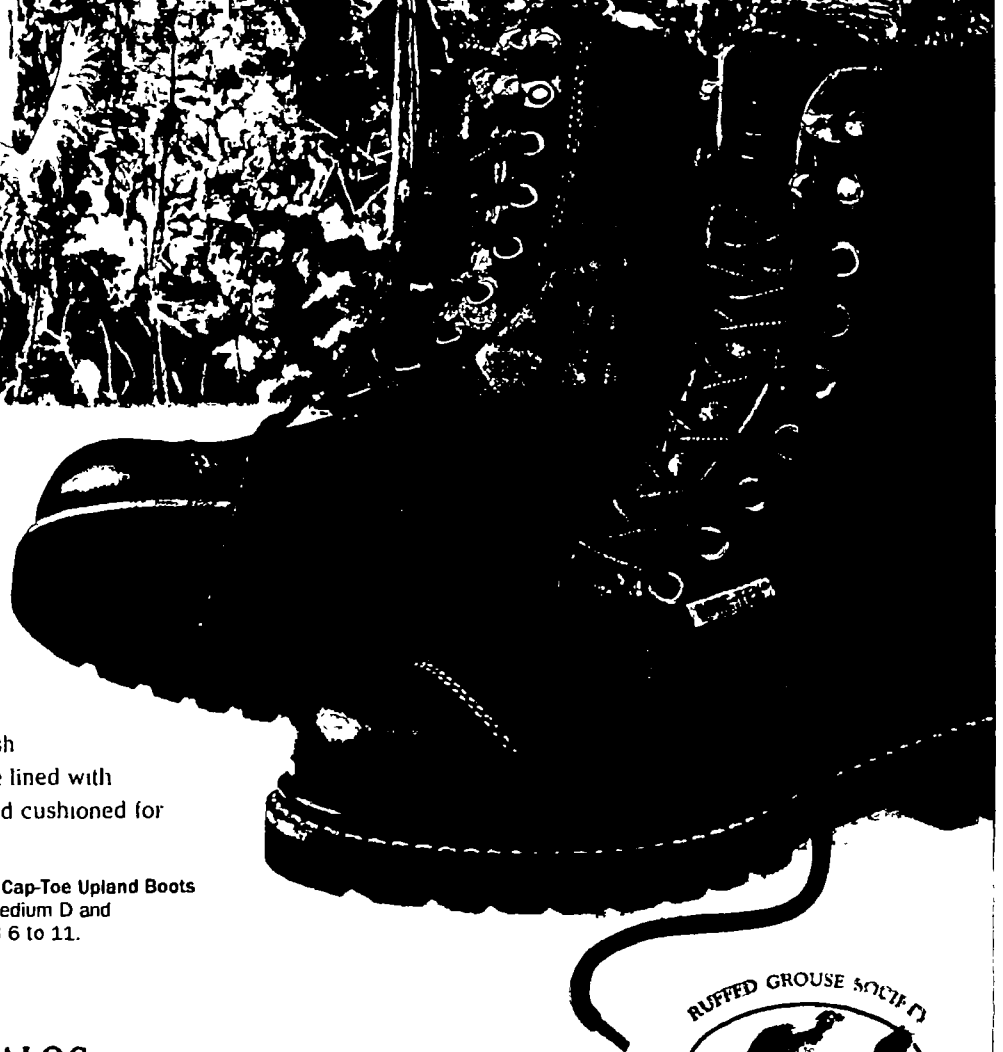
[WWW.SKBSHOTGUNS.COM](http://WWW.SKBSHOTGUNS.COM)

# L.L.Bean—Official Boot Sponsor of the Ruffed Grouse Society



We've been outfitting wingshooters for over 97 years with gear that stands up to the rigors of the field. Our upland boots are crafted from tough yet supple kangaroo leather and rugged canvas that can take the punishment of pushing through brush without weighing you down. They're lined with waterproof, breathable Gore-Tex® and cushioned for long-lasting comfort.

Bean's Gore-Tex Kangaroo Leather/Fabric Cap-Toe Upland Boots Available in Men's whole and half sizes Medium D and Wide EE 7 to 12, 13 Women's Medium B 6 to 11.



**FOR A FREE CATALOG**  
Call 800-791-8164 or [shop.llbean.com](http://shop.llbean.com)

## L.L.Bean



L.L. BEAN IS PROUD TO BE THE OFFICIAL BOOT SPONSOR OF THE RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



# 5 Great Reads

by Nancy Anisfield

*First the disclaimer: these are not new books, nor are they focused on grouse or woodcock. Nevertheless, the worlds within them touch most of us at some point – politics, conservation, dogs, humor and hunting. Presented in no particular order, these are five great books recommended for your winter fireside musings*

## Politically Incorrect Guide to Hunting

by Frank Minter

No one who hunts can avoid the debate. Sometime, somewhere, an anti-hunter will ask, "How can you kill defenseless animals?" We come armed with a variety of explanations – habitat encroachment, challenge of the hunt, engagement in the outdoors – but many of us wish we had heftier munitions. This book provides them.

Frank Minter gives hard facts and surprising stats in support of hunting, citing everything from cougar populations to alligator lengths, table tennis injuries to bear attacks, the tons of game meat served in soup kitchens to human injuries caused by collisions with deer. He takes vegans to task and traces the transformation from environmentalism to eco-terrorism.

Minter's writing is straightforward with only occasional lapses of bias apparent through his word choice. Little known facts and significant numbers – the sheer force of his statistical argument – make this a fascinating and valuable book.

## Merle's Door: Lessons from a Freethinking Dog

by Ted Kerasote

Ted Kerasote met "a big, golden dog" by the San Juan River in the Utah desert. "Merle," as he later named the dog, adopted Kerasote, choosing him from among his friends. "Might it have been what I ate, and the subtle residue it left in my pores, that made him so interested in

me?" writes Kerasote, comparing a dog's reliance on scent to ours on sight. "When I ate meat, it was that of wild animals, not domestic ones – mostly elk and antelope along with the occasional grouse, duck, goose, and trout mixed in."

Kerasote writes of his life with Merle, examining the canine perspective, as in this consideration of scent. He uses anthropological research and animal behavior studies to analyze Merle's actions, agreeing with some and refuting others. Kerasote tells tales of Merle's encounters with moose, coyotes and bison, of his relationships with other dogs; of hunts for elk and grouse, and, inevitably, of Merle's aging.

The dog door is the underlying metaphor for the book – it gave Merle the freedom to live his own life, and Merle's use of it gave Kerasote insight into his dog's nature. Accepting the concept of a dog having a life of his own (as opposed to a life in which all actions are dictated by a human owner's control) is the brilliant lesson the book teaches – readers find themselves looking at their dogs very differently afterwards.

Merle is a great character, exuberant and intelligent. If you like audio books, Patrick Guard Lawlor's reading (on CD or MP3) is wonderful. He gives Merle's voice just the right tone to complement the dog's eyebrow lifts and tail wags. Kerasote anthropomorphizes throughout, but the enormous affection between human and canine makes the excess forgivable.

## A Sand County Almanac

by Aldo Leopold

Written in 1949, this book is as relevant today as when first published. A benchmark in nature writing and theories of conservation, Aldo Leopold's work organizes the "almanac" section in a month by month odyssey of the outdoor world of Wis-

consin. In the second section, organized by place, Leopold recounts some of the episodes in [his] life that taught [him] gradually and painfully, that the company is out of step. These episodes, scattered over the continent and through forty years of time, present a fair sample of the issues that bear the collective label "conservation." The last section tackles the politics and ethics of conservation, presenting them with a clarity of language possibly unrivaled in conservation literature. An example: "Wilderness is the raw material out of which man has hammered the artifact called civilization."

The book builds from observation to experience, then analysis and reflection, but it doesn't have to be read straight through. You can open it anywhere and instantly be submerged in text rich enough to savor in small quantities. This is a book that deserves permanent residence on every hunter's shelf.

## The Great Duck Misunderstanding and Other Stories

compiled by Brian R. Peterson

What's astonishing about this collection of hunting and fishing stories is the variety of writers between its covers. Who would imagine Milton Berle sharing page space with Ted Nugent? Or James Thurber chalking up yucks with Patrick McManus? Toss in another 50 or so outdoor humor writers, and you're talking about the kind of funny stuff that actually makes you laugh out loud when you're sitting reading alone.

In P.J. O'Rourke's "Brave Hunter, Stout Woodcock," he describes woodcock as looking like "a knee-walking shorebird in urgent need of Jenny Craig." Since game tastes like what it eats and woodcock eat earthworms, he suggests hunting and frying night crawlers instead. And so on.

The collection covers fresh and saltwater fishing, deer hunting, duck

hunting and more. There's Joe Bob Briggs' "Prarie-Dog Hunting," which concludes an AK-47 is what's really needed to hunt them. Other revealing titles include, among others, "Pheasant Dogs I have Known and, uh, Tolerated," "Blowing Away the Media" (about shooting televisions, literally), "Sex and the Single Retriever," "Bufford's Hawk Posse," "The Cows are Trying to Drown Me," and "Shut up and Eat Your Snowshoes."

## The Green Hills of Africa

by Ernest Hemingway

Keeping in mind Ernest Hemingway's declarative prose style (stripped down and on the verge of stiffness) and remembering his goal of writing truth through observations as objectively as possible, hunters can discover his unique ability to describe things that often seem indescribable.

He writes about feeling frustrated and anxious in having no luck pursuing kudu, even though he'd successfully taken several other animals. He conveys the joy of total immersion in the hunt and the simple rhythm of eating, drinking, sleeping and hunting on an extended trip. When his friend shoots a larger rhino, he is honest. "There we were... wanting to congratulate, wanting to be good sports about this rhino whose smaller horn was longer than our big one, this huge, tear-eyed marvel of a rhino, this dead, head-severed dream rhino, and instead we all spoke like people who were about to become seasick on a boat." Hemingway describes the landscape of Africa and its wildlife in words surprisingly spare but nonetheless vivid, particularly for hunters who find so much of the experience of hunting difficult to convey.

Note: Be sure to have a bottle of very cold beer or a glass of port by you while you read. Hemingway and his characters pay a lot of attention to their drinking, and readers will inevitably develop a thirst. 🍷



**Waiting for Spring...**

Spring is just around the corner, and a grouse seeks refuge against a partially melted bank where shelf ice still exists. Melting snow uncovers both food sources and additional cover, two factors that will greatly aid grouse in the upcoming breeding season.

Artwork by Christopher Smith

*This past fall our grouse brood from the spring had broken up for good during the fall dispersal, leaving the remaining individual birds from the original brood searching the landscape for proper cover for the winter months and the subsequent spring breeding season. Recall that juvenile males would be searching for available drumming cover in which to set up display territories, while young hens would seek the right distribution and arrangement of nesting and brood-rearing cover.*

*The illustrator for our centerfold this year is Christopher Smith, a wildlife artist from Interlochen, Michigan. The text of this centerfold first appeared in the New Hampshire Federation Newsletter in 2005.*

## The Wilds of an Eastern Winter

*As we end the annual cycle of the ruffed grouse we've been following through the seasons for a year now, we'll take a look at one of the more stressful and dangerous – but ultimately very interesting – periods of their life.*

*With a North American distribution ranging from central Alaska, east across Canada to the Maritimes, south throughout the northern United States and down our major mountain ranges, significant amounts of snow are prevalent in ruffed grouse range from mid-November to, in some areas, mid-May. Ruffed grouse are not migratory birds and as a result do not leave their northern breeding range in the fall to relocate to warmer southern climates for the winter.*

*As with much of the year, the most important things on a ruffed grouse's mind in the winter are food and avoidance of predators. However in the winter the forest is devoid of much of the canopy of concealing leaves present during the previous eight months, and most of the easily available fruits, seeds, nuts and green shoots are but memories of the past summer. To withstand the harsher conditions of cold-season living, ruffed grouse have developed physical and behavioral adaptations that support their ability to survive harsh winters. These adaptations each have a specific purpose to help reduce the stress of feeding and roosting in cold temperatures, and together they serve to minimize the potential for winter mortality.*

To allow for greater feeding mobility when walking on soft snow, scale-like pectinations grow on the grouse's toes which give them a greater surface area, much like tiny snow shoes. At the same time, the bird's leg feathers have become denser and grow further down the leg to help keep these exposed limbs warm. Other, smaller feathers have grown in above the beak and nostrils to help warm inhaled winter air.

Several behavioral adaptations allow for a greater degree of safety during the winter by reducing exposure to predators, the most interesting of these being snow roosting. Despite their thick feathers and the accessory winter plumage noted above, grouse can get thermally stressed when temperatures fall below 25 degrees. In order to reduce this potentially deadly stress condition, ruffed grouse fly and dive into soft, deep snow when available, creating small snow-cave roosts in which they while away their non-feeding hours during cold weather. This insulating blanket of snow can maintain the ambient temperature at between 20-30 degrees around the roosting grouse, despite much colder outside air temperatures.

In areas where snow depths do not allow burrowing, or when freeze/thaw cycles create a thick crust of icy hard-pack on softer snow, grouse seek alternative roosting cover in patches or stands of conifers. As a rule the greater the needle density and darker the tree species, the better for collecting and holding the meager solar warmth and creating a warmer site for these roosts. In the Northeast, preferred conifers for roosting include various spruce and fir species, as the branches and needles of pine and hemlock tend to be too sparse and open to retain adequate warmth. On average, grouse using snow roosts can expect to reduce their nutritional requirements by about 30%, while grouse roosting in warm conifers reduce that same need about 20%. In either case, these warmer roosts substantially cut the volume of food needed, and therefore also decrease the length of time grouse must expose themselves to feed every day compared to times when there is poor thermal snow cover or no conifer roosting sites available.

As for the timing of their feeding in the winter months, ruffed grouse feed more heavily in the very early morning light and late afternoon. In general, grouse will seek areas with more mature hardwood trees that provide high quality buds, catkins and persistent mast, with male aspen buds being a preferred winter food due to a very high fat content. During feeding forays, the birds will quickly gorge and fill their crops with as much plant material as possible, then retire to protected snow or conifer roosts to process and digest the hoarded food over the next 10-12 hours. Overall, this behavior reduces the grouse's exposure to both daytime and nighttime avian predators, though there is evidence that barred owls have the ability to use their keen sense of hearing to locate grouse that are completely concealed in snow roosts!

Regardless of these strategies, survival is a tough battle for ruffed grouse through the winter. You'll recall that about 45% of our original brood of 14 made it through the fall. Well, by the coming spring, the expectation is that only 2 to 3 of our original chicks will live to breed that first spring after their hatching! (The key to increasing the overall annual survival of ruffed grouse is to increase the initial chick survival the previous spring by having all the necessary habitat components readily available in the forest.)

This ends our year-long study of the life of a ruffed grouse in the East. From hatching to adulthood - we've examined many of the threats and challenges ruffed grouse face throughout the year.

## Snow Roosting: A Survival Tactic

Years that yield a good snowfall are advantageous for grouse survival, and they utilize snow roosts during the day as well as night.



In the last rays of evening a grouse leaves a telltale sign of settling in for the night: a one-hole entry into snow that is at least 8" deep. Sometimes a bird may land and work down into the snow, but in most cases grouse bomb downward at a steep angle for a quick and efficient entry. Once in the snow a grouse will work forwards - creating a small snow cave - until he's low enough to be hidden from predators and protected from the elements. The small space conserves body heat much more efficiently than roosting in a nearby pine or spruce tree.

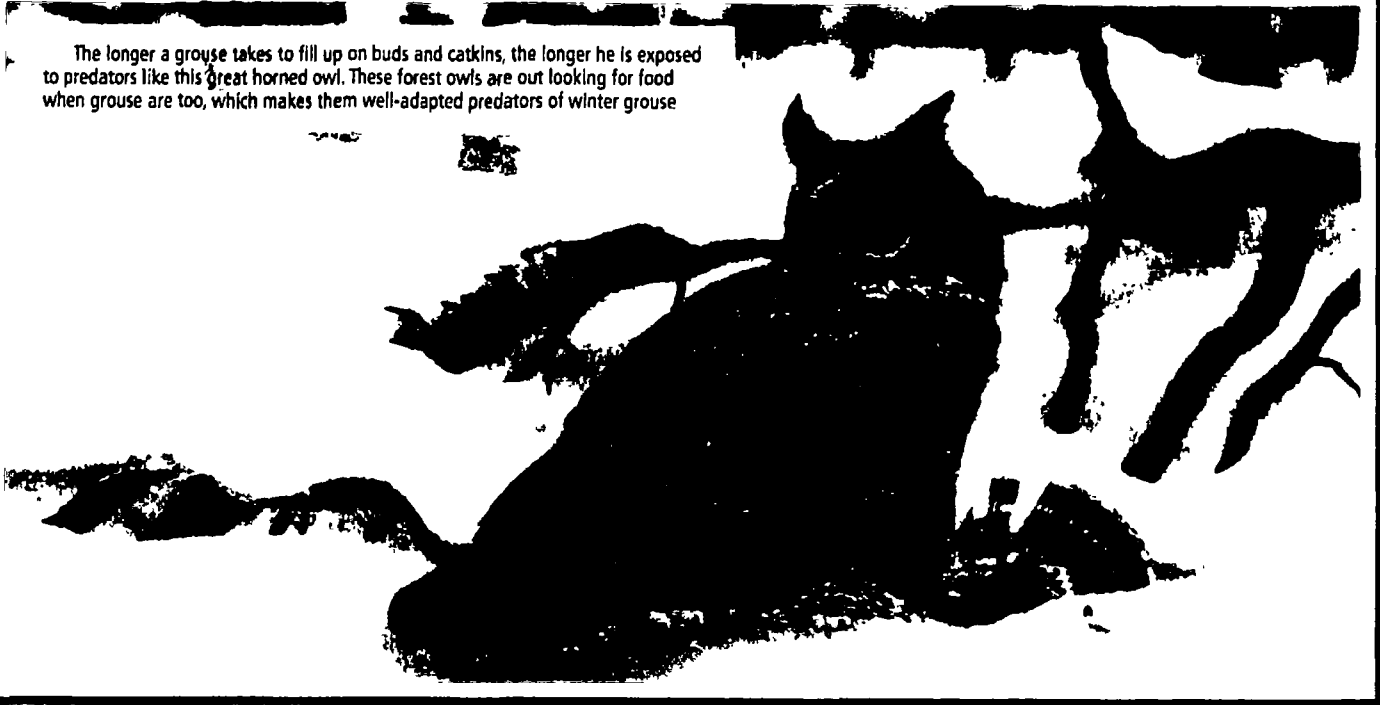


The following morning the grouse listens carefully, then pokes its head to the surface for a cautious look around

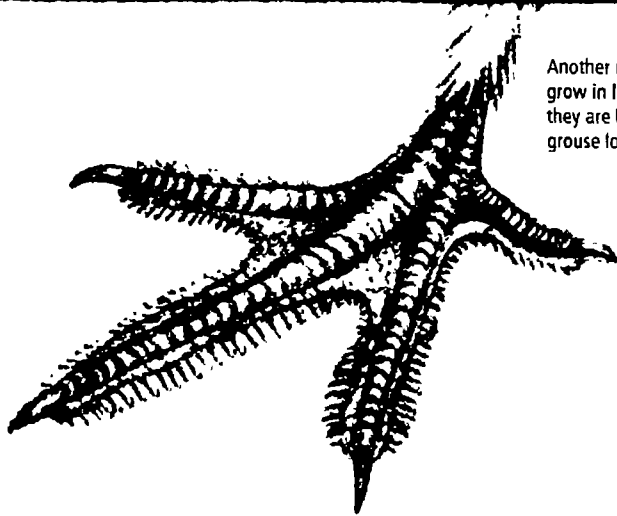


Though a grouse may simply walk out of the roost, most often he'll burst out in flight, leaving wing markings in the snow, and head directly to cover or a food source. Any hunter who has surprised a grouse in a snow burrow can attest to the exhilarating experience of having an unseen grouse materialize at your feet.

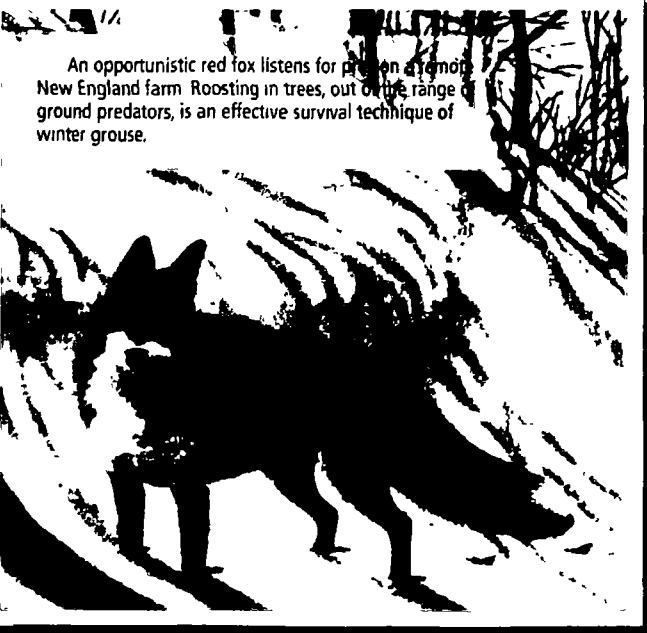
The longer a grouse takes to fill up on buds and catkins, the longer he is exposed to predators like this great horned owl. These forest owls are out looking for food when grouse are too, which makes them well-adapted predators of winter grouse



Another remarkable adaptation of ruffed grouse are protuberances called pectinations on their feet that grow in late fall, prior to the onset of snow. The pectinations work like snowshoes for the grouse, and they are better able to walk in snow as well as grip slippery branches with them. The following spring grouse lose their "snowshoes", as they are no longer needed.

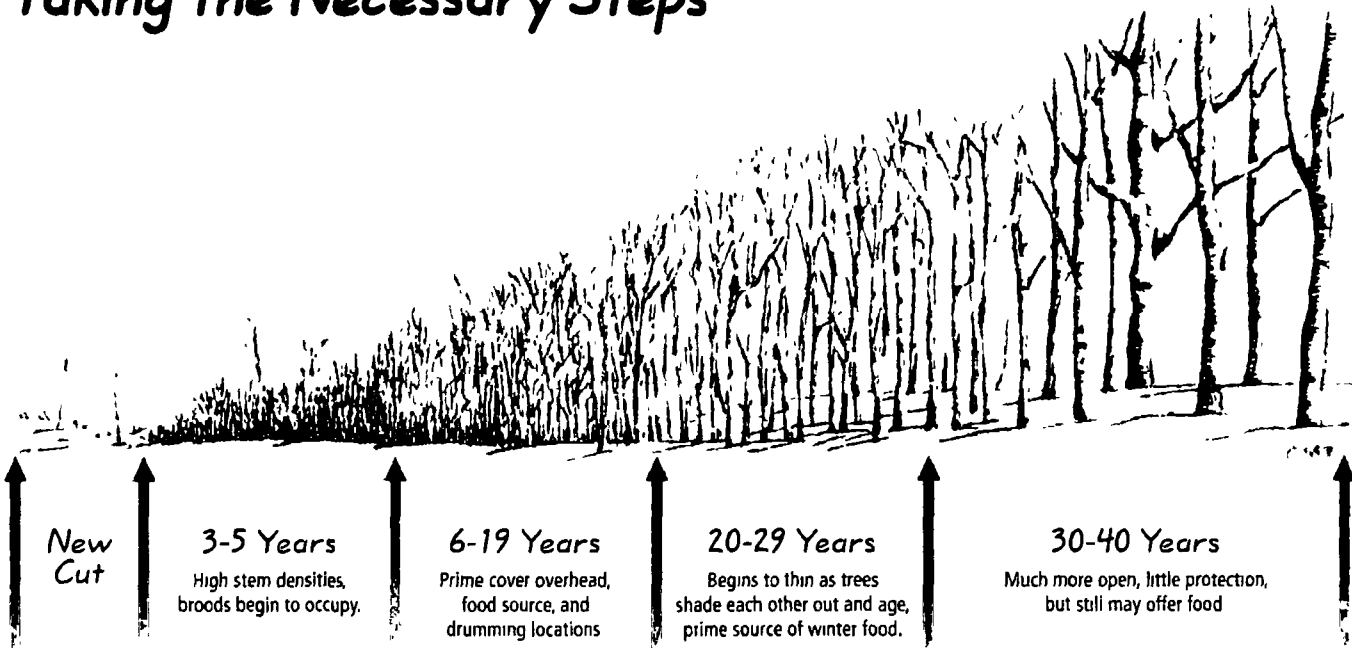


An opportunistic red fox listens for prey on a remote New England farm. Roosting in trees, out of the range of ground predators, is an effective survival technique of winter grouse.



This lucky hunter holds a prize – a December grouse. While studies show that hunter impact in the late season is compensatory, you won't find many who will take more than one or two per day, even if the opportunity arises. A smart, old rooster grouse in December is a trophy indeed.

# Creating Quality Habitat for Grouse and Related Species: Taking the Necessary Steps



Ruffed grouse are most common in northern hardwood forests between five and fifteen years old. In these years most regenerating trees have a diameter no greater than a golf ball.

When a forest reaches the age of 15 to 20 years, some trees in the young hardwood forest will begin to die out. This natural thinning process allows the remaining trees to take full advantage of sunlight and soil nutrients. As the stands thin themselves, mature trees will begin to dominate and species such as oak, beech and hophornbeam that can produce abundant "hard mast" foods such as acorns, beechnuts and other seeds, will take over. The tradeoff is that the stand understory becomes significantly more open and provides far less protection for grouse against predators. Because of this natural process, the very high stem density of young hardwood cover lasts only about 10 years.

Landowners interested in keeping a consistent source of ruffed grouse cover in their forest should

maintain their woodlot stands in a variety of age classes. This helps ensure that as one stand matures and its understory becomes more open, another young stand is nearby to provide dense, high quality brood habitat for grouse. This mix of age classes can be accomplished by harvesting 5-10 acre stands of mature forests every 5-10 years, which serves to diversify the overall forest age structure of the entire area. This rotation could continue indefinitely, providing a diverse array of habitats for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and many other wildlife species across the decades or even centuries.

As we've learned over the past year, our New England hardwood forests provide crucial habitat for ruffed grouse, American woodcock, and New England cottontail rabbits. Proper land management techniques, like those discussed, are essential for the welfare of these and many other species of wildlife.

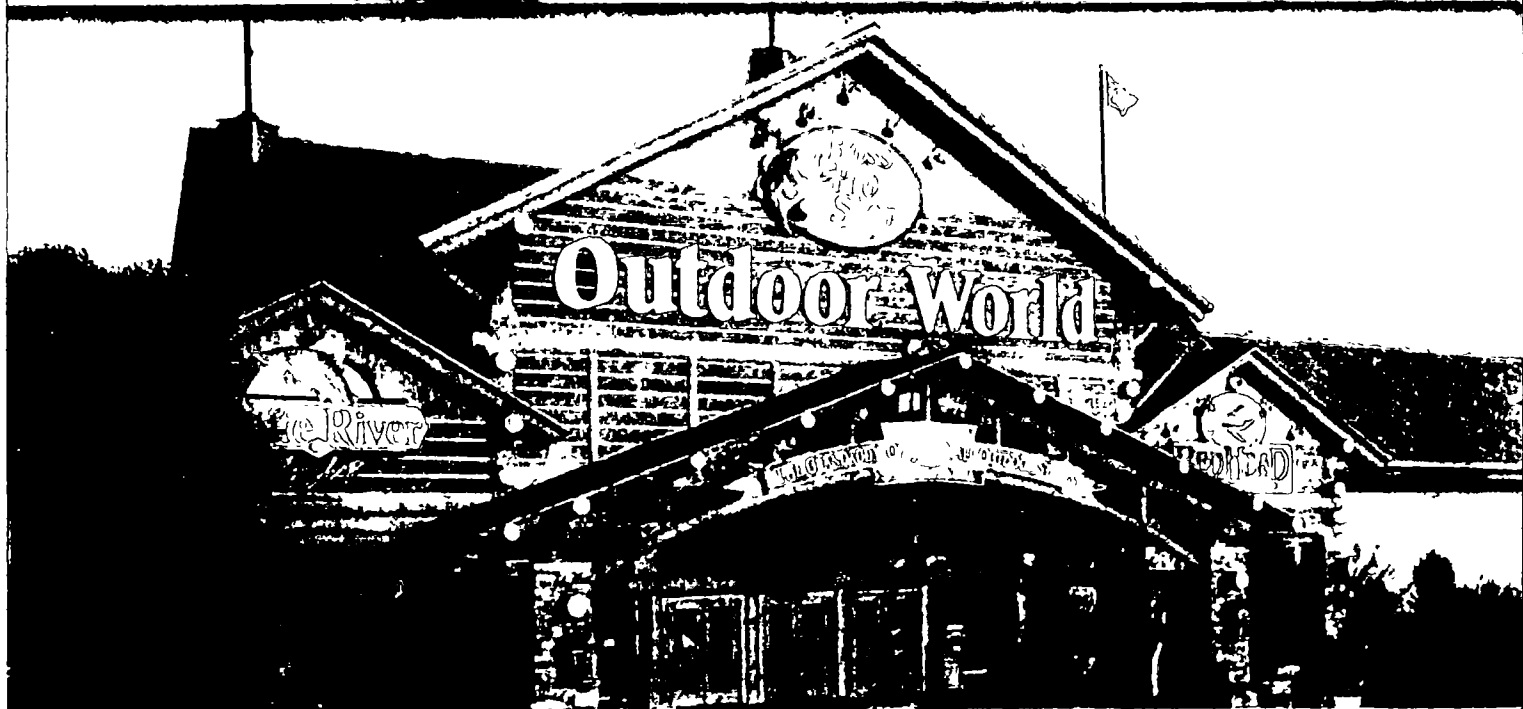
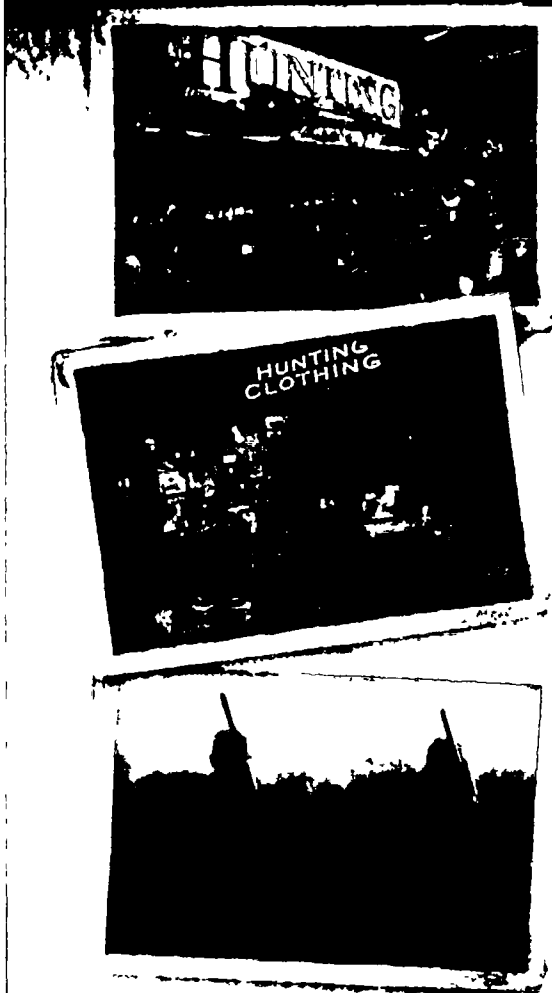
## Coming Spring 2010

Next year we'll follow the American woodcock through four seasons in the Midwest, learning about their habitat, breeding practices and survival tactics.



*Welcome*  
**FISHERMEN,  
HUNTERS,  
— AND —  
OTHER  
LIARS.**

Welcome, outdoorsmen! We built it just for you. It's true. Your local Bass Pro Shops® store is the only one of its kind. Sure, you'll discover in all our stores the same Low Price Guarantee, expert sales associates, and the best selection of outdoor products around. But the specific gear you'll find is unique to each location, because we understand that the Kansas grasslands are very different from Ohio hardwoods. And that's no lie.



Shop online at  
[basspro.com](http://basspro.com)

For a FREE catalog  
1-800-BASSPRO

For an adventure in itself  
Visit Our Stores Nationwide

# HOME COVERS CALLING

Spotlighting the Doings of RGS People on the Ground

## Have something to report?

We'd love to feature your chapter events! High resolution pictures, along with names of those pictured, date of event and a brief description are welcomed. Submissions may be emailed to [editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:editor@ruffedgrousesociety.org); or mailed to Attn: Editor, Ruffed Grouse Society, 451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis PA 15108.



Work day coordinator Dave Bartz of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin (3rd from r, back row), along with fellow Wisconsin RGS members and US Forest Service (USFS) employees, take a break for lunch at the conclusion of a successful habitat work day this summer. The event was held on the Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forest, and work crews cleared debris and widened a section of a hunter walking trail. This year alone Bartz has organized three field days for Wisconsin RGS volunteers. Photo by Scott Anderson of the USFS.



The committee of the Cumberland Valley RGS Chapter of Carlisle, Pennsylvania organized their first Sporting Clays Shoot in June of this year.



Hamming it up: Grinning with a grin is Gerry Putt of Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania. Putt is a committee member and also won the high gun award at the event with an impressive score of 65 out of 75.



John Edmiston of the Neshannock Creek Chapter of New Wilmington, Pennsylvania (l) and his visiting nephew Kane from South Carolina display their harvest after a hunt late last winter. This was Kane's first time hunting grouse in Pennsylvania.

## Congratulations!

Congratulations to our three 2009 RGS National Raffle Winners Jim Farrell from Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania won the first place Dream Hunt. Farrell and his wife, Linda, attended the RGS National Grouse and Woodcock hunt this October in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, following a 3 day hunt in Havre, Montana. Both attendees will also receive an SKB model 785 over-and-under shotgun. The SKB is a commemorative RGS edition and features an RGS logo medallion on the receiver. Andrew Lukashuk of Sussex, New York won a \$1000 Cabela's gift certificate and Kristin Dew of Elgin, Illinois won a pair of custom-fitted upland hunting boots from Russell Moccasin.

The 2010 National Raffle features a Winchester model 21 baby frame 28-gauge shotgun. Tickets are available through a Regional Director, or by calling RGS headquarters office. See page 7 in this issue for more details.



A big deal: Philip Pfister, 2006 World's Strongest Man, (center) accepts a sponsor gun on behalf of Chesapeake Energy (CE). The gun was won by sponsor CE at the April banquet of the Ohio River Chapter of New Martinsville, Ohio. After the presentation, CE generously donated the gun back to the chapter. Also pictured (l to r) are chapter committee members Josh Amos, Russell Smitley, Andy Pittman and Bill Rea



Banquet Chairman Brian Clark of Gouldsboro, Pennsylvania (l) and committee member Kevin Steible of Bangor, Pennsylvania, keep it light during the inaugural banquet of the Northeast Pennsylvania Chapter Ticket Chairman George Nichols, Prize Chairman Corey Wiesel and fellow committee members Sarah Clark and Paul and Lisa Howe were instrumental in organizing the late July event.

HOME COVERS *continued on next page*

RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



## EMBROIDERED APPAREL

Bob Allen  
High Prairie  
Hunting Shirt

\$35.00  
RGS-HU127

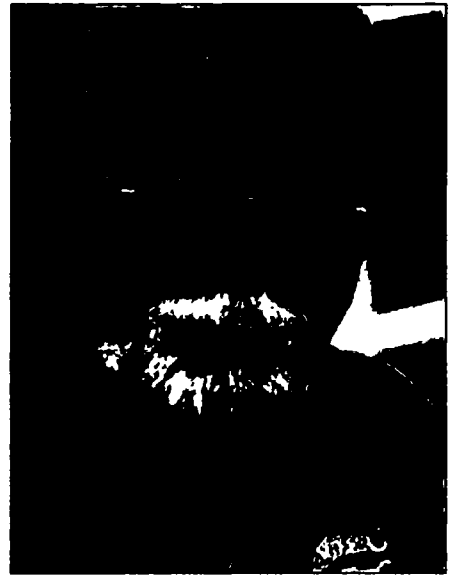


1.800.550.2698 • [WWW.SHOPRGS.COM](http://WWW.SHOPRGS.COM)

**In Memoriam**



Members of the Allegheny Northwoods RGS chapter of Franklin, Pennsylvania (from l to r) Steve Wilkinson, Jeff Perdue, Dave Galbreath and Denny Alston participated in a youth field day event.



**William G. Tapply, 1940-2009**

William G. Tapply passed away at his home in Hancock, New Hampshire on July 28, 2009 after a long and courageous bout with leukemia.

Tapply had written many books, including a mystery series and a number of books about hunting and fishing. He began his career as a high-school history teacher and later taught writing at Emerson College and Clark University. A Contributing Editor for *Field & Stream*, *American Angler*, *Gray's Sporting Journal* and many other publications, Tapply dedicated his life to the written word.

The sporting world lost a good friend in Tapply who pursued writing passionately, following in the footsteps of his father, H.G. Tapply of "Tap's Tips".

RGS Field Editor Art Wheaton remembers an email he received from Bill late last summer "I have been under the weather, yes," Bill wrote, "the kind of weather that requires chemotherapy. I'm doing pretty well these days, and enjoying them I just got back from two weeks at Martha's Vineyard with my wife. I had a couple of good fishing excursions, bluefish on flies They pull hard." Wheaton says, "I can glean a lot from those words...he was a tribute to our sporting life and I know when the fork on the road ultimately came for him - as it will for all of us - he moved on to the better hunting land."

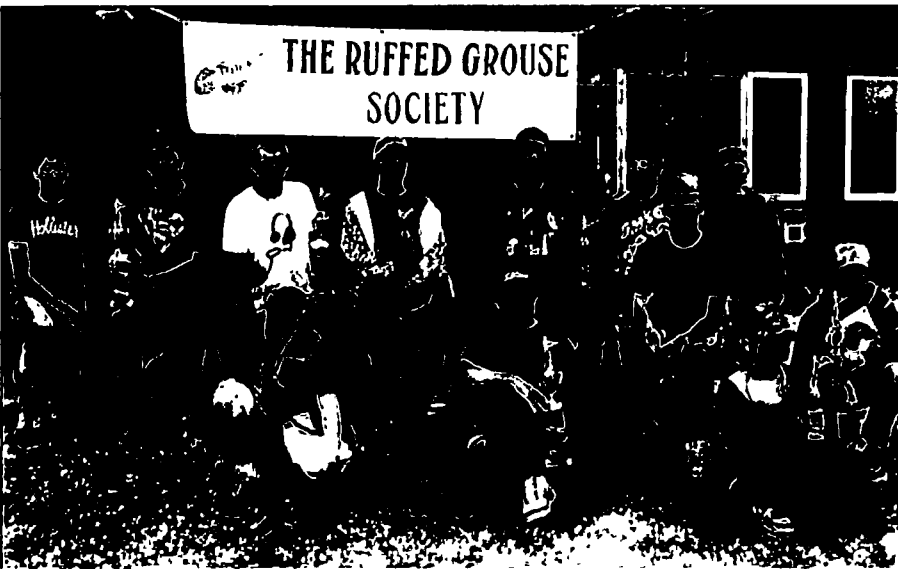
Tapply is survived by his wife, mystery writer Vicki Stiefel. He also leaves a son, Michael, two daughters, Melissa and Sarah; two stepsons Blake and Ben Ricciardi; his mother Muriel and sister Martha Van Drunen.



**Floating along:** A trip down the river on a beautiful day clearly thrills these youngsters participating in the youth field day held in mid-July at Camp Coffman in Kossuth, Pennsylvania.



**Just a little fishy:** A youth day attendee eyes his catch. Events included fishing, shooting, presentations and a host of other activities. Over 400 youth were in attendance.



The Robert J Lytle RGS Chapter of Imlay City, Michigan held a youth shoot this summer. Four of the 13 participants had never shot competitively before and were excited about the new experience.



projectPOTICO

Fostering Sustainable Forests in Indonesia

A WRI AND NEWPAGE PARTNERSHIP

NewPage — we're about paper... and so much more.

A leader in sustainability with an exceptionally broad portfolio of eco-friendly products, NewPage is committed to the responsible management of our earth's natural resources. One demonstration of this commitment is our landmark initiative with the World Resources Institute (WRI) called Project POTICO, an important global undertaking to preserve rainforests in Indonesia and protect local communities and species that depend upon them. For more information, please visit [www.ProjectPOTICO.org](http://www.ProjectPOTICO.org).



WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE



NewPage

Headquartered in Mansfield, Ohio, NewPage Corporation is the largest coated paper manufacturer in North America. The company's product portfolio is the broadest in North America, and includes coated freesheet, coated groundwood, super-bleached, newsprint and specialty papers. These papers are used for corporate communications, medical journals, magazines, catalogs, books, coupons, inserts, newspapers, packaging applications and direct mail advertising.

Learn more at [www.NewPageCorp.com](http://www.NewPageCorp.com).

# Conservation Policy –

Wildlife Conservation Society

## A vital component to fulfilling RGS' mission

by David Decker

RGS has a core mission of growing ruffed grouse and American woodcock. We pursue this mission by working with public and private landowners to establish and sustain the young forest habitats preferred by grouse, woodcock, golden-winged warblers, eastern towhees and many other species of wildlife. We can't ignore, however, that decisions made in Washington D.C. can dramatically affect opportunities for habitat management initiatives on both public and private forest lands. Vast sums of money can be made available to assist private landowners in the sound stewardship of their woodlands, or by the same token, direction can be provided to federal land management agencies that all but eliminates active forest management as an option for federal public lands across the nation.

It is vital that RGS be engaged with our elected and appointed officials in Washington. As the old saying goes – "the world is run by those who show up," and we have been showing up in the halls of Congress and key offices at the US Forest Service, US Fish & Wildlife Service and other important federal agencies for over 20 years.

I currently serve our membership as the Society's Director of Conservation Policy. My primary function is to build coalitions with other wildlife conservation organizations to protect our hunting heritage and promote opportunities to practice forest wildlife conservation through active forest management

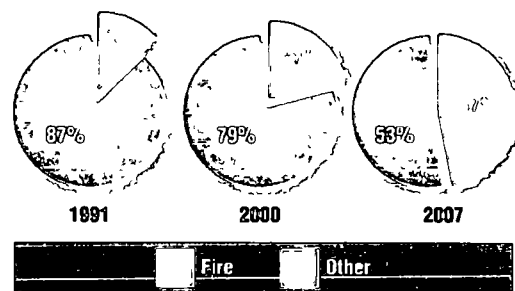
### The Funding Pie is Only so Big

As an example of an issue that can affect habitat management on our federal public lands, costs to control wildfires in the continental

United States have risen dramatically over the past decade and these increases are likely to continue into the foreseeable future. The portion of the US Forest Service discretionary budget spent on wildfire suppression has increased significantly (See pie charts below). These increases seriously impede the ability of the agency to conduct habitat management projects and address other pressing conservation needs.

As US Forest Service wildfire costs increase at a more rapid rate than the overall agency budget, the proportion of funds available for wildlife habitat enhancement and other important programs continues to decrease. In addition, costs that exceed the amounts budgeted for

Proportion of U.S. Forest Service Discretionary Funds Spent on Fire-Related Programs vs. Other Program Areas



"Decisions made in Washington D.C. can dramatically affect opportunities for habitat management initiatives on both public and private forest lands"

wildfires are typically transferred from other programs as needed. This borrowing totaled \$200 million in 2006 and \$100 million in 2007. These two factors: the erosion of budgets for other programs as the wildfire budget continues to account for an increasing proportion of the overall Forest Service budget, and year-end borrowing from these other programs negatively impact the ability of the agency to pursue other goals.

Since 2005 RGS has led the efforts of the wildlife conservation community to ensure that the costs of protecting natural landscapes and rural communities from wildfires do not break the back of the Forest Service. Legislation has been introduced during past sessions of Congress that would establish a special emergency fund that the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management could use to cover costs associated with major fires: this would eliminate the need for these agencies to raid the wildlife management budget or other important programs.

In March of this year, the Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act (FLAME Act) passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 412 to 3. The broad bi-partisan support for the FLAME Act was due in part to the work of the Society and others who met time and again with legislators on Capitol Hill to outline the need for swift and effective action. As this is being written, the FLAME Act awaits a final vote in the Senate, where it is expected to enjoy substantial support, and the signature of the President to finally provide a funding mechanism that will allow federal agencies to meet the threat of catastrophic wildfires without further eroding their ability to address the needs of millions of hunters, anglers and other dedicated conservationists.

### Small Trees as Renewable Biomass

Although a gallon of gas is currently well below the record high prices seen during the summer of 2008, there is still considerable interest in promoting the use of alternative fuels to lessen our dependence on foreign oil and to enhance our national security. Toward that end, the Society is working with others from the wildlife conservation community to correct a serious flaw in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. This legislation was designed to provide incentives for the research and development of alternative fuels, including biofuels, and it established what is known as the Renewable Energy Standard. This standard defines what materials and processes can be used to produce a renewable fuel and, therefore, be eligible for the subsidies authorized by the Energy Independence and Security Act. Unfortunately, Congress bowed to political pressure exerted by preservationist organizations and crafted a definition of "renewable biomass" that explicitly bans the use of most wood fiber from federal lands. Frankly, Congress blew it.

It costs federal, state and local governments billions of dollars each year to harvest small-diameter trees from forest stands on federal lands that are overstocked and at serious risk of catching fire. These costs are exorbitant precisely because there is no market for these small-diameter trees. If these trees could be used as feedstock for the production of biofuel, the costs recovered from the sale of this wood fiber to biofuel producers could pay for the harvest operations – a true win-win situation. Even if economic conditions were inadequate to generate revenue from this wood fiber, its utilization to produce biofuel would certainly be better than allowing it to rot in the field.

In addition to providing opportunities to protect wild lands and rural communities from fire, an expansion of the definition of the term "renewable biomass" to include wood fiber harvested from federal lands could greatly enhance opportunities to establish the young forest habitats required by ruffed grouse and so many other types of wildlife in the eastern United States. Today, although large-diameter individuals of most tree species are readily marketable in most regions of the east, small-diameter trees commonly have little or no economic value. These

small-diameter trees are often left standing and the shade they cast can greatly complicate the development of dense, young forest habitat conditions. If markets existed for these small trees, they too could be harvested along with the large trees. This would improve the economic viability of the harvest operation and improve habitat conditions for grouse and other wildlife.

The Society and others are currently working with federal legislators to change the definition of "renewable biomass" so that any wood fiber harvested in a thoughtful and sustainable manner, regardless of who owns the land, can be used to produce biofuel. After all, it makes zero sense to preclude the use of a perfectly good source of fiber merely because it is harvested from the wrong side of a property line.

### Other Current Agenda Items

Two important blueprints guiding the future for ruffed grouse and woodcock conservation have been completed over the past several years – the Ruffed Grouse Conservation Plan and American Woodcock Conservation Plan. These conservation strategies were the result of years of collaboration between representatives of federal and state natural resource management agencies, universities, conservation organizations such as the Ruffed Grouse Society and many others. The Ruffed Grouse Society coordinated the development of the Ruffed Grouse Conservation Plan and was a key player in the American Woodcock Conservation Plan as well.

These Plans themselves will do little to enhance conditions for ruffed grouse and woodcock unless they are implemented. The Society is currently working with state natural resource agencies to see that the recommendations contained in these Plans are incorporated into statewide habitat management objectives.

In addition, because over 75% of the forest is privately owned in the eastern United States, which is the primary range of both ruffed grouse and woodcock, the Society is working to ensure that funds are available to private landowners for habitat management activities. Primary sources for these funds are the landowner assistance programs that make up the foundation of the conservation component of the Farm Bill – programs such as the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

As the current Farm Bill was being drafted in 2007 and 2008, the Ruffed Grouse Society partnered with 32 other conservation and environmental organizations under the banner of the Forests in the Farm Bill Coalition. The Coalition's primary goal was to increase the level of support available through the Farm Bill for wildlife habitat management on private forest lands. The Coalition worked to expand support for both on-the-ground habitat management practices and for technical assistance to aid landowners in making the best habitat management decisions given their specific opportunities and objectives.

The need is great for this technical and financial support. Private individuals and families control over 260 million acres of forest in the United States, much of this in the east. Disappointingly, only 22% of the private landowners who have harvested wood products from their property have done so with the aid of a forester, wildlife biologist or some other natural resource professional. Subsequent to the passage of the Farm Bill in 2008, the Society has concentrated its efforts on ensuring that these important landowner assistance programs are fully funded by Congress.

It's fair to suggest that the Ruffed Grouse Society is one of the most difficult tasks of any wildlife conservation organization. The Society promotes the setting of landowner priorities and objectives, with an almost single-minded focus on the conservation of wildlife and their habitats. We are proud to be a part of the conservation movement.

# The Magic Wand of a Left-Hander



Photo by T. C. Flanigan



by Frank J. Vivone, Jr.

**"We tramp off the trail into an aspen-pine mix. A grouse flushes in front of Ice Man and he misses. A second bird flaps through the pines and I miss, but Ice Man gets his gun up in time to make a nice shot. Coolly, he claims his first grouse of the year."**

**I**ce Man collected nine flying grouse in 2008 with 20 shots in the densest timber of northern Minnesota. He would have had ten, but we lost the one that flew high. I saw it fall from above the aspens: it sounded like a three-pound bag of flour hitting the ground, "poomp." We couldn't go back and get the dog, because we were in a mile and light was fading fast. We hustled to beat darkness to the trail. That bird's story ended there, its scent washed away in the overnight downpour.

Ice Man's ratio is the best I've heard in 20 years of ruffed grouse hunting. That's not counting the woodcock, which are always taken from odd trajectories.

Ice Man arrives Sunday afternoon. We organize camp and head out for a leisurely walk on "three trails" before dark. We neither see nor hear a single bird. Back at camp he starts a fire, and I bring out the grouse breast kabobs that have been marinating in pineapple juice for two days. I fall asleep dwelling on a strategy for "green jug".

"Green jug" is the only trail in the area that doesn't have an ATV attached to it, and it reminds me of the Missouri roads I adored as a kid – swerving and hilly. Last week I hunted the woodcock area alone and didn't find any. At the bottom of a hill I was skipping over mud when a grouse exploded five yards in, twisting through the alders. I stuttered two shots and leaned around those dense trees in pursuit. Then he buzzed around one, over another, and I missed again. I couldn't stop now because I thought I might have caught him with a bb. I crossed the creek, lost my balance and slipped – soaking my right side in the process. A few more steps and he blasted off without a trace.

Yup, I am eager to return to that trail.

Ice Man has a tradition of going for a short hunt with his goofy German short-hair while I muster around camp fixing breakfast. All he needs is a Mountain Dew, but I prefer coffee, tea, toast and eggs, with either stewed peppers, bacon, ham or potatoes. I have to wash my face and tie on my 16-inch tracker-boots. I've never gone with him on these early morning hunts, I know that time alone up here is necessary, and good. But today I want to be there when the birds fly like they had the last two seasons, so I slip on boots and he leads us out of camp toward "the boulevard".

When Ice Man lets Sam out of the kennel he acts like he always does – leaping out and racing 100 yards down the trail. Ice Man yells, "Sam, get in there!" The dog runs straight back to us. Then Ice Man yells again and Sam smashes into the brush. Since he sounds like stampeding wildebeests, we can keep track of him for many yards. We walk and talk. Periodically, Sam charges out behind us, scaring the crap out of me.

Sam busts a lot of birds like this. Some fly Ice Man's way and Ice Man is happy. I am happy because I know the dog won't be with us on most of the hunts, so I am tolerating him, because I enjoy I-Man's company. No birds this time, though we aren't sure because Sam's pounding hooves can't be differentiated from flushing wings when he scares them to tree limbs.

We eat breakfast and head for the "green jug". Our woodcock covert was empty. Across the road we inch through a jungle of shorter thicker stuff when a woodcock fluttered away. I shoot and miss. I-man shoots next, and the woodcock spins down like a bent boomerang. "Nice shot, Ice Man!"

A half mile further in we tramp off the trail into an aspen-pine mix. A grouse flushes in front of Ice Man and he misses. A second bird flaps through the pines and I miss, but Ice Man gets his gun up in time to make a nice shot. Coolly, he claims his first grouse of the year.

At "cross trail ridge" Ice Man gets one that flushes off a low branch and knocks down another, the high-flyer that we are unable to find.

Rain pelts the tent after midnight. Sleeping under a tent in a steady rain is wonderful. I feel like a kid again. The following morning, in pouring rain, I-Man nets one swooping out of a tree, one flying off a dead tree branch and one flushing from the gravel road in front of "Nelson's place" – all spotted by me. I miss one in front

THE MAGIC WAND OF A LEFT-HANDER *continued on next page*

of mature aspens.

The next day we head for "camp drummer" – a smart male that drums on a log 100 yards from the tent. He isn't to be found at his log, and there aren't many droppings there either. Perhaps the timber is becoming too mature. A few hundred yards beyond the log we flush one, but aren't able to get a shot. Another hour of cranking through the aspen puts us just where "3 trails" turns west.

We stick to the open trail. Ice Man says, "There goes one, on the ground to the right." I fall to one knee, following the grouse under the pines but he doesn't fly. In we go. A few yards further we hear it clucking and it darts through a white pine. Ice Man nails it. Then I mistakenly shoot a spruce grouse that will go home for my dog. Then Ice Man yells, "He's under the pine, Ace Man, just ahead of you!" The pine was slapping me like a twirling mop at the car wash. "Yea, I heard ya"

It flaps above Ice Man and he misses twice and laughs, "Oh, that was an easy one. How come you aren't shooting, Ace Man?"

"Wooff...Wooff... if you keep missing I'll go to the kennel." We are having a great time – ruffed grouse hunting at its best.

At the end of "three trails" we take a breather on a rock overlooking a creek, loving the sun and talking. On the trail back, a bird gets up five yards to the right and flies towards the creek and 60 foot firs. It startles us and disappears in moments through the pines. Ice Man says, "I am going in about 50 yards in the direction I saw him last."

I yell in frustration, "Ok, I am going all the way to the dark stuff." As we approach a skinny evergreen the bird flushes in Ice Man's direction. When I see the bird's wings spread on the grass I shout, "You got him, Ice Man, nice shot." I'm really thinking, "Unbelievable, they are all going his way!" I had my chances, though.

I lose track of the trail and have to ask I-man. In a snickering low voice he says, "The trail is about five yards to the left...on the other side of that pine, Ace Man."

I reply, "Hey, Chief Ice Feather, you are supposed to know where we are. I'm flushing all the birds your way."

After lunch it's time to hunt across "the boulevard" and photograph the three-foot-high drumming boulder that I found last week. It has hundreds of rooster droppings in a crevice – much more than the logs I have seen. We have chased many birds here, but have never found their drumming spots before. Ice Man is surprised at the boulder, just like I was, and speculates that a big old male has been using it. To my disappointment my photos are terrible; I'll have to wait until next year to try my digital. It would be fantastic to photograph that old male displaying on it.

Just a few steps past the log we hear a grouse. It may be him,

and Ice Man shoots twice and misses. We continue for about two more hours, but don't flush anything after that. Tired, yet relaxed after five hours of real ruffed grouse hunting we drive to "green jug". There, in the middle of the trail, was a young grouse filling his gullet for the night. "Go ahead Ice Man." I say, "Take him. I'll video you."

He loads up and walked slowly down the path to flush him. He reminds me all the time that grouse never fly down the road, but they flush toward the timber. Well, this one flushes and flies straight down the road. Boom! Ice Man gets him.

I swear he is shooting faster this year! I claim lofully that he has to shoot twice at all the birds. He replies, "Well, I have to! You do want me to get them, don't you?" I can't argue with that. Since taking two fast shots is working, maybe that is the way it should be for ruffed grouse. Maybe I'll just pull both triggers at once, which is the only advantage I can see to having this gun over a single selective trigger.

Suddenly, I spy one

walking in the aspen. It flushes, leaving us no shot. As we walk in further two more birds flush. With grouse flushing on all sides of us, we lose track of one another. Finally, in frustration, we start yelling in an attempt to locate one another. We can't shoot until we're sure we can do so safely.

Late that day, on our way back to camp, I chase after one for 25 yards in the middle of the road before he flies. I shoot under him after he flushes, then fumble in getting to the rear trigger. It's a defining moment for a beautiful double trigger 12-gauge double barrel that I can't shoot fast enough. I tell Ice Man that I am getting rid of it. You can't get thick gloves into the finger holes either.

We decide to leave early the next day, and our traditional final supper of dove poppers, which are made with one dove breast, a slice of onion and any type of pepper, wrapped in bacon, tooth-picked and grilled over hickory chunks are better than lobster tails.

The next morning we pack and drive to the highway the long way. Ice Man shoots a big gray phase that flushes from the gravel. I see only the peak of Minnesota's deep autumn beauty and contemplate Ice Man's magic wand.

He camped just five days, two of which were travel days. In three days of hunting he shot 20 times at 14 flying grouse and once at a woodcock. He bagged nine grouse and the woodcock, not bad at all!

*Frank Vivone grew up in Des Moines, Iowa listening to his father's stories about small game hunting. He started hunting at 11, and his first grouse hunt was in 1984. He fell in love with the timber bird, and hunts them annually in Minnesota with friends.*

*Vivone is in the process of completing two books on ruffed grouse, and he lives for running with his dog, hunting grouse and doves, camping in timber with his family and writing. He can be reached at [srfaspn@yahoo.com](mailto:srfaspn@yahoo.com).*



It only takes two birds to delight these ruffed grouse fanatics, dog trainer Gregg Johnson from Minneapolis, Minnesota (l) and Jerry Nissen of Kansas City, Missouri (aka Ice Man)

# ***Ithaca Gun Company***

*"Take an Old Friend Hunting"*

**We're READY  
For The Season.  
ARE YOU?**

**28 Gauge**

**Ithaca Apparel Available**  
shirts, hats, gun cases and more

**contact your local Dealer**



Proud Member

**Made in USA**

**[www.ithacagun.com](http://www.ithacagun.com)**

**420 N. WARPOLE STREET UPPER SANDUSKY, OH 43351 PH: (419) 294-4113 FAX: (419) 294-3230**

# Winter Ruffed Grouse

by Doug Stamm

An upland bird hunter who thinks ruffed grouse season is all about walking through groves of golden aspen under a blue autumn sky is missing half the season. Beautiful as the fall season is, the late winter season has its own rewards, and the grouse hunter who ventures into the snow will often have the uplands to himself.

The ruffed grouse you hunted in the fall isn't in the same place, nor is he the same bird you'll hunt in the winter. Indeed, the upland hunter needs to admire birds encountered this time of year. These birds are wary, smart and lucky to have survived this long and are not easy game. But several factors conspire in favor of the hunter to find savvy winter grouse.

The first snowfalls of winter leave ruffed grouse at a disadvantage. They can't burrow into snow-roosts until the snow is seven to eight inches deep, and if they roost or feed on shallow white snow, they are easily detected by owls and hawks — the predators that do grouse the most harm.

With food on the forest floor now locked in ice or covered by snow, grouse are forced to feed on the buds and catkins of trees and shrubs. Grouse are reluctant to leave the security of their roosts and expose themselves to the twin dangers of cold and predation and so they will leave their roost areas only once or twice a day to feed. All of these factors simply mean that for most of the day in winter, ruffed grouse will be out of the wind and out of sight in places predictable to the winter hunter.

In the northern regions and higher altitudes of the ruffed grouse range the one major cover grouse will nearly always be found in are conifer stands of juniper, spruce and balsam fir, near or mixed in with areas of dense mature aspen. No other factor in the north or in the mountains plays a larger role in prime winter grouse habitat than the conifer and aspen combination. In the shade and dense cover of conifer boughs grouse can roost unseen by predators and find shelter from the wind. Nearby aspen mean a short flight to feed on buds, which keeps their exposure time to avian predators at a minimum.

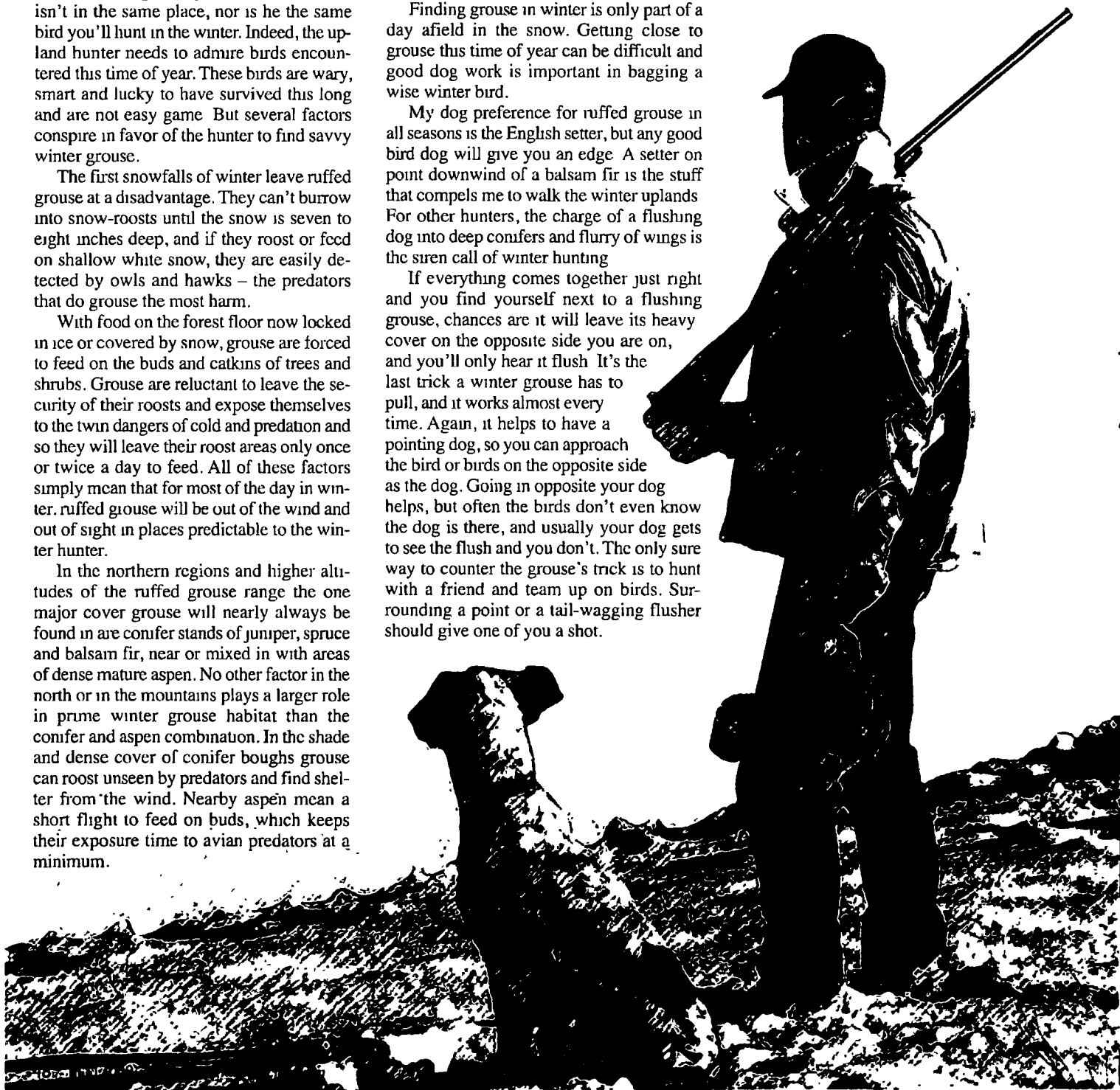
Conifer patches on south facing slopes are especially good grouse magnets on sunny winter days. The dark green color of conifers and the often exposed ground of south facing slopes collect the sun's warmth and attract grouse. These southern exposure areas also offer birds rare opportunities to forage on exposed greens and fallen berries exposed by melting snow.

Finding grouse in winter is only part of a day afield in the snow. Getting close to grouse this time of year can be difficult and good dog work is important in bagging a wise winter bird.

My dog preference for ruffed grouse in all seasons is the English setter, but any good bird dog will give you an edge. A setter on point downwind of a balsam fir is the stuff that compels me to walk the winter uplands. For other hunters, the charge of a flushing dog into deep conifers and flurry of wings is the siren call of winter hunting.

If everything comes together just right and you find yourself next to a flushing grouse, chances are it will leave its heavy cover on the opposite side you are on, and you'll only hear it flush. It's the last trick a winter grouse has to pull, and it works almost every time. Again, it helps to have a pointing dog, so you can approach the bird or birds on the opposite side as the dog. Going in opposite your dog helps, but often the birds don't even know the dog is there, and usually your dog gets to see the flush and you don't. The only sure way to counter the grouse's trick is to hunt with a friend and team up on birds. Surrounding a point or a tail-wagging flusher should give one of you a shot.

But in the end the birds usually win and by far most winter grouse escape the hunter. If we are fortunate to bag one for a winter's dinner we should be grateful for a walk in wild places and our forest's bounty. When they escape us and fly over the ridge we respond graciously, and wish them a fair spring. 🐾





domestic  
energy

scenic  
beauty

abundant  
recreation

wildlife  
habitat

sustainable  
forests

healthy  
streams

**MWV** MEADWESTVACO

Managed land – for generations

# Winter's Wonders

## Hunting ruffed grouse in the bitter months

*Text and Photos by Nancy Anisfield*



Fingerlips numb. Eyes watering with the sting of icy air. Thick snow cascades from cedar branches, packing cleverly down the neck of your jacket. But your heart is pounding. Grouse tracks circle the ground beneath a huge evergreen and the dog has already caught scent.



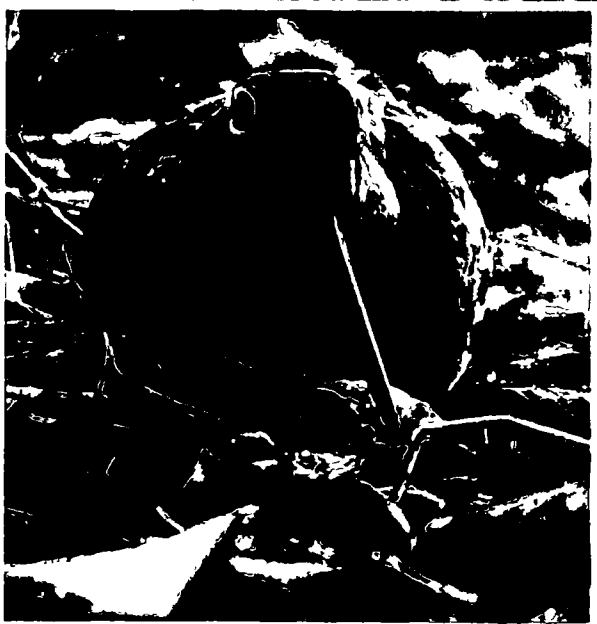
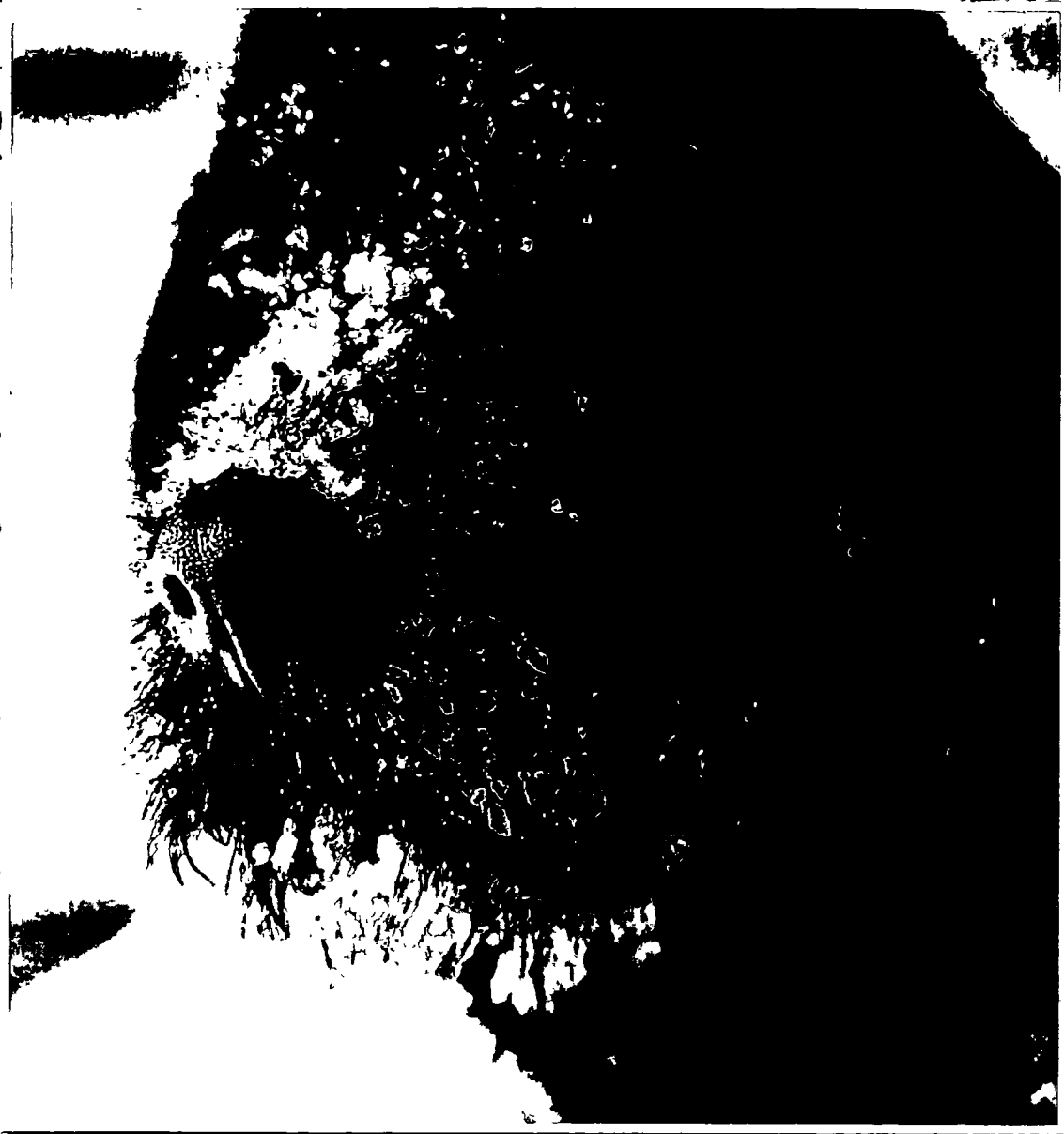
Winter grouse hunting isn't for everyone. In several inches of snow, it's hard to keep up with your bird dog, and it's even harder to get to him quickly and quietly when he locks on point. The grouse are smart, educated by the season and wary of their vulnerability as the cover thins and predators search for a winter meal.



Hunters who savor a challenge will find great rewards in these winter months. There is the delight of seeing grouse tracks in one direction, and your bird dog tracking in the other until he realizes his mistake, reverses directions and locks on point in what seems like just seconds later.







Nancy Anisfield was a commercial illustrator, college English instructor and a corporate copywriter before discovering that she would have a good excuse for skipping out of work to hunt and train her dogs if she became an outdoor writer and photographer.

Her work is used by Tri-Tronics and appears in *The Versatile Hunting Dog*, *The Bird Hunting Report* and many other publications. She is a consulting editor for *The Upland Almanac* and a field photographer for RGS. Nancy also serves as the creative entity behind her husband Terry Wilson's company, Ugly Dog Hunting. They live in Hinesburg, Vermont, where their lives are carefully managed by her two German shorthaired pointers, his two German wirehaired pointers and a retired Chesapeake Bay retriever.

To see more of Nancy's photos, visit [www.anisfieldhuntingdog-photography.com](http://www.anisfieldhuntingdog-photography.com) and [www.uglydoghunting.com](http://www.uglydoghunting.com)

# RGS STAFF CHANGES

## Bruce Wojcik

Bruce Wojcik recently joined the ranks of the Ruffed Grouse Society team of regional directors. He will be responsible for Michigan and northern Indiana



Bruce Wojcik

Wojcik brings over a decade of experience to the field, and plans both to grow membership and coordinate on the ground conservation efforts. Having served as a Regional Director for Ducks Unlimited and a Senior Regional Director for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, he has been dedicated to conservation – and conservation organizations – for much of his career.

“His background in conservation speaks for itself,” RGS Senior Regional Director Mark Fouts said. “Bruce will make an excel-

lent addition to our field staff, and I look forward to working with him.”

Wojcik makes his home in DeWitt, Michigan with his wife, Phyllis, and their English setter, Petie. Both he and his wife are wildlife biologists. Wojcik is eager to begin his work in Michigan. “I have the utmost respect and appreciation for volunteers, and I am most excited and anxious to team up with Michigan RGS volunteers to make things happen across our great state,” he said.

Wojcik may be reached at [rgsbruce@comcast.net](mailto:rgsbruce@comcast.net).

## Dan Holliman

The new regional director of New York and northern Pennsylvania is Dan Holliman from Syracuse, New York. Holliman has been an active member of RGS since 1996, and believes it is key for all members, and potential members, to understand how vital it is to work toward making a difference in the legacy of hunting through active management of habitat.

He has had significant experience as a sales executive and business development expert with the Cablexpress Corporation in New York. Over the past decade he has also served as VP of Business Development in two start-up technology companies. Holliman is also a former faculty member of the Maxwell School for Citizenship and Public Affairs, and a former staff member of the University of Michigan.

As an avid hunter, Holliman is passionate about double guns, conservation and dogs. In his spare time he trains his two English setters, Appalachia and Sierra. Enjoying the outdoors has been a life-long interest for Holliman, who is an Eagle Scout. He anticipates sharing his passion for conservation by growing new RGS chapters. “I look forward to helping members and non-members alike understand the importance of young-forest habitat, not only for our sporting heritage, but also for many species of wildlife, like deer and songbirds. We must realize that the agenda goes beyond our immediate covers,” says Holliman. “The not-for-profit sector has an important voice in state and local policies that affect the natural surroundings throughout our nation.”

Holliman may be reached at [rgsdan10@gmail.com](mailto:rgsdan10@gmail.com).



Dan Holliman

Pure comfort  
Exceptional quality  
Ultimate warmth

Give the gift of luxury this season -  
A unique lay blanket handmade from  
the finest premium natural beaver furs.

ADIRONDACK  
BEAVER BLANKETS

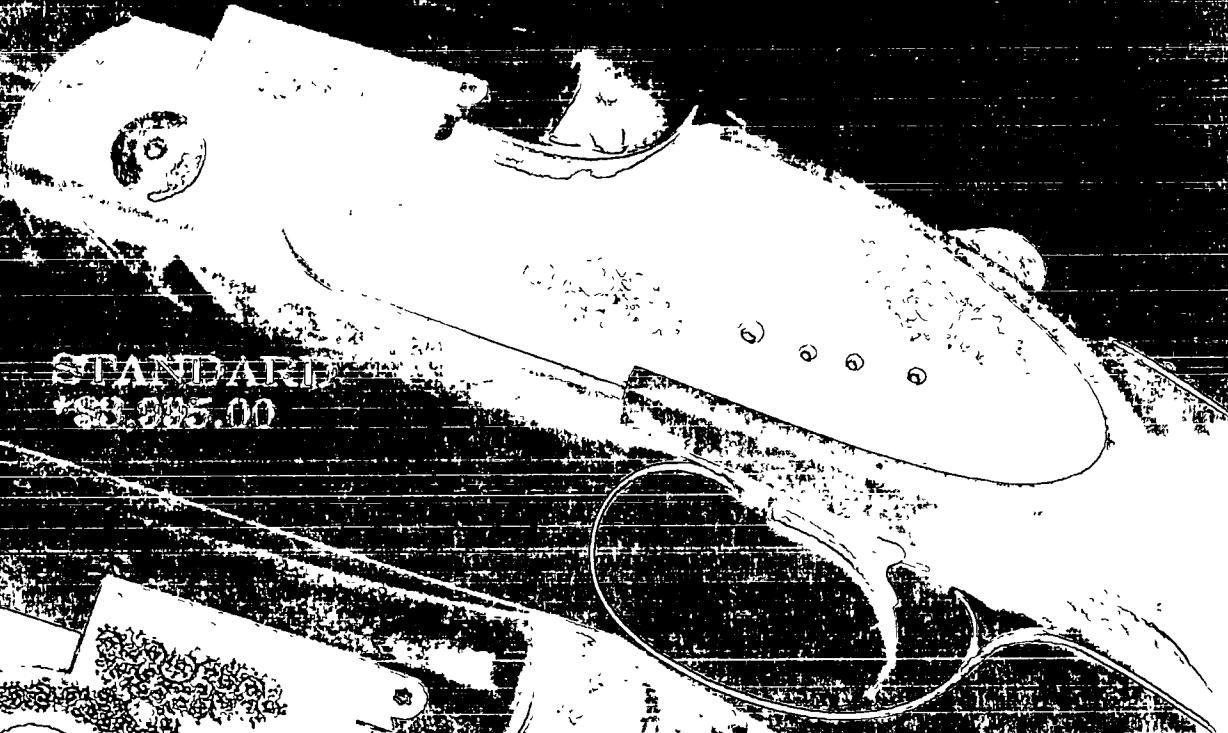
440.286.1998  
[adirondackblankets.com](http://adirondackblankets.com)

Connecticut Shotgun Mfg. Co.

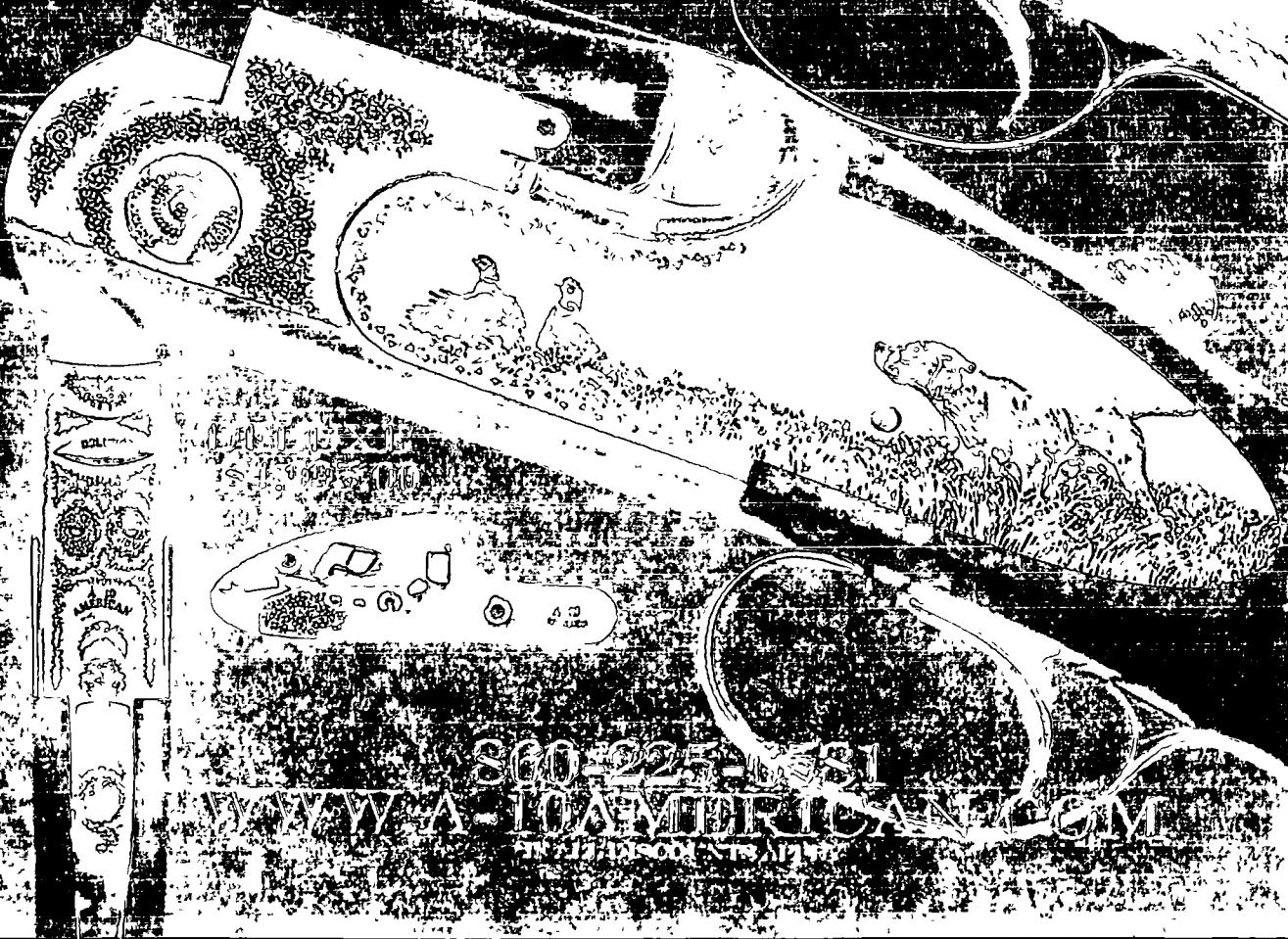
Presents

# A-10 AMERICAN

AMERICAN MADE, AMERICAN BEST  
HAND DETACHABLE SIDELOCK OVER AND UNDER



STANDARD  
\$83.995.00



860-225-1431

WWW.A-10AMERICAN.COM

© 1999 CONNECTICUT SHOTGUN MFG. CO.



# FLAVORS

# The Experience

## A Holistic Approach to Food

by Anna Siroha

The history of food dates back to every culture and society of man since the beginning of our existence. This plethora of knowledge has been scantily recorded throughout the ages, and doubtless countless savory recipes have died an untimely, yet largely unavoidable, death.

Every dish has a history, and some may even be uncovered (at least in part) by a zealous sleuth. Just ask Chef Allen Dye.

Dye is the head Chef for M7 Event Solutions in Asheville, North Carolina. In his mind, books provide the gateway to an entire food experience. The history, the traditions and the people that are behind every dish are of as much interest to him as the food itself. Knowing the rich history of every dish makes it taste all the better. Dye offers a clear proof of his theories, "How many people remember their grandmother's cooking?" He has a point.

Dye, who stems from Quaker roots, had never shot a gun when he began working with his business partner, Joe Lasher, on their annual game dinners. He now hunts occasionally with friends, and his love of learning has discovered merits to the

hunting culture. "There are many traditional aspects [to hunting] that are valuable," he explains. "Game meat is really good for you, and whether you're a hunter or not, conservation of our environment makes sense."

Ten years ago, when he began his introduction to hunting, a world he didn't know existed opened up before him. "It isn't just a world for hunters – there's room for people like me too," he says. People interested in the scientific, cultural and historical aspects have a place. Simply put, hunting is part of all mankind's heritage.

Even before his interest in cooking wild game evolved, Dye spent some time researching wild foods. "Evolutionarily speaking, we evolved to eat wild caught food, and we respond to this food better," he claims. He values the fact that eating wild game forces one to think about the entire process – from harvesting, cleaning and preparation of the food. "It means stepping outside your comfort zone – it becomes more an experience when you're eating it. It reminds you of your place in this world around you."

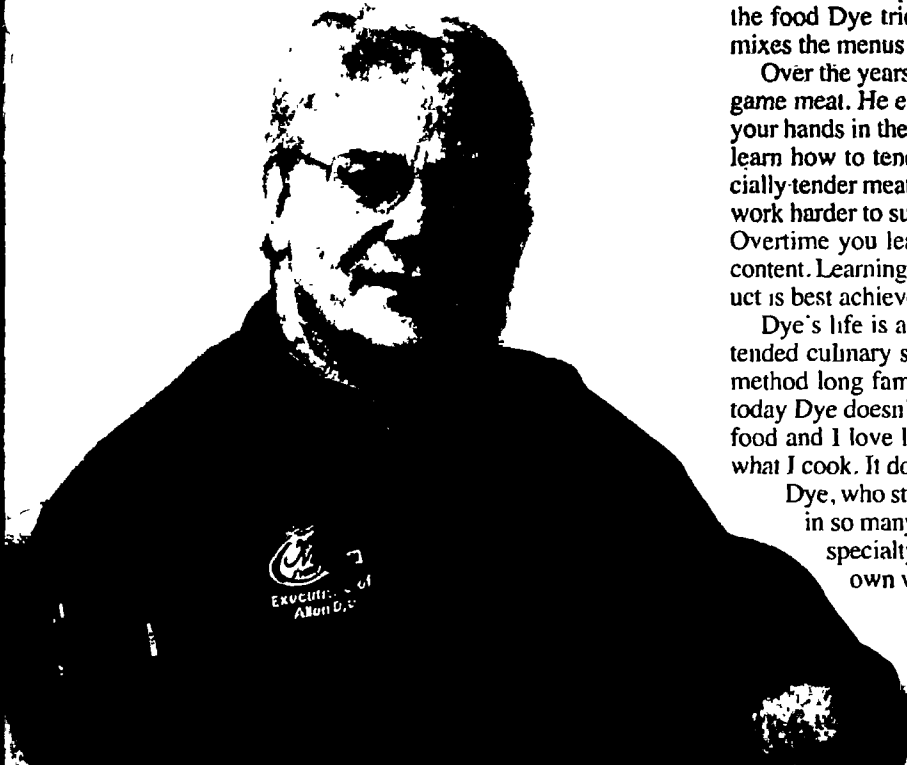
Today Dye prepares food for game dinners organized by Joe Lasher. The dinners began ten years ago as a family tradition, but now attract people from all walks of life. When preparing the food Dye tries to buy everything from local sources, and mixes the menus up annually.

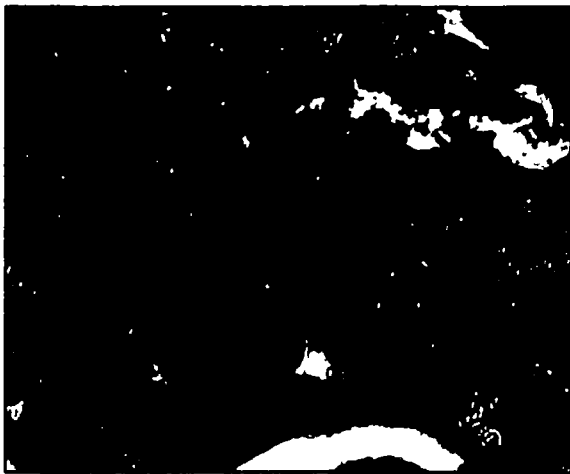
Over the years, Dye has learned a few things about preparing game meat. He emphasizes how important it is just to try – get your hands in there and see what happens. It's also important to learn how to tenderize, game meat is much leaner than artificially tender meats. Poultry is still poultry, but wild birds have to work harder to survive, he cautions, so flavors will be different. Overtime you learn to adjust for tenderness, moisture and fat content. Learning how each of these factors affects the final product is best achieved by practice.

Dye's life is an example of what he preaches – he never attended culinary school. Instead, he learned his trade through a method long familiar to our ancestors - apprenticeships. Even today Dye doesn't consider the process complete. "I really love food and I love learning about it. Everything I learn enhances what I cook. It doesn't matter if I learn it from my sous-chef."

Dye, who studied English literature in college, is interested in so many different types of food, he decries claiming a specialty. Perhaps his passion is best described in his own words - "It's a food thing."

*This concludes our two part series on Joe Lasher and Chef Allen Dye of [www.gamedinner.com](http://www.gamedinner.com).*





### Pine Bark Stew\*

- 3-4 pounds boneless, skinless freshwater fish: catfish, bass, trout or perch
- 1 pound bacon strips
- 2 large onions, peeled and chopped
- 2 ribs celery, chopped
- 2-3 large garlic cloves, peeled
- 3 russet potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 6 c canned whole pear tomatoes
- 1 c fresh parsley, chopped
- 3-4 bay leaves
- hot sauce (to taste)
- 2-3 lemons
- 2 c dry white wine
- 4 c shrimp stock (chicken or vegetable stock may be substituted)

### Spice Cake

- 2 c sugar
- 1 c vegetable oil
- 2 c raisins
- 2 t baking soda
- 3 1/2 c all purpose flour

#### Spices

- 1 t cinnamon
- 1 t cloves
- 1 t salt

Blend spices together. Thoroughly wash fish under cold water, pat dry with paper towels and squeeze a lemon over the fillets. Heat the largest, most intimidating skillet you can find and fry the bacon strips until crispy. Remove from the pan to cool on paper towels.

Quickly brown the fish fillets in the bacon grease. Do not fully cook the fish, just brown over high heat on both sides and remove. (We're going to bake everything in the oven a bit later.) Add the onions and celery to the hot grease and begin to fry. Smash garlic cloves and add to the pan.

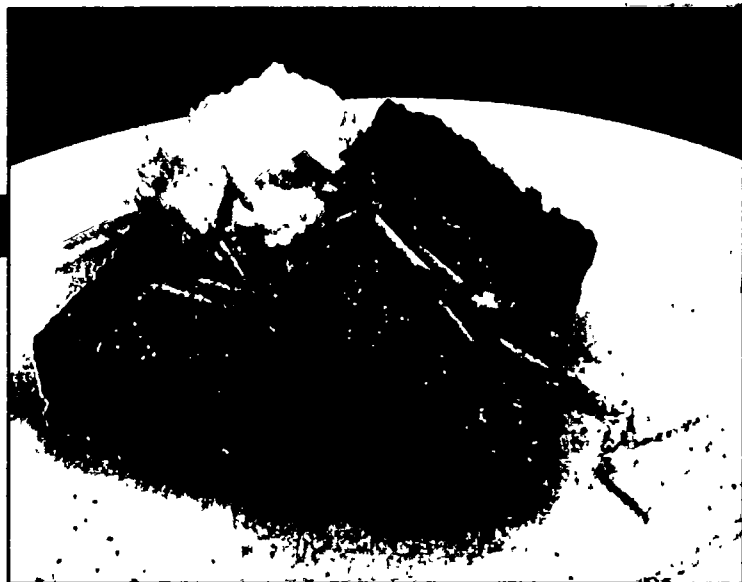
After 10 minutes or so, when the onions begin to brown around the edges, sprinkle generously with more of the spice mix. Add the white wine to the pan and simmer for 5 minutes or so. (You may notice the aroma changes as the alcohol evaporates away.) Add shrimp stock and canned tomatoes. Simmer for a few more minutes, taste, and adjust seasoning.

Spoon 2/3 of the vegetable mixture into a large baking dish. Place the fish fillets evenly over the vegetables. Spoon the remaining vegetable mixture over the fish. Bake for 25 minutes, or until bubbling hot and fish flakes away with a fork. Serve in the baking dish garnished with parsley and bacon strips.

#### Spice Mix:

- 1 t basil, 1 t thyme, 1 t oregano, 1 t granulated garlic
- 1/2 t white pepper, 1/2 t black pepper, 1 t salt

*\*Why, you ask, is this called Pine Bark Stew? The answer is because that is what you make the cook-fire out of!*



*My mother picked this one up at a Quaker Wife's Retreat in 1959, but I suspect it is an Americanization of an old English pudding with hard sauce.*

Over high heat dissolve sugar in 2 cups boiling water. Add vegetable oil, raisins and spices and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and rest for a few minutes in a cool place.

Dip out a few spoons of the now chilled mixture and make a slurry with the baking soda. Then mix the slurry into the batter, mix vigorously, lean into it for 20 or 30 turns. (Really show the batter who's boss. Oh, yes.

When ready to bake, beat the flour into the batter, and let stand for a few minutes to get the air bubbles out. Pour into two loaf pans that have been greased and dusted with flour. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Serve with a generous, very hot helping of warm lemon sauce.

#### Warm Lemon Sauce

Mix 3 1/2 cups sugar, 3 cups boiling water and 3 1/2 fresh lemons, squeezed and strained. Add 6 teaspoons butter, 4 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice, nutmeg and salt to taste.

# NIRGS News

## ■ New Equipment To Enhance RGS' Habitat Work

RGS recently purchased two trucks and two trailers for use with the ASV/Terex PT-100 forestry loaders in the Midwest and the CAT loader in the Northeast. The new trucks and trailers will allow for the transport of the equipment to various locations for habitat work.

One truck and trailer will be used in the Midwest and the other trailer in the Northeast. An additional truck is being supplied by the US Fish and Wildlife Service for use in Wisconsin. The remaining truck is also for use in the Northeast, with an additional trailer to be purchased very soon.

The new equipment was purchased with funds from several recently obtained grants.

## ■ California Lawsuit Ends in Settlement Unfavorable for Healthy Forest Management

A recent Northern California lawsuit ended with a settlement by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company agreeing to pay \$14.75 million as recompense for the 1999 Pendola fire in Plumas and Tahoe National Forests. The fire started due to a pine tree that fell onto a power distribution line.

Allegations that the fire caused damage to the lands, harm to the ecological habitat and loss of timber ended in the resulting settlement.

The decision is viewed by many to be a blow to conservation groups because fire, which is a natural act of nature that allows for forest renewal, was viewed as a destructive force.

## ■ Wildlife Bill Introduced to Congress

**Bill requires unrealistic species monitoring**

In June this year Wisconsin Representative Ron Kind presented "American's Wildlife Heritage Act" (HR 2807) to Congress. The bill, though ostentatiously written to sustain wildlife and plants on federal public lands, may actually prove too cumbersome to be effective.

Requirements in the bill place overwhelming obligations upon federal land management agencies to monitor every species that may be impacted by a proposed activity. The manpower necessary to implement this requirement is beyond the current expertise available to these agencies, and there is no provision in the bill for additional funding to cover this cost. Attempting to meet these guidelines requires large quantities of money that would perhaps be better spent in accomplishing much needed habitat work on federal lands.

RGS intends to work with Representative Kind and other members of Congress to modify the language of the bill to reflect more reasonable expectations.

## ■ Local RGS Chapters Play a Role in Landmark Preservation

With support from Minnesota's local RGS chapters the state of Minnesota has approved a landmark proposal to conserve more than 290 square miles of some of the best northern hardwoods in the state. The effort, known as the Upper Mississippi Forest project, is the largest conservation effort ever undertaken by the state of Minnesota.

The Upper Mississippi Conservation lands total more than 187,000 acres and – combined with adjacent county, state and federal lands – covers an area of more than 4,000 square miles of uninterrupted forest habitat.

It is anticipated that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will purchase a working forest conservation easement next year from the landowner – UPM Kymmene Corporation of Finland. This would ensure that the property would not be subdivided or developed, regardless of ownership, as well as ensure sustainable forestry management.

The principle benefit of this project, as noted by Grand Rapids RGS Chapter President Noah Wilcox is "the Upper Mississippi conservation effort guarantees permanent public access for outdoor recreation and conserves an incredible amount of habitat that is home to some of the best ruffed grouse populations in the country". The amount of land that will remain intact and open to the public is nearly 75 percent as large as all of Minnesota's state parks combined.

The project cost is approximately \$45 million. The state will pay a total of \$36 million over two years to purchase the easement needed to ensure that the Upper Mississippi property remains permanently intact.

A number of other groups provided significant support to the project. The Blandin Foundation provided a grant of \$7 million with the Conservation Fund, the Richard King Mellon Foundation and others raised another \$2 million.

RGS chapters across the state recognized the importance of this effort and banded together with the Grand Rapids chapter to support the proposal by signing a collective letter of support, in addition to contacting key legislators involved with the project.

## The most excitement you can have without a shotgun!



With a history dating from the 1930s, Bowen Lodge has been one of the premier fishing resorts in Minnesota for a very long time. Whether for families or fishermen – our unique location on Winnie and Cutfoot Sioux Lakes – in prime hunting country, Bowen's is the place to visit.



Deer River, MN [www.bowenlodge.com](http://www.bowenlodge.com) 1-800-331-8925



WHEN THE QUALITY OF TIME SPENT AFIELD MEANS MORE  
TO YOU THAN WHAT IS BROUGHT HOME IT'S TIME FOR

## GRAY'S SPORTING JOURNAL

GRAY'S GOES BEYOND THE "HOW TO." IT GOES STRAIGHT  
TO THE SOUL OF THE SPORTING EXPERIENCE.

GRAY'S CAPTURES THE MOMENT,  
SPARKS THE IMAGINATION,  
EXHILARATES THE SPIRIT.

GRAY'S IS THE ESSENCE OF THE  
HUNTING AND FISHING EXPERIENCE.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

CALL 1-800-288-5892



# HITS OR MISSES

## Lance's Cover

by Art Wheaton

The land had been bush-hogged initially, then thinned a bit and some was eventually mowed to encourage new grass. Finally a few walking trails were added, a coincidental result of tracks left by a tractor. It was an easy place to hunt and a great place to introduce a young dog to intoxicating grouse scent. With the old apple trees, thorn apples, clover patches and mixed berries it was a veritable farmer's market for grouse.

An old barn had fallen down nearby, the timbers long since reclaimed by the earth. The rock foundation, a single blooming mountain ash and the little overgrown lane on the other side of the main road were the few remaining vestiges of Alexander Walls' farm.

This site – a 1930s and 40s homestead – is typical of many aging covers in New England. I remember this one in particular because when I was a youngster the house and barn were still barely standing, apple trees dominated the surrounding fields and a gravity-fed water

supply from a wonderful old spring still ran to the farmhouse. One spigot in the shed's soapstone sink ran continually and another fed the hand pump in the kitchen.

Over the years Nature began her slow but mighty reclamation of the ground – maple, beech, birch and patches of red bush surrounded the apple trees and squeezed out the sunlight. The once great grouse habitat had aged beyond its prime.

A close friend of mine, Lance, decided to reclaim part of the old cover – as a benefit for those brush-worn partridge hunters among us. His work with a tractor, bushhog and ingenuity one winter returned one part of the area into suitable grouse habitat.

I entered the cover in late summer – the foliage was still green and heavy. My young setter, Max, was about to get a fresh whiff of grouse scent. I slipped the beeper collar on and proceeded to coax Max to work each side of the walking trail laid out by Lance for ol' fogies





such as myself. The evening sun was shaded by the hillside trees to the west, and it made for a pleasant walk. I had high hopes of introducing Max to a late spring bird just a bit short on experience. We meandered into a concentration of old apple trees, their crop heavy on the ground.

Casting to the left, but not too far, Max seemed to be enjoying this romp through the bushes. Occasionally coming to the walking path, I coaxed him back into the thicker stuff so he would get the idea that birds aren't likely to be on the trail. Bedsides, even if we did bump into one looking for some clover or just a little grit, it's sometimes hard to get a good point when a bird is out in the open.

A little further along I called him and he bounded up, still not sure why I brought him to such a great new playground. Stepping off to my right in a particularly thick patch, Max followed a few steps and then jumped ahead, as he thought this was my new direction. He made a cast to the left and then I saw him get birdy. Maybe, at last, a little luck was coming my way.

Once Max began hunting, I worked back on the trail and moved around the cover to the left, following the natural edge of undergrowth. He began working hard, casting back and forth, a sure indication bird scent was heavy. I heard the beeper tone turn to a soft, steady "beep, beep, beep" and turned my head in time to see him locked up in the brush.

No sooner had I begun to advance when the partidge burst out in front of me, close enough for me to see his wing dip as he banked to the right, and presenting a pretty fair shot. I raised my right arm, as if it were my Parker VHE 28-gauge and pulled my forefinger against an imaginary trigger.

At that moment I was content with Max — who had been doing so well this time out. He was excited over the scent and rushed around with continued enthusiasm. It was a simple yet wonderful evening in Lance's cover, practicing a bit of "shoot and release."

Everyone needs a little place like this, where after a hunt you can sit a stone wall, light a pipe and eat a sandwich with your dog panting at your feet. It is a place to pause and reflect, taking a moment to purge your mind of life's trials and tribulations.

A wise man once told me that as you get older, you will find that small things take on greater significance. In this case it wasn't important to actually bring down a bird, instead it was witnessing my dog's fine performance that became paramount. It served as a gentle reminder that I have more hunts behind me than in front of me, a tingling awareness of my own mortality causing me to seek a moment of reflection. 🐾

*Art Wheaton has pursued grouse and woodcock for over 40 years and missed his fair share. He can be reached at [art\\_wheaton@gmail.com](mailto:art_wheaton@gmail.com)*

# HEARING LOSS IN HUNTERS CAN BE AVOIDED

# CUSTOM FIT ANALOG & DIGITAL HEARING PROTECTION

electronic shooters protection

(800) 767-7791  
ESP @ USA.NET  
[WWW.ESPAMERICA.COM](http://WWW.ESPAMERICA.COM)

## Shoot with the Best

10 gauge 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ " & 12 gauge 2"  
Shells Available!



PAPER HULLS AVAILABLE  
12, 16 AND 20 GAUGE

RST manufactures PREMIUM 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ " and BEST GRADE 2" - 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " shotgun shells. Whether enjoying the soft recoil for clay targets or the superior patterning on upland game, RST shotshells will give you **THE BEST PERFORMANCE MONEY CAN BUY.**

570-553-1651 • [WWW.RSTSHELLS.COM](http://WWW.RSTSHELLS.COM)

# RGS at Corps of Grouse and Woodcock Project

by Jeff Krause and Mark Banker

Raystown Lake in Huntingdon County is in central Pennsylvania, and meanders for over 30 miles north to south. It is the largest lake in the state, and is hemmed in by steep mountains and ridges. The 119 miles of shoreline are devoid of houses, the only development two major recreation areas and scattered boat launches. The 8,300 acre man-made lake was dedicated in 1970 by former President Gerald Ford, and is surrounded by 22,000 acres of nearly unbroken wildlife habitat – public land owned and managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District. It is also the site of one of the largest cooperative habitat projects that the Ruffed Grouse Society has ever undertaken.

Twelve years ago, the Altoona chapter of RGS began working with personnel at Raystown to design a cooperative habitat project to benefit grouse and woodcock. It wasn't long before the State College chapter joined the cause and the "Bashline Project" was born. The project is named in memory of Jim Bashline, a nationally recognized outdoor writer and supporter of RGS. Jim's wife Sylvia remains an ardent supporter of RGS and the project.

The Raystown Lake project may be unprecedented, given that it has taken shape on Corps of Engineer land, a success due in large part to top-down support from Raystown admin-

istrators. The consent of both the Operations Manager Dwight Beall and Lead Ranger Jude Harrington have been crucial. Their support has allowed Wildlife Biologist Jeff Krause, who has been the primary liaison to the Society and the catalyst for the project, to direct vast habitat improvements on the 22,000-acre uplands.

To date nearly 1,700 acres of timber sales, including the removal of 4 million board feet of timber and over 50,000 tons of pulpwood, have created an impressive patchwork of early successional habitat, well-distributed across the Raystown Lake lands.

Timber sales are the primary instrument for creating grouse and woodcock habitat and are laid out by Corps foresters and other technicians hired through the AmeriCorps program. The Society has assisted with the funding of the AmeriCorps positions nearly every year over the life of the project. This has proven to be a good investment, as many of the initial timber sales are now producing some terrific grouse and woodcock hunting. Revenues from timber sales and specific Bashline donations are utilized to expand beyond the harvesting goals and includes the addition of interpretive exhibits and site specific cover and food enhancements.

The Old Loggers' Trail, an interpretive trail that winds up



(right to left) Corps biologist Jeff Krause explains the features of the Old Loggers' Trail to writer Chuck Fergus, AmeriCorps Forester Jake Mazzei and RGS volunteer Dale Gericke.

and down ridges and through a variety of habitat types, was the brainchild of Ranger Allen Gwinn and Krause. They were also responsible for developing a *Memorandum of Understanding* between RGS and the Corps that formalized the cooperative relationship. Gwinn also directed the development of very high-quality interpretive kiosks along the trail that describe the habitat and wildlife hikers are likely to encounter.

Though the terrain often rises sharply from the lake's shoreline, there are several places where water gently gives way to previously-farmed bottomlands. These areas now offer prime opportunities to manage for woodcock on fertile, moist soils. Most notable of these opportunities is the 3,000 acre Raystown Lake Mitigation area – or the State Gamelands 420 – which is intensively managed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission for a variety of game and non-game species. Approximately 80 acres of low lying creek bottoms have been revegetated from abandoned farm lands, creating early successional shrub lands comprised of alder, silky and red osier dogwood, and hawthorn.

In the early 2000s approximately 5 acres of aging hawthorn stands were regenerated to create thicker cover in prime woodcock habitat. The Commission has also planted approximately 25 acres of aspen stands adjacent to created wetland sites that have developed into superior woodcock habitat. Throughout these lowlands, which are locally known as "Woodcock Valley", singing males are observed in good numbers in the spring. Funding for the woodcock work was supplemented by a \$10,000 grant from the Orvis Foundation, which was secured by RGS.

At the southern end of the lake, the Corps manages approximately 900 acres specifically for grouse and woodcock. Since 1999, approximately 120 acres of small harvest blocks have been completed to improve grouse habitat. An additional 150 acres of bottomland hardwoods and abandoned fields scattered throughout this area are also managed for woodcock. The lowland areas currently managed for early successional cutting provide good cover in prime woodcock habitat. In addition, approximately 50 acres of old fields have been



**Long-term Project Yields Results:**  
Cousins Zach Becker (l) and Matt Kyper display grouse taken in November of last year. The boys hunted in a clearcut created by the cooperative project at Raystown Lake.

planted with a variety of native shrubs and treated with herbicide for multi-flora rose and bush honeysuckle.

In addition to active timber harvest, hundreds of thousands of trees have been planted across the Federal land to improve desirable regeneration and provide additional varieties of both hard and soft mast. Volunteers, inmate crews and a local youth conservation crew known as the Pennsylvania Conservation Corps have provided assistance for planting, treatment of invasive species and non-commercial cutting. The Corps has also made significant progress in balancing deer with their habitat, which has spurred improved oak regeneration.

Continued support from management, staff and other partners has created a showcase of wildlife management that RGS is proud to support. The future of early successional wildlife appears to be secure at Raystown Lake. 🐾



## Want to put your grouse in clover? Give TRAIL MIX a Try...

The Ruffed Grouse Society is offering "Grouse Trail Mix" to address the nutritional needs of both young and adult grouse, as well as other wildlife.

Grouse Trail Mix is an AMPAC's "Wildlife Perfect" product and features four types of clover as well as birdsfoot trefoil (Clovers are Starfire red clover, Hunt Club brand white clover, Alsike clover, Crimson clover)

AMPAC is packaging the seed in six-pound bags for one-half acre of ground. Planting instructions are printed on the bag. One bag is \$32 plus shipping from RGS Headquarters near Pittsburgh (The per-pound price of the Grouse Trail Mix is well below the wildlife seed mixes currently available in stores.)

RGS Grouse Trail Mix is formulated to produce high protein content all season long. It's formulated to tolerate poorer soils Plot Enhancer brand chicory will provide continuous feed in the summer when the legumes are either producing seed heads and are less palatable or during the droughtier times, thanks to its tap root system

For more information on AMPAC Seed Company and planting tips, visit [www.ampacseed.com](http://www.ampacseed.com).

To place an order, visit the RGS website at [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org) or call 1 (888) 564-6747. (Ask about larger quantities.)

# CLASSIFIED

## ART

### HAND ENGRAVED DOG PORTRAITS

What better way to pay tribute to your beloved hunting partner than with a Hand Engraved Portrait on your favorite shotgun? [www.engravedsportingguns.com](http://www.engravedsportingguns.com), E-mail [bellabaddog@myfairpoint.net](mailto:bellabaddog@myfairpoint.net), Call (207) 963-2525

**MASTER CANINE ARTIST ORIGINAL ARTWORK AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE CONTACT BRUCE PRENTICE (215) 674-2488 HATBORO, PA E-MAIL [birdogbruce@yahoo.com](mailto:birdogbruce@yahoo.com) OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE [www.birdogbruce.com](http://www.birdogbruce.com)**

**RGS/STAMPS:** All nine mint with die-cut board ready for framing Fits std 11 X 14 frame. \$195.00/full set w/ stamp savers **TO ORDER: 1 (888) 361-4344 or [jfreimuth2@comcast.net](mailto:jfreimuth2@comcast.net)**

## BOOKS/TAPES/ETC.

**For Sale:** 25th Missouri Ruffed Grouse Society commemorative shotgun- one of one- **Ruger Red Label 20-gauge O/U, 4 chokes 3" chambered, gold inlay grouse** Phone (660) 826-6714.

## DOGS

**BONASA KENNEL:** Dual Type English Setters at Stud Excellent Bloodlines Outstanding Grouse and Woodcock Dogs **JOHN BERNARDI, SARANAC, NY. (518) 534-4191.**

**Grouse dog for sale - rare opportunity to own a good one 3-year-old Elhew background English pointer male Two seasons of wild bird hunting experience Whistle trained, Whoa broke, honors steady to wing and shot Very easy to handle, will demo and train buyer \$7500 Call Jim at 616.540.0942.**

**LARGE MUNSTERLANDER PUPPIES:** Whelped September Great pointers, retrievers and companions Both parents **NAVHDA NA PRIZE DOGS.** Hips certified HD free. [www.colerainmunsterlanders.com](http://www.colerainmunsterlanders.com). HUNTING FAMILIES ONLY (216) 789-2409

## FOR SALE

[www.MunitionsToGo.com](http://www.MunitionsToGo.com) **BEAT THE HIGH COST OF AMMO BY BUYING IN BULK. [www.MunitionsToGo.com](http://www.MunitionsToGo.com)**

**"GROUSE WON'T ALWAYS FEED ON ASPEN": Gordon Gullion.** Add winter feed diversity to your hunting areas Contact: COLD STREAM FARM, 2030D FREE SOIL ROAD, FREE SOIL, MI 49411. (231) 464-5400.

**GROUSE HABITAT MAPS:** Plan your grouse hunt in northern Wisconsin with a detailed grouse habitat map from KP Maps [www.kpmaps.com](http://www.kpmaps.com)

## HUNTS

**NORTH DAKOTA/WILD PHEASANTS -** Also Huns & Sharptails CHEAP \$40 per night Public PLOTS land maps "Private Land-Access Bulletin Board" 1 (866) **ROOSTER or tailfeath-erinn@aol.com/www.tailfeatherinn.com.**

**FABULOUS UPLAND EXPERIENCE:** Unlimited Highbush Cranberry patches loaded with ruffies and sharptail Minimum of 10-20 flushes an hour in light cover and easy walking. Three days \$850. First-class meals and lodgings. **CONTACT PETER MARTIN AT (705) 335-3163 or E-MAIL [pw-martin@ontera.net](mailto:pw-martin@ontera.net).**

**HUNT NORTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE** for grouse and woodcock this fall The vast timberlands of NH's Great Northern Woods is the perfect habitat for the elusive ruffed grouse We offer comfortable cabin accommodations, true northern hospitality and professional guide service for bird hunting and fly fishing. Orvis-endorsed fly-fishing outfitter **LOPSTICK LODGE & CABINS, FIRST CONNECTICUT LAKE, PITTSBURG, NH 03592. (800) 538-6659; [www.lopstick.com](http://www.lopstick.com).**

**HUNT PALMQUIST FARM IN NORTHERN WISCONSIN** Trek through 800 private acres of forest & 10,000 additional acres of public forest & grouse trails After bagging the birds, leave the woods for a comfortable cabin Palmquist Farm strives to make your hunt successful & enjoyable We prepare lunches for the field & home cooked meals are scheduled to accommodate your hunt schedule We welcome dogs & provide professional guides Call for packages and rates <http://www.palmquistfarm.com/activities/hunting/>; (800) 519-2558

**NORTHERN MAINE GROUSE & WOODCOCK HUNTING:** Classic cover on 100,000s of acres of commercial timberland and 1,000s of miles of logging roads Sweeping river valleys and abandoned farms offer good woodcock cover You will experience some of the most consistent grouse hunting in the country Professional guiding, quality pointing dogs, lodging, meals & transportation. Packages by day, 1/2 week or full week **ALLAGASH GUIDE SERVICE, (207) 398-3418, [www.allagashguideservice.com](http://www.allagashguideservice.com)**

**UPLAND HUNTING ADVENTURES** in beautiful Adirondack Mountains and Lake Champlain Valley Hunt successional growth covers containing aspen, oak, hickory and beech along with apple, cherry, dogwood, sundry berries and plenty of young conifers for security Covers right out of Spiller's *Grouse Feathers* and Harnden Foster's *New England Grouse Shooting*. Scenery reminiscent of a Schaldach print or a Lynn Bogue Hunt sketch It all comes together with great habitat and beautiful scenery in the Lake Champlain Valley. **ADVENTURE GUIDE SERVICE (WILLSBORO, NY), (518) 963-4286, [www.adventureguideservice.com](http://www.adventureguideservice.com).**

## REAL ESTATE

**DEER, BEAR and GROUSE HUNTERS!** Check out this Northwoods lodge on over 300 diverse acres in Price County, Wisconsin Enjoy complete seclusion in the woods with creek, food plots, miles of seeded trails and tree stands with shooting lanes. Priced to sell at \$449,900. Call Jody at RE/MAX New Horizons Realty, LLC at (715) 820-1923 or view <http://www.newhorizonsrealtywi.com>

**Maple-wooded five acre parcel with newer, quality construction 3-bedroom home.** Nice kitchen, bright interior, well-planned and cozy. Beautiful piece of property situated amongst thousands of acres of state land, managed for ruffed grouse & woodcock Includes 8 kennels for boarding or raising dogs 421937, \$224,000 Contact Pat O'Brien, email: [pat@patobrien.com](mailto:pat@patobrien.com); Phone: (231) 582-1700.

**PHEASANT HUNTING LODGE** SW North Dakota 6000+ sq. ft Fully furnished \$595K (928) 606-0604

# ADVERTISING

## MAINE GROUSE & WOODCOCK

*Specializing in Grouse.  
(Your Dogs or Ours!)*

Call or Write for Free Information

### FOGGY MOUNTAIN

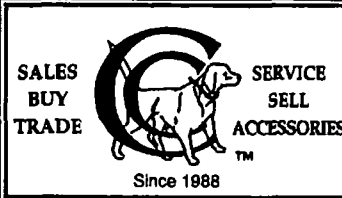
Guide Service  
Wayne A. Bosowicz, Master Guide  
(207) 564-3404

131 Ladd Road  
Sebec, Maine 04481  
www.maine grouse.com



## Collar Clinic

Your Source  
for Electronic Dog  
Training Equipment  
New & Reconditioned



FREE COLOR CATALOG!  
Call 1-800-430-2010

Collar Clinic  
1517 Northern Star Dr.  
Traverse City, MI 49685

Visit our web site:  
www.collarclinic.com

## GROUSE & WOODCOCK SHOOTING



in the beautiful Battenkill Valley  
3 Hours from New York City.

Over 1,000 Acres Managed for Grouse  
with 15 Miles of Trails and Edge Cover.  
Private Suites.

Trips can be Combined with Trout Fishing  
(no extra charge).

Close to 4,000+ Acres of State Lands.  
Late Season - February Grouse Shooting.

CAPT. BOB STORC  
22 VILLAGE SQUARE  
GLEN COVE, NEW YORK 11542  
1 (516) 671-7690

www.battenkilllodge.com

## HUNT NORTHERN ONTARIO'S BEST-KEPT SECRET - RUFFED GROUSE



Millions of acres of prime habitat with huge  
grouse populations. Easily bag your daily limit  
Enjoy your stay in beautiful lakeside cabins in the  
grandeur of the northern bush country with an  
ultimate ruffed grouse hunting experience. Six-day  
hunt package \$595  
Write or call.

### CALL OF THE NORTH

Box 697 Hwy 11 Geraldton, Ontario POT 1M0  
Photos & information at www.callofthenorth.com  
(807) 854-1371 Toll Free (800) 801-4080

## Hunt with your best friend

...and make a few new ones with NAVHDA

North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association members are  
hunters, breeders and trainers dedicated to helping you get the most  
out of your versatile hunting companion. We maintain the only registry  
in North America specializing in versatile pointing dog breeds.  
Learn more about us on our web site at [www.navhda.org](http://www.navhda.org)

Best Buy Membership - Only \$78.50 US funds, S&H included  
(IL Residents add sales tax)

1 Full Year NAVHDA Membership

Informative Monthly Magazine

60 Minute Training DVD

In-Depth Training Book

Testing Rules Booklet

Member Decal



**PURINA**



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ No PO Boxes

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Breed of Dog(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to NAVHDA or use your credit card:

MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Card# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: NAVHDA • PO Box 520 • Arlington Heights, IL 60006

## Park Falls "The Ruffed Grouse Capital of the World" and Price County welcome you!

2009 Spring Drumming Counts up 6%!



Ruffed Grouse Season  
runs Sept. 12, 2009 until  
January 10, 2010

For your FREE Grouse Hunter's  
Packet, contact:

Price County Tourism  
1-800-269-4505

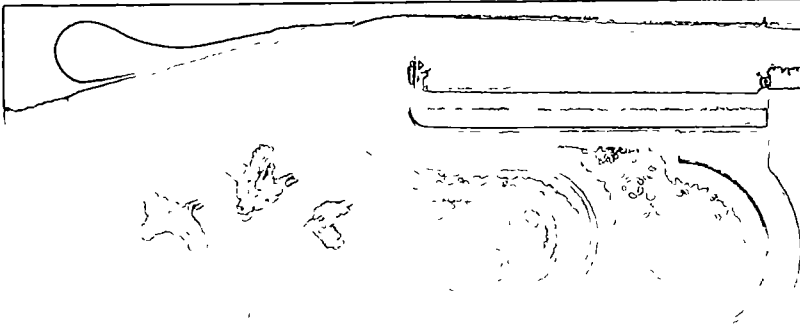
www.pricecountywi.net

• Park Falls • Fifield • Phillips • Prentice •

**WISCONSIN**  
*Life's So Good*

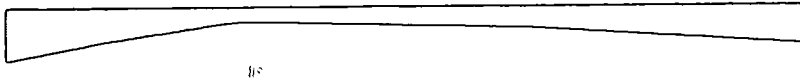
# Become an RGS Life Sponsor

Sportsmen and women who agree to become a Life Sponsor of the Ruffed Grouse Society at the \$10,000\* level have their choice of a Caesar Guerini Magnus, Connecticut Shotgun RBL-28, AYA 4/53 or Kimber Valier Grade II. For more information on the benefits of becoming a Life Sponsor call 1-888-JOIN-RGS or visit [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).



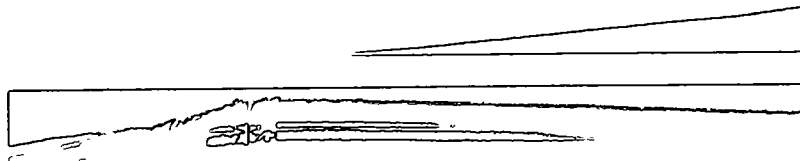
## Caesar Guerini Magnus

• Stock in stock  
• Chamber of 12 or 16 gauge with 28" or 30" barrels or 20 gauge with 26", 28" or 30" barrels  
• Comes with 12 or 16 gauge, polymerized steel pump  
• Large black plastic hard case with accessories \$3,995 retail value



## Connecticut Shotgun RBL-28

• New availability in 12- or 16-gauge  
• Stock in stock  
• Chamber of 12, 16 or 20 barrels with 26", 28" or 30" barrels  
• 28 gauge chamber available  
• Home & commercial case with accessories \$3,950 retail value



## AYA Model 4/53

• Stock in stock  
• Chamber of 12 gauge with 28" barrels or 16 gauge with 28" barrels  
• 12 gauge chamber available  
• Weights 6.5 or 7.5 lbs.  
• Weighs 6.5 or 7.5 lbs. with accessories  
• Large black plastic hard case with accessories \$3,995 retail value



## Available for a limited time only: Kimber Valier Grade II

• Stock in stock  
• 12 gauge, 28" barrel  
• 12 gauge chamber  
• Large black plastic hard case

\* If no applicant, then other applicant offers \$5,000 must be received approval, and then in accordance \$5,000 to be paid in either 6 months or 12 months. \$10,000 may also be paid in equal installments over four years, although this program method does not qualify for a shorter term.



## Are you ready for a blower with power?

STIHL has a blower that's right for you. We offer an entire line of backpack and handheld blowers, including low-noise and electric models. Ask your STIHL Dealer which blower is right for you.

[stihlusa.com](http://stihlusa.com)

**STIHL**®



# RUFFLY SPEAKING

## Thuggish Thickets

by Paul Carson

As I crawled from the brambles on hands and knees and looked up at him, my father shook his head in sad resignation and said, "You idiot. You could have been shot."

In situations where my brother or I would prove once again we weren't youngsters destined to grow up to be brain surgeons, Dad tried to convince himself – I believe – that we were foundlings left on the doorstep in an orange crate. That would be me first and then Tom, my brother, a few years later. I'm not sure if in Dad's fantasy it was two different orange crates or the same one used twice for economy. But I digress.

He was fond of saying that he hoped we, Tom and I, weren't actually blood heirs to the vast Carson estates; he'd hate to leave such wealth in our hands. When we asked when he was going to show us the vast estates, which we hoped were alive with cottontails and squirrels, he said he'd let us see them when we got a little older, if we lived that long.

We fooled him and lived, admittedly losing minor parts of ourselves along the way, but nothing that turned out to be absolutely necessary in the long run. And our suspicions were eventually confirmed that the "Carson estates" were nothing more than the six acres – most of it swamp – on which we lived.

But this time Dad's "idiot" remark was real and very cutting, because I'd just threaded my way through a blood-thirsty "killer brier patch" and was proud of the accomplishment.

Dad and an uncle from my mom's side were out on the ridge above our house with a beagle. I was supposed to go with them, even though at the time I was too young to carry a gun. I'd been delayed somehow or other and they'd gone off without me. They, being normal size men and of average intelligence, went around the brier patch and let Boney, the beagle, hunt the cover. I figured I'd take a shortcut through the patch and meet them on the ridge. Even for a skinny 10-year-old, the cover

was a tad tight. I was down on my hands and knees inching along when Boney jumped a rabbit uphill from me. The bunny headed for the thickest cover he knew. Unfortunately for him, that's where I was at the time. We came nose to nose in what little trail there was. The rabbit swapped ends and headed for the ridge. When he cleared the brambles my uncle met him with his .410. He was a crack shot with that little double. But he wasn't the ultimate sportsman or he'd have recognized the rabbit was running in sheer terror and let him go.

My father said they were pretty sure I wasn't a rabbit as I came crawling out of the brambles, but they wondered if I could have been some stray dog or coyote that might attack the neighbor's sheep if they let me get away. I was really miffed, because I knew I should have gotten credit for bringing that rabbit to the gun, despite how much Boney was macho-strutting as if he'd done all the work.

That killer brier patch disappeared, as killer brier patches do. It's the natural way of things

For example, I vaguely recall a milk cow grazing in a lovely little secluded valley pasture when I was really, really young. The pasture was later abandoned and eventually grew into one of the most savage killer brier patches it has been my misfortune to encounter. But there was an opening right in the middle of all the brambles, a bald spot. And if a gunner crawled into the opening and a partner circled the cover with the beagles working in the thick stuff, a flushed cottontail would come highballing across the opening for the other side of the bramble cover. Then, if you were fast enough and had wiped enough blood from all the thorn gouges out of your eyes, you could tumble a bunny in a very satisfying manner.

It seemed no time at all before that particular killer cover grew into something else, with hawthorns and crab apples choking out the briars. (No one I know ever cries for a choked brier.)

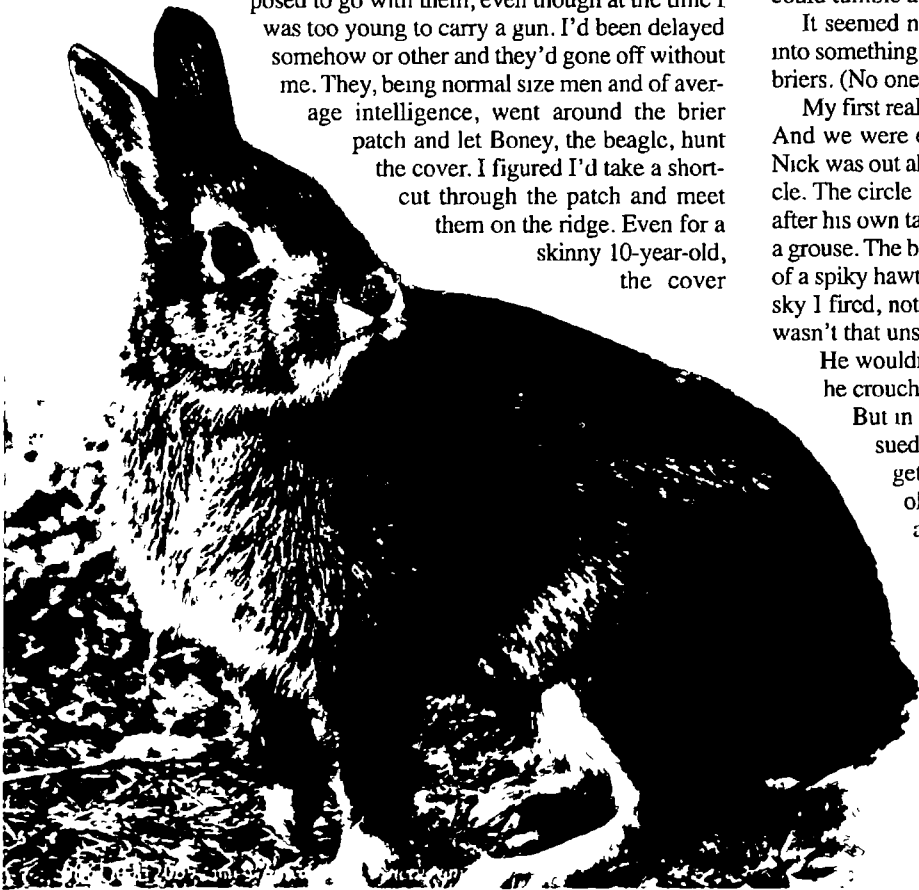
My first real bird dog was a black and white springer named Nick. And we were exploring the cover that had replaced the brambles. Nick was out ahead of me when he suddenly started running in a circle. The circle got smaller and smaller until he looked as if he were after his own tail. And then out of the tiny center of the circle sprang a grouse. The bird seemed to be scrambling up from branch to branch of a spiky hawthorn as it clawed for altitude. When it did reach clear sky I fired, not waiting for it to shift into high gear. (I tell myself it wasn't that unsporting because it was Nick's first grouse.)

He wouldn't bring it to me. In fact when I walked up to him as he crouched over the bird I thought I might have to fight for it.

But in the end he did let me take it without threats being issued on either side. And when I finally took a moment to get my bearings, I was sure I was standing right on the old bald spot of the killer brier patch. And as satisfying as taking those galloping bunnies might have been, taking the first grouse of a first bird dog on that spot was maybe as satisfying as it would have been to discover there actually were vast Carson estates. Well, almost. 🐰

Eastern Cottontail Rabbit  
*Sylvilagus floridanus*

Photo by T.C. Flanagan





*Want birds?*



Hunt with an **Ugly Dog**  
and support the **Ruffed Grouse Society**.

Please join us in keeping the covers thriving and the birds flying.



The Ugly Dog Hunting Company has serious gear for you, your dog, and the hunt.

- rugged, hunt-tested field gear
- men's and women's upland clothing and boots
- dog kennels, gear, vests, and training equipment

Shop online at [www.uglydoghunting.com](http://www.uglydoghunting.com) or call toll free for a catalog, 877-982-7054

# The Woodlander... Understated Elegance, Unmatched Craftsmanship.



At Caesar Guerini we are all avid bird hunters and wanted to create a gun that truly reflects our deep passion for thundering wings, autumn foliage, steady gun dogs, and the smell of wood smoke on a crisp afternoon wind. The Woodlander with its classic color case hardened receiver and natural oil finished Turkish walnut stock is the shotgun you imagine in such a setting. It is destined to be the upland game gun of choice for its quick mounts and smooth handling. The Woodlander is available in 12, 20, 28, and .410 gauges in right hand, left hand, and English stocks. Two and three barrel sub-gauge combo sets are also available. For more information visit our web site.

 CAESAR  
GUERINI

The logo features a stylized profile of a horse's head to the left of the brand name. The word "CAESAR" is in a smaller, serif font above "GUERINI", which is in a larger, bold serif font.

(410) 901-1131 | [www.gueriniusa.com](http://www.gueriniusa.com)



COPIES OF THIS PRESS RELEASE ARE AVAILABLE FOR \$10 PER COPY. CONTACT: (412) 262-4044

451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044 [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

January 6, 2009  
For Immediate Release

**RGS Wildlife Habitat Management Efforts in Missouri to Continue  
*\$20,000 Grant to Benefit Grouse and Songbird Populations***

Coraopolis, PA – The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is the recipient of \$20,000 in funds to continue the River Hills Forest Habitat Project in Central Missouri. This important wildlife habitat management program has benefited ruffed grouse and other wildlife species that require young forest habitat.

A grant of \$12,000 has been approved by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDOC) under the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative with the remaining \$8,000 being provided through the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Private Lands Program. Matching funds and in-kind services are being provided by the Ruffed Grouse Society, Audubon Missouri and others to this project.

According to Mike Zagata, RGS Executive Director and CEO, "RGS is pleased to be able to continue to work with a variety of partners to support the River Hills Project. The dedicated efforts of our Mid-Missouri RGS chapter members has been a key to the projects success."

A trend towards reduced forest harvesting and a loss of natural fire has created a deficit of young forest habitat in the area, critically important to ruffed grouse as well as many other wildlife species.

Since 2003, the River Hills Forest Habitat Project has promoted the regeneration of oak/hickory forest habitat in three east-central Missouri counties, Callaway, Montgomery and Warren.

The River Hills Project Area has been identified as an Important Bird Area by Audubon Missouri and as a Conservation Opportunity Area in the Missouri Wildlife Action Plan.

A key to the success of this project has been the coordination of management efforts on both public and private lands in the River Hills Area. Management has been intensified on six Conservation and Wildlife Management Areas by the MDOC. Private Lands Conservationists and Resource Foresters from the MDOC have also worked closely with private landowners in the area to simultaneously conduct habitat improvements. MDOC Private Lands Conservationist Jamie Barton reports, "As a result of this cooperative effort, over 2,500 acres of habitat has been enhanced in the River Hills Project Area to date. This work is having a positive effect on many bird species in the area."

Established in 1961, 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.

Information on the RGS, its mission, management projects and membership can be found on the web at: [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

Media Contact:

Gary Zimmer, 715-674-7505.

E-Mail: [rgszimm@newnorth.net](mailto:rgszimm@newnorth.net)



© 2009 RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY. THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND IS A 501(C)(3) NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION.

451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

January 26, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Minnesota Court sides with conservationists in Superior National Forest  
lawsuit  
*Decision allows US Forest Service to move forward*

Coraopolis, PA – Sportsmen and women are among the winners in a significant legal victory in a case regarding the Superior National Forest in northern Minnesota. The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) joined with others including the Minnesota Forest Industries, Inc., Minnesota Timber Producers Association, All Terrain Vehicle Association of Minnesota, Blue Ribbon Coalition, Lake County and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to defend important habitat management projects being proposed by the US Forest Service.

In 2008 the Sierra Club and other preservationists had filed suit to halt implementation of the recently revised Forest Plan - claiming that because the Plan allowed habitat management projects adjacent to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) it would affect the wilderness character of the BWCAW and, therefore, should not move ahead.

Last November the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota granted RGS its request to appear as amicus curiae in support of the US Forest Service (USFS) and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) in its defense against the litigation.

The preservationists argued that aspen clear-cutting and other logging, which will benefit ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other species of wildlife in the Superior National Forest, will negatively impact not only the Superior but the adjacent BWCAW.

Speaking on behalf of the RGS, attorney Ryan Woody of Hartford WI, provided arguments to the contrary and just this past week the court agreed, ruling in favor of the defense on all counts.

"The win on the SNF case is important because it involved the newly revised Forest Plan, which governs all future management and projects on the SNF for at least the next 15 years. In addition, I think the court's decision is important for future projects, because the court showed its respect for the Forest Service's expertise and reviewed the Plan under a very deferential approach. More specifically, Judge Schiltz decided to rely upon a Forest Service roads analysis even in the face of a more expensive and critical roads report submitted by the environmental groups. As far as RGS is concerned the newly affirmed plan should provide for important opportunities to actively manage forest conditions to improve early successional habitat for ruffed grouse and other species," Woody said.

"RGS Senior Regional Wildlife Biologist Gary Zimmer agreed with Woody's assessment, adding that "The Court decision supports the many years of planning conducted by the Forest Service when it revised the Superior National Forest Plan. After years of delays, it is now time to implement that revised Plan in this area."

"The ruling is not only a big win for the US Forest Service; it's a big win for sportsmen and other conservationists, as well as hunted and non-hunted species such as ruffed grouse, American woodcock, moose and other wildlife, including many species of neo-tropical songbirds that inhabit the Superior National Forest," said Dr. Michael Zagata, RGS CEO and Executive Director.

Established in 1961, 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

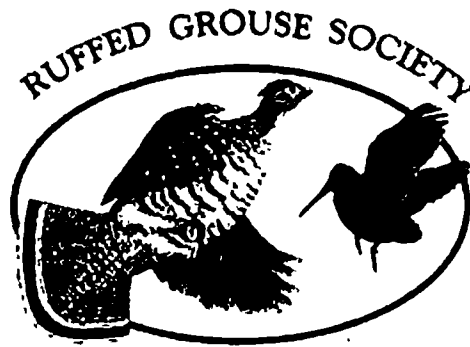
Further information on the RGS, its mission, management projects and membership can be found on the web at: [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

**Media Contact:**

Gary Zimmer, RGS Senior Regional Wildlife Biologist

Phone: 715-674-7505

E-mail: [rgszimm@newnorth.net](mailto:rgszimm@newnorth.net)



451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

March 17, 2009  
For Immediate Release

**Ruffed Grouse Society announces details of 2009 Youth Essay and Poster Contests**

The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is pleased to announce details of its Second Annual Youth Poster and Essay Contests.

Open to youngster's ages 6-11, the theme of this year's Poster Contest is: "Show some of your favorite outdoor activities." All entries must be submitted on an 11 x 17 poster. First place winner will receive a pair of Steiner 8x22 Safari Series binoculars and a one-year RGS Junior membership. Last years poster winner was Kayley White, 8, of Little Chute, WI. Utilizing the suggested guideline to illustrate some of the animals one might meet in a young, thick forest, Kayley's winning entry depicted a forest scene with bees, a black bear, a rabbit, a hummingbird, white-tailed deer and a grouse. Her winning entry appeared in the 2008 fall issue of RGS magazine.

The Essay Contest is open to children ages 12-18. This year's theme: "What person in your life has taught you the most about the outdoors," should be described in 350 words or more. First place winner of the essay contest will receive a Tri-Star 20-gauge Youth Model Semi-Automatic shotgun. (Awarding of shotgun dependent on winner meeting legal requirements). Owen Morgan, 12, of Wytheville, VA was the 2008 winner. His winning composition "To kill a grouse" also appeared in the 2008 fall issue.

To qualify, all entries must be submitted by May 31, 2009, and include a return address.

Entries should be sent to: Editor, Ruffed Grouse Society, 451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108.

Every qualifying entry will receive an RGS lapel pin.

Established in 1961, 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.

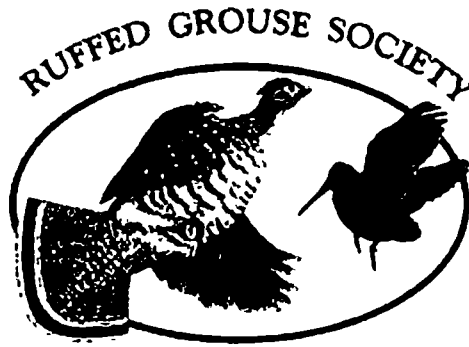
Information on the RGS, its mission, management projects and membership can be found on the web at: [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org) .

Media Contact:

Anna E. Stubna, 412-262-4044

E-mail: [AnnaS@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:AnnaS@ruffedgrousesociety.org)





© 1997 RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PHOTOGRAPHY BY J. SIMONSON. ILLUSTRATION BY J. SIMONSON.

451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

March 23, 2009  
For Immediate Release

**Woodcock hunting survey provides skinny on hunter satisfaction  
and trends**

The results of a woodcock hunting survey suggest that a typical woodcock hunter is a 40 plus year old male, who hunts woodcock primarily while hunting for other game animals, (grouse, bobwhite quail and rabbits); hunts woodcock 10 days or less each year and harvests 10 or fewer woodcock each season.

Conducted by the Ruffed Grouse Society, the mailed questionnaire which randomly queried 2,025 hunters nationwide also revealed that 19-percent of the respondents hunt woodcock in more than one state or Province.

When it came to harvest numbers over the last five years, 56-percent said they shot five or less, 24-percent between 6 and 10, 14-percent 11-20 and 6-percent killed between 21-50. None of those surveyed indicated they harvested 50 or more.

The survey showed most woodcock hunters appear satisfied with the current season and bag limit structure. Seventy percent feel

that the 3-bird daily bag limit is adequate; 7-percent said it was too low, 6-percent thought it was too high and 17-percent had no opinion.

As for the length of the season, 61-percent said the season was sufficient, 16-percent said it was too short; 2-percent thought it too high and 21-percent had no opinion.

Although the highest percentage of respondents (38-percent) stated the overall quality of woodcock hunting has remained about the same over the past 5 years, hunters who feel that it has gotten worse (33-percent) far outnumber those who feel it has become better (17-percent). Likewise, although the majority of woodcock hunters (52-percent) are hunting about the same number of days as they were 5 years ago, 26-percent said they are hunting less, while 13-percent said they are hunting more. Nine-percent haven't hunted woodcock at all.

"This decline in hunter effort could be due to a perceived decline in hunt quality, or because hunters are getting older, or both," said Dan Dessecker, RGS Director of Conservation Policy.

Of those woodcock hunters that expressed an opinion, 38-percent support the idea of establishing a \$15 permit to hunt woodcock if the generated funds were used for woodcock habitat conservation, while 48-percent opposed, and 14-percent were unsure.

Not surprisingly, hunters who could be considered more dedicated (those who hunt more days each year or hunt in more than one state or province) are more likely to support a permit than are casual woodcock hunters.

Forty-seven percent of survey respondents suggest that they would, or probably would continue to hunt woodcock if required to purchase a permit in order to do so, while 40-percent said they would not, or probably would not continue to hunt woodcock if they had to pay an additional \$15.

This collaborative survey was conducted to gain insight into what woodcock hunters think about their sport is the first such random, nationwide survey ever conducted.

The survey had a 27-percent response rate.

To view the RGS National Woodcock Migration Map log onto:  
[http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/index.php?env=news\\_article:m229--1-4-s::n-547--&\\_event=&n\\_event=](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/index.php?env=news_article:m229--1-4-s::n-547--&_event=&n_event=)

Established in 1961, 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.

Information on the RGS, its mission, management projects and membership can be found on the web at:  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

Media Contact:  
Dan Dessecker, 715-234-8302.  
Email: [rgsdess@chibardun.coop](mailto:rgsdess@chibardun.coop) .



DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT  
FOR RUFFED GROUSE, WOODCOCK,  
AND OTHER FOREST WILDLIFE  
451 McCormick Road  
Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

March 27, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Coraopolis, PA The Appalachian Highlands Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) has signed on as a co-sponsor of Arbor Day Celebration at Clintwood Elkhorn's Bear Wallow Surface Mine on April 3, 2009.

Under the theme "Trees for Wildlife" more than 300 middle schoolers from Buchanan and Pike counties, KY are expected to attend. TECO/Clintwood Elkhorn will provide trees, backpacks and tree identification books for each of the students.

Initiated by the Virginia representatives of the Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) other co-sponsors include, the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF), the American Chestnut Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and Take Pride in America.

"The restoration of trees is extremely important everywhere, not only for the protection and food source it provides for wildlife, but for people as well. It is however of particular importance in areas of surface mine sites, inasmuch as it returns the mined areas to a productive postmining land use, while at the same time provide a meaningful outdoor experience for young people that emphasizes America's outdoor heritage," said Appalachian Highlands Chapter president Mike Giles.

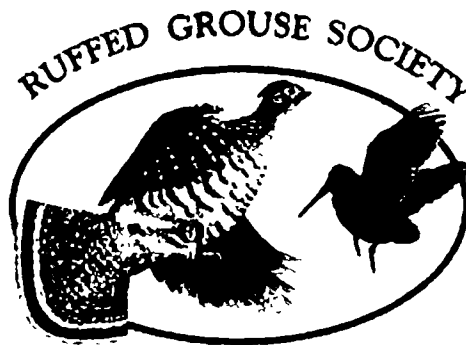
The Arbor Day Celebration will take place on mined land that is being reforested according to guidelines promoted by ARRI. Following these guidelines, contractors have cleared the area of invasive species, applied soil amendments, and ripped the soil to lessen compaction. Once established, the new forest will provide wildlife habitat, improve water quality, sequester carbon, and mature into a valuable resource.

The project will include the planting of as American chestnut, northern red oak, yellow poplar, walnut, red maple, and green ash seedlings.

Lunch and promotional materials will be provided to participants.

For more information contact Giles at 276-679-7424.

451 MCCORMICK ROAD • CORAOPOLIS, PENNSYLVANIA 15108-9377  
(412) 262-4044 FAX (412) 262-9207 (888) 564-6747 TOLL FREE  
Email: [rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org) [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)



© 2009 RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS

451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

April 6, 2009  
For Immediate Release

### Grants enhance habitat management capabilities for Ruffed Grouse Society in Midwest

The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) recently received three grants totaling \$182,000 to purchase heavy equipment for managing habitat in the Midwest. RGS will purchase two ASV/Terex PT-100 Forestry loaders with mulching heads with grants of from the R.K. Mellon Foundation, from the Frey Foundation of Grand Rapids, MI, and from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation located in East Jordan, MI.

The new pieces of equipment will service Michigan and Wisconsin as well as surrounding states. The versatile equipment will allow the RGS to help public and private partners aggressively manage neglected aspen, alder and brush habitats for ruffed grouse, woodcock and many other species. The RGS and its partners have been operating similar equipment in the Northeast for several years with excellent results.

The equipment program has allowed RGS and its partners to manage high quality habitats that typically are neglected because of the lack of proper equipment. Woodcock in particular have benefitted because large areas of old fields, prime woodcock habitat, that are typically left to convert to forests are now maintained as shrublands.

"We are extremely grateful to our funding partners who have allowed us to grow this program", stated RGS Executive Director and CEO Mike Zagata. "These machines will help us manage critical habitat on public and private lands in two crucial states".

"These pieces of equipment are important tools to help the Ruffed Grouse Society target habitat improvements for woodcock in habitat, like alder, that is not being managed by commercial harvests," adds Gary Zimmer, RGS Senior Biologist in the Western Great Lakes Region. "With this equipment the RGS will be one of the primary implementers of the Upper Great Lakes Woodcock and Young Forest Habitat Initiative."

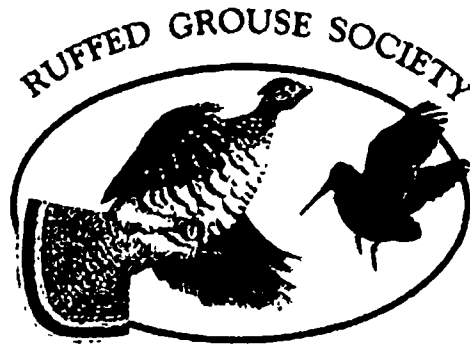
Established in 1961, the Ruffed Grouse Society is the one international wildlife conservation organization dedicated to promoting conditions suitable for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and related wildlife to sustain our sport hunting tradition and outdoor heritage.

Information on the RGS, its mission, management projects and membership can be found on the web at: [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

Media Contact:

Mark Banker, 814-867-7946.

E-Mail: [rgsbank@comcast.net](mailto:rgsbank@comcast.net)



2010-05-07 10:00:00 AM EST

451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

May 7, 2009  
For Immediate Release

**Ruffed Grouse Society Supports Maryland's Forest Service Proposed Work Plan  
*Urges sportsmen and other conservationists to contact DNR***

Coraopolis, PA -- The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is urging all upland bird hunters and other conservationists to contact the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Service and urge them to follow through on its proposed 2010 fiscal year work plans for the Green Ridge, Pocomoke, Potomac-Garrett, and Savage River State Forests.

According to John Denning of RGS Backbone Mountain Chapter, public input will help us to ensure that our State Forest resources are prudently managed for the benefit of all our citizens, the forest resource itself, and all the wildlife that depend upon the various stages of forest development to provide them the habitat they rely upon for survival. One of those stages, young forests that result when mature trees are harvested, is rapidly declining and thus the wildlife, including about 43 species of neo-tropical songbirds, that rely upon that stage for their survival is declining.

The work includes silvicultural operations, maintenance and construction projects, including clear cutting projects needed to produce early successional forests that ruffed grouse, American woodcock and many other species need to survive and thrive.

Comments can be sent via e-mail to: [jpurdue@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:jpurdue@dnr.state.md.us) , or by calling 410-260-8505. The comment period ends on May 24th. A complete summary, objective, and map of the vicinity is available on the DNR web site at: [www.dnr.maryland.gov./forests/mdforests.asp](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov./forests/mdforests.asp) .

Established in 1961, 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.

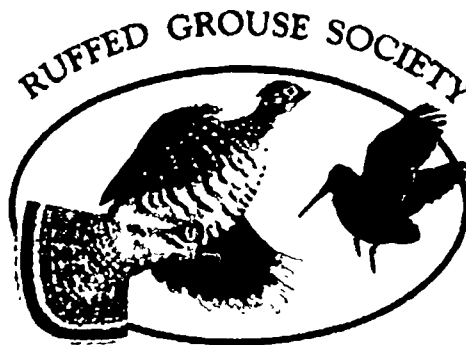
Information on the RGS, its mission and management projects can be found on the web at: [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

**Media Contact:**

Dave Hansroth, 412-303-1405.

E-mail: [rgshans@comcast.net](mailto:rgshans@comcast.net) .





© 1998 RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PHOTOGRAPHY BY J. M. HARRIS

451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

June 17, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Ruffed Grouse Society can't support "America's Wildlife Heritage Act" as written  
*Well intended legislation will do more harm than good*

Last week, Representative Ron Kind (D-WI) introduced legislation to the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress in Washington, that would sustain the diverse fish, wildlife, and plants that depend on our nation's federal public lands. But as well intended as bill HR2807 is, it may well do otherwise.

Since its formation in 1961 the Ruffed Grouse Society has always supported legislation that would benefit fish and wildlife, and the restoration of habitat needed for their survival; but after reading the language in the "America's Wildlife Heritage Act", we cannot, in good conscience, support this bill as written.

The bill would require that all activities on the 449 million acres administered by the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management work toward enhancing the survival and health of all native plants and animals that exist on these federal lands. Although this is indeed a laudable goal, as with most things, the devil is in the details; and the detail of the bill language that would mandate that these federal agencies survey literally hundreds of species of plants and animals prior to implementing any activity makes this otherwise well-intentioned legislation unworkable.

According to Dan Dessecker, Director of Conservation Policy for the Ruffed Grouse Society, "While we support efforts to enhance coordination between federal land management agencies and state fish and wildlife agencies to sustain wildlife populations, it is simply not possible to meet the species-by-species monitoring requirement imposed by this legislation – the federal agencies affected have neither the expertise nor the funds to do so," Dessecker said.

Others are of the same conviction and until they have done what they aren't capable of doing, much needed management for all wildlife on public lands could be halted with one frivolous lawsuit after another.

HR 2807 requires that the federal agencies monitor all wildlife identified by the state fish and wildlife agencies as "species of greatest conservation need", as well as various classifications of plants. In Wisconsin alone, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has identified over 650 such species of wildlife. And although not all of these species are found on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in the northern portion of the state, a substantial number undoubtedly are. Obviously, when one includes plants, the list becomes even longer.

"The hundreds of millions of dollars required to count every beetle, butterfly and bird of concern across the nation could be far better spent on managing the forest to provide habitats for the many species of wildlife that are becoming more rare every day; or perhaps to protect imperiled forests, rangelands and rural communities from catastrophic wildfires," said RGS, Executive Director and CEO Mike Zagata.

The Ruffed Grouse Society will continue to work with Representative Kind, other members of Congress and our partners in the wildlife conservation community to modify the language of HR 2807 to meet its intended objective in a reasonable and responsible manner.

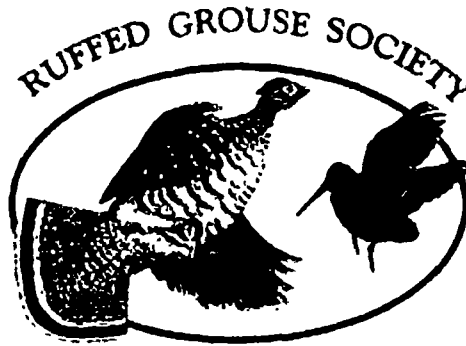
Established in 1961, the Ruffed Grouse Society is the one international wildlife conservation organization dedicated to promoting conditions suitable for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and related wildlife to sustain our sport hunting tradition and outdoor heritage.

Information on the RGS, its mission, management projects and membership can be found on the web at: [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org) .

Media Contact:

Dan Dessecker, RGS Director of Conservation Policy  
715-234-8302.

Email: [rgsdess@chibardun.coop](mailto:rgsdess@chibardun.coop) .



CREATED BY: [unreadable] FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, WASHINGTON, DC 20460

451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044 [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

June 22, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Two RGS publications now available on the Internet  
*Articles explain the importance of forest restoration*

Coraopolis, PA -- In its continuing efforts to educate sportsmen and other conservationists on the importance of proper forest stewardship and the need for a diversity of both young forest and old forest species, the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) has made available two of its highly regarded publications in a PDF format.

In each of the articles, the authors skillfully explain in laymen's terms and easily understood color graphics, what has happened to our forests and the wildlife species, both hunted and non-hunted, that depend on early successional stages of what will eventually become mature forests.

The first is a reprint of *The Other Silent Spring: Disappearing Birds of Young Forests* by Steven Backs, a wildlife research biologist, with the Indiana Fish and Wildlife Department of Natural Resources. The article was featured in the Summer 2009 edition of the Ruffed Grouse Society magazine.

In the article Back's writes: "***These three birds [the American woodcock, the ruffed grouse and the whip-poor-will]...are "coal mine canaries" telling us by their absence that young forest habitats are quickly disappearing. Are we listening? Do we hear the emptiness? Will we listen?***"

The second is a new publication *Placing Wildlife at Risk by Ignoring Ecological Principals: The Need to Manage Public Lands*, by Dr. Michael Zagata, RGS Executive Director and CEO.

Its original format is a four-page tabloid size paper publication, in which Dr. Zagata references the "State of the Birds" report issued in 2009 by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative.

In a passage from the manuscript Dr. Zagata explains: "... **many Eastern forest birds dependent on disturbed or early-successional forest or natural disturbance (including pine barrens) are suffering consistent and troubling declines. Those birds in decline include golden-winged warbler, whip-poor-will, prairie warbler, Eastern towhee, and field sparrow, and popular game species such as Northern bobwhite and American woodcock.**"

The RGS urges every upland bird hunter, bird watcher and conservationist to take the time to learn the principals as they relate to the species we care so much about. Too often well meaning individuals and organizations favor mature trees over seedlings and saplings without understanding the consequences.

Both of these "must read" documents should be digested and the principals passed along by grouse and woodcock aficionados, bird watchers, conservationists and educators teaching others about nature.

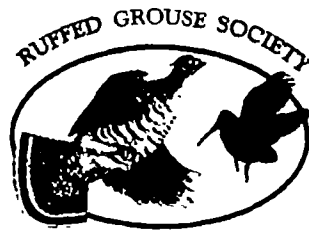
A direct link to the Steven Backs article PDF is: [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/pdf/RGS\\_Summer09p40-42Sm.pdf](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/pdf/RGS_Summer09p40-42Sm.pdf) . For the publication by Dr. Zagata the web address is: [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/pdf/PlacingWildlifeAtRisk.pdf](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/pdf/PlacingWildlifeAtRisk.pdf) .

For Internet distributions, both documents have been converted into a printable 8 1/2" x 11" PDF that can be downloaded and e-mailed to hunting partners, school ecology teachers and others.

Established in 1961, 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.

Information on the RGS, its mission, management projects and membership can be found on the web at: [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

Media Contact:  
Ron Burkert, 412-262-4044.  
E-Mail: [ronb@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:ronb@ruffedgrousesociety.org) .



DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT  
FOR RUFFED GROUSE, WOODCOCK,  
AND OTHER FOREST WILDLIFE  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

June 19, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Coraopolis, PA –The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) supports the passage of Senate Bill 167 that, among other things, develops a hunter mentorship program that allows youth when closely accompanied by an adult mentor to hunt as early as the age of 10 in the state.

Sponsored by Sen. Jim Holperin (D-Conover) the bill was approved by the State Senate on June 9th, and its companion bill authored by Representative Ann Hraychuck (D-Balsam Lake) passed the State Assembly on Thursday. It now awaits approval by the governor.

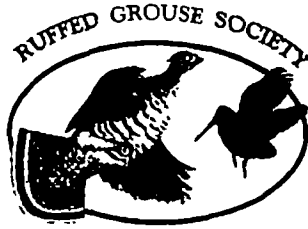
According to Mike Zagata, RGS Executive Director and CEO, “RGS encourages Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle to follow the bi-partisan efforts of the State Senate and Assembly in signing this important bill to increase participation in hunting by youth in the state. This bill will make it easier for sportsmen and women to pass their hunting heritage on to the next generation. RGS has been a leader in youth outdoor education across the country and will continue to support efforts that promote hunting by our youth.”

This bill also allows youth accompanied by an adult mentor to target practice at an earlier age. “This bill provides important mentoring opportunities where adults can legally work with youth at an earlier age than ever before and allow closely supervised use of a firearm”, said Wisconsin RGS Regional Director Dave Johnson. Johnson goes on to say, “It is important we reach the youth at an early age before many other things draw their attention.”

Thirty states currently have no minimum hunting age and 28 have created apprenticeship programs similar to what is proposed in Wisconsin. The state programs vary in minimum age, safety requirements and license fees.

If passed, the Wisconsin program will start on September 1, 2009.

Media Contact:  
Dave Johnson, 715-426-1000  
E-mail: [uptrek@gmail.com](mailto:uptrek@gmail.com)



DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT  
FOR RUFFED GROUSE, WOODCOCK,  
AND OTHER FOREST WILDLIFE  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

July 14, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Coraopolis, PA - The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is pleased to announce the hiring of Bruce Wojcik, a Michigan native who holds a BS degree in Wildlife from the Univ. of WI-Madison. Bruce will be the RGS Regional Director for Michigan and Northern Indiana. His will be responsible for growing both membership and chapters in those states as well as for coordinating RGS' on-the-ground mission-related conservation efforts. In order to further RGS' work to create early successional or young forests. He will work with other conservation organizations and public agencies on regional habitat restoration projects.

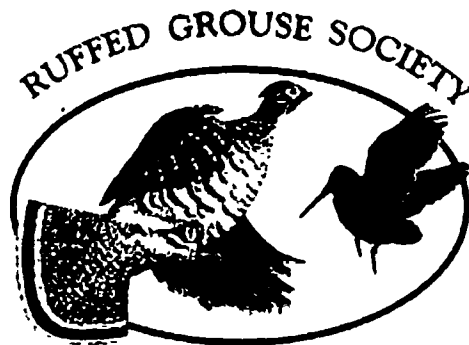
Bruce has worked in the conservation field for over a decade, and is no stranger to the Regional Director position; he has worked in this capacity for Ducks Unlimited and also served as a Senior Regional Director for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. He was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan and has been dedicated to conservation and conservation organizations nearly his entire life. Bruce and his family share a passion for hunting, fishing, and the great outdoors and are committed to leaving something for the next generation to enjoy.

"His background in conservation speaks for itself. He will be a great fit for the Michigan area. I think he will make an excellent addition to the field staff and I look forward to working with him," said Senior Regional Director, Mark Fouts.

According to Mike Zagata, RGS Executive Director and CEO, "Bruce is the ideal fit with what we look for in a Regional Director. He has the educational background, people skills and experience with volunteers to assist his current chapter volunteers and to bring together other folks interested in the wildlife that depend upon young forests for their survival to form new chapters. Michigan is an important state for the Society, and we needed someone who could send that signal – Bruce is that person."

Media Contact:  
Ron Burkert, 412-262-4044.  
E-Mail: [ronb@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:ronb@ruffedgrousesociety.org)

451 McCORMICK ROAD • CORAOPOLIS, PENNSYLVANIA 15108-9377  
(412) 262-4044 FAX (412) 262-9207 (888) 564-6747 TOLL FREE  
Email: [rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org) [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)



© 1998 RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIMMYE L. HARRIS

451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

September 15, 2009  
For Immediate Release

**Ruffed Grouse Society supports the Thread Lightly Respected Access  
campaign**  
*Initiative will eventually open more land to hunters*

Coraopolis, PA – As 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, the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is proud to be a part of the Thread Lightly “Respected Access is Open Access” outreach campaign.

Since its inception in 1961, RGS has always supported initiatives that will open more land to hunting, and the “Respected Access” campaign looks like it will certainly do that.

There are many indiscretions that would make a landowner cut off access to his or her property, with littering, natural resource damage, unsafe shooting practices and visitor conflicts high among them. Drawing attention to these transgressions, by way of public service announcements, social networking, website resources, an online awareness course, trail kiosks, press coverage and outreach at key events, may be just what is needed to curb the misbehavior.

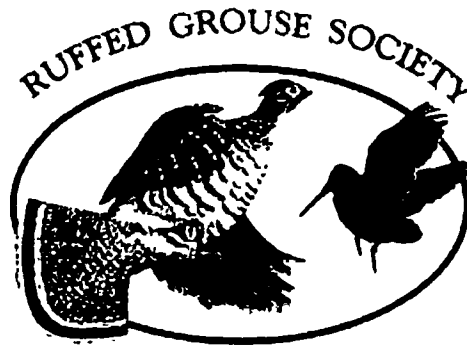
"All it takes is the inexcusable actions of one individual, to give landowners reason to close off their land to hunting and other outdoor activities; and more often than not, once that land is gone, it's gone forever. Reaching those who have no regard for private and/or public property is no easy task, but this educational campaign is a step in the right direction, and the Ruffed Grouse Society is proud to be a part of it," said RGS executive Director and CEO Mike Zagata.

As RGS Director of Conservation Policy Dan Dessecker has often said, "Throughout the range of the ruffed grouse, the vast majority of our forests are owned by private individuals. Hunters need to treat these lands with respect to help secure hunting access for the future."

Information on the Ruffed Grouse Society, its mission, management projects and membership can be found on the web at:  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

Media Contact:  
Dan Dessecker, 715-234-8302  
E-mail: [rgsdess@chibardun.coop](mailto:rgsdess@chibardun.coop) .





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, THE RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY, 451 MCCORMICK ROAD, CORAOPOLIS, PA 15108

451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA 15108  
(412) 262-4044  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

October 27, 2009  
For Immediate Release

RGS welcomes Andrew Weik as its New England Wildlife Biologist  
*Dedicated professional brings years of experience with him*

Coraopolis, PA -- The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) announced today the hiring of Andrew P. Weik as its New England Regional Wildlife Biologist. Scheduled to start in January, 2010, Weik will be responsible for implementing RGS' on-the-ground forest management and landowner and land manager education programs in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont.

A New England native Weik, 45, has been employed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Northeast Region at Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge – the only National Wildlife Refuge dedicated to woodcock management - for the past five years. He serves as technical expert in USFWS Region 5 on early successional forest habitat management and its impact on American woodcock population dynamics.

In addition to providing technical training regarding forest management techniques that benefit wildlife to public and private resource professionals and landowners at workshops and meetings, Andrew was responsible for developing the Refuge's Habitat Management Plan, Annual Habitat Work Plan, and assisting with the development of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan which will guide refuge programs for the next 15 years.

Prior to working with the USFWS, Weik was the Waterfowl and Upland Game Bird Program Leader for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

where, among other projects, he coordinated the development and implementation of programs and surveys to assess the status of game birds.

Married with two sons, Nolan (5) and Collin (3), Andrew, together with his wife Angela (also a wildlife biologist), enjoys hunting with their two setters and one Labrador for grouse, woodcock and waterfowl. One of Andy's favorite quotes from the father of wildlife management, Aldo Leopold, when talking about grouse hunting, is "There are two kinds of hunting: ordinary hunting, and ruffed grouse hunting".

"All of us here at RGS are very excited about the addition of Andrew to our team," says RGS President and CEO Mike Zagata. "Andy's background and experience as a wildlife biologist with the USFWS, as well as his work with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, will help us continue our mission of enhancing the environment for ruffed grouse, American woodcock, and other forest wildlife that utilize or require thick, young forests created through ecologically sound forest management practices".

"I'm really excited about working for the Ruffed Grouse Society," says Weik. "The organization was founded on the principle that sound scientific management is essential in today's landscape for thriving populations of grouse, woodcock and other wildlife. I look forward to building on the accomplishments of the other RGS biologists, raising awareness of the habitat needs of grouse, woodcock, and other wildlife that depend on young forest, helping incorporate successional forest habitat management in municipal, state, federal, corporate, and non governmental organizations' management plans, incorporating wildlife habitat needs into the development of woody biomass technology to help meet our energy and wildlife habitat needs, and working with landowners and RGS chapters on habitat improvement projects," Weik said.

One specific project that Weik hopes to see through to its conclusion in 2010 is revising the RGS-published "A Woodcock in the Hand" (Sepik 1994) -- a publication that provides tips on examining, aging, and sexing American woodcock as well as information on population monitoring and conservation. The booklet is currently out of print.

To assist Weik in his goals, RGS is currently seeking a regional director for the New England area. The position involves working with local chapter volunteers to create and host chapter events including fund-raising sportsman's banquets, shoots, educational activities and youth events. Interested individuals should contact Mark Fouts at 715-399-2270 or by e-mail at [rgsfouts@centurytel.net](mailto:rgsfouts@centurytel.net) .

Established in 1961, 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.**

Information on the RGS, its mission, management projects and membership can be found on the web at: [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

Media Contact:

Mike Zagata, 412-262-4044.

E-Mail: [mikez@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:mikez@ruffedgrousesociety.org) .



DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT  
FOR RUFFED GROUSE, WOODCOCK,  
AND OTHER FOREST WILDLIFE  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

October 27, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Coraopolis, PA – In the tradition of a classic driven pheasant shoot, similar to those held on private estates in England, Scotland and Spain, the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is sponsoring a driven pheasant and flighted mallard shoot at the Pawling Mountain Club (PMC), Pawling, New York on Saturday, November 14, 2009 beginning with a Continental breakfast and clays warm up at 9 a.m.



Considered the "sport of kings," this RGS all-inclusive shoot is limited to 18 guns, which will alternate between ring-neck pheasants and flighted mallards during the morning and afternoon sessions.

Accompanying guests are welcome to attend the game menu luncheon at 1 p.m. along with the following live and silent auctions for a variety of items, highlighted with the finest selection of quality firearms, artwork, trips and collectables at 2 p.m.

Located at 306 Penny Road PMC is bordered by a 1500-acre expanse of the Appalachian Trail National Park. The preserve offers ideal woodland and open field game cover unmarked by roads and traffic, making it ideal for this type of shooting experience.

451 MCCORMICK ROAD • CORAOPOLIS, PENNSYLVANIA 15108-9377  
(412) 262-4044 FAX (412) 262-9207 (888) 564-6747 TOLL FREE  
Email: [rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org) [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

Orchestrated by a "Gamekeeper", everyone involved works to show, shoot and retrieve great quality upland game birds, and a shared love of the countryside is sure to knit together all the participants in an atmosphere of camaraderie and banter on the day.

Limited overnight accommodations are available at PMC's spacious traditional country log home lodge.

Registration for this 400 pheasant and 400 mallard released shoot is \$1,800 per gun, and registration is on a first come basis.

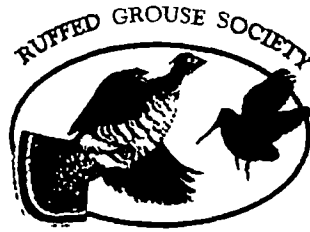
For more information and/or registration, contact Mark Fouts at 715-399-2270 or by e-mail at [rgsfouts@centurytel.net](mailto:rgsfouts@centurytel.net).

Media Contact:

Julie Krieger

412-203-4120

E-mail: [juliec@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:juliec@ruffedgrousesociety.org)



DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT  
FOR RUFFED GROUSE, WOODCOCK,  
AND OTHER FOREST WILDLIFE  
[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

November 19, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Coraopolis, PA -- The Wildlife Leadership Academy (WLA) facilitated by the Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education (PICE) is offering the Pennsylvania Drummers program on June 22-26, 2010.

A member of the WLA advisory team, the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) will play a prominent role in instructing youth on ruffed grouse ecology and management, as well as fostering strong leadership skills. The program includes instruction on wildlife biology, research and monitoring techniques, the role of hunting, nature photography and journaling, and community outreach and instruction techniques.

Open to youngsters ages 14-17, this unique program begins with an intensive residential field school including comprehensive instruction on all things ruffed grouse, and continues as students complete service and leadership projects within their communities throughout the year. PA Drummers will be held at the Powdermill Nature Reserve near Ligonier, Westmoreland County, PA.

The Ruffed Grouse Society has worked closely with PICE and other conservation organizations and agencies to develop the PA Drummers program. (Drummer is another name for a male ruffed grouse).

"The Wildlife Leadership Academy meets a very high standard. Participants will leave not only understanding all aspect of ruffed grouse conservation, but also with a grasp of the skills and methods for passing their knowledge on to others," noted Mark Banker, Senior Biologist for the Ruffed Grouse Society.

Tuition for the residential field school is \$400, and applications are currently available for the 2010 field schools. Interested students can download an application by going to [www.PICEweb.org](http://www.PICEweb.org) and clicking on the youth programs link. Tuition scholarships are also available. The application deadline is April 1, 2010.

Interested teens and parents can also contact program coordinator Michele Kittell at [mkittell@picweb.org](mailto:mkittell@picweb.org) or 570-245-8518 or Banker at [rgsbank@comcast.net](mailto:rgsbank@comcast.net) or 814-867-7946.

Media Contact:  
Mark Banker  
814-867-7946  
E-Mail: [rgsbank@comcast.net](mailto:rgsbank@comcast.net)

451 MCCORMICK ROAD • CORAOPOLIS, PENNSYLVANIA 15108-9377  
(412) 262-4044 FAX (412) 262-9207 (888) 564-6747 TOLL FREE  
Email: [rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org) [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)



DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT  
FOR RUFFED GROUSE, WOODCOCK,  
AND OTHER FOREST WILDLIFE

[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

November 25, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Coraopolis, PA – The Ruffed Grouse Society has named Pennsylvania native Tripp Way as Regional Director for New England. He will begin Dec. 1, 2009.

A graduate of Ohio's Wittenberg University, Tripp, 28, earned a bachelors degree in English Literature, but it was his love of grouse and woodcock hunting that introduced him to the Ruffed Grouse Society, where he learned of the organization's comprehensive habitat restoration programs.

At about the same time, Tripp began studying the ruffed grouse, keeping extensive statistics and reporting the collected data to the Loyal Order of Dedicated Grouse Hunters; comparing his results with others.

Passionate about grouse and woodcock hunting over his 2.5 year old German Wirehaired Pointer, Duke, Tripp said he is extremely excited about joining RGS and committed to working for a cause he is so impassioned about, adding that his goals are to increase membership and chapter participation while maintaining focus on the true matter -- grouse, woodcock, and the conservation of young forest species.

Tripp and his fiancé, Ciaran, plan to wed upon her graduation from law school and completion of her bar exam. They plan to relocate to CT.

"Together with biologist Andy Weik, Tripp will provide the presence in New England that RGS is seeking. The energy he brings to the position is sure to rub-off on everyone he comes in contact with," said RGS president and CEO Mike Zagata.

Media Contact:  
Mike Zagata, 412-262-4044

451 MCCORMICK ROAD • CORAOPOLIS, PENNSYLVANIA 15108-9377  
(412) 262-4044 FAX (412) 262-9207 (888) 564-6747 TOLL FREE  
Email. [rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org) [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)



DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT  
FOR RUFFED GROUSE, WOODCOCK,  
AND OTHER FOREST WILDLIFE

[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

December 17, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Coraopolis, PA - In what may very well be the most significant event of the year, the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) will hold its Fourth Annual New York City Fundraiser Dinner at Aretsky's Patroon, 160 East 46 Street, Manhattan, on Wednesday, January 13, 2010.

The guest list includes people interested in managing our forests for both hunted and non-hunted wildlife -- people who obviously understand that unlike the government bailout that has poured billions of dollars into the automotive and banking industries, the only funding wildlife will receive in 2010 will come from concerned conservation organizations, businesses and private individuals. And, when it comes to ruffed grouse, American woodcock and numerous species of songbirds and the young forest habitat needed for their survival, no one has a track record of success like the Ruffed Grouse Society.

According to RGS president and CEO Mike Zagata, despite what many feel is a difficult economy, sportsmen and women continue to support wildlife and its habitat. Then, citing the significance of habitat restoration, and the importance of hunters and other conservationists to remain involved, the former New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner went on to say, "The sportsmen and women of New York and adjacent states see the necessity of giving something back if we and future generations want to continue to enjoy the wonderful outdoors traditions we inherited."

The gala begins with an open bar reception party at 6 p.m., immediately followed by a gourmet dinner at 7 p.m. (Parking is conveniently located directly across the street).

As is the custom at this affair, the event will feature live and silent auctions, highlighted with the finest selection of quality firearms and fly-fishing equipment by renowned manufacturers. Other items include outstanding hunting and fishing equipment and trips, original wildlife art, and an assortment of one of a kind collectables.

Attendance is \$750 per plate with all proceeds used to further the protection and management of the state's young forest habitats for ruffed grouse, woodcock and other

451 MCCORMICK ROAD • CORAOPOLIS, PENNSYLVANIA 15108-9377  
(412) 262-4044 FAX (412) 262-9207 (888) 564-6747 TOLL FREE  
Email: [rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org) [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)



young-forest wildlife. In addition, each reservation received by December 24, 2009 will receive a complimentary \$100 National Raffle Ticket on a Model 21 Baby Frame 28 gauge shotgun. The gun has a retail value of \$32,000.

(Several tables of ten are still available, and a receipt for all donations and the charitable portion of each ticket will be issued).

For more information and/or reservations contact Julie Caugherty-Krieger at 412-203-4120, or by e-mail at: [juliec@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:juliec@ruffedgrousesociety.org).

**Media Contact:**

**Julie Caugherty-Krieger, 412-203-4120 or 888-564-6747, ext 4120**

**E-mail: [juliec@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:juliec@ruffedgrousesociety.org)**

**From:** Gary Zimmer [mailto:rgszimm@newnorth.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 29, 2009 6:20 PM  
**To:** FAN Member  
**Subject:** FAN Update



# Western Great Lakes Region FAN UPDATE

Volume 8, Issue 5

December 29, 2009

---

## **Happy Holidays to All**

As 2009 fades away, we can sure look back at the past year as a year of positive times in the ruffed grouse and woodcock world. With your help RGS has been very active and making some significant moves forward. It definitely is time to say thanks for the continued support of the many dedicated RGS members who help make all of this possible. As you will see in the following FAN Update there has been alot happening in this region. Below you will see a summary of some of the things that have been accomplished and have once again provided my annual listing of the Ten Regional Highlights of the Past Year. Just like last year, it certainly was difficult to stop at ten. To all RGS members thank you again for all your support and what you do for the Society and for me. When things are getting tough I can always look to our members for strength and encouragement. I hope the holidays continue to be special 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

---

## **2009 SENIOR REGIONAL BIOLOGIST REPORT**

Here's a summary of the 2009 Regional accomplishments:

- Attended 60 meetings with resource agency staff/legislators and provided RGS input to 23 public land management projects.
  - Involved in 26 media contacts (includes press releases/television and radio interviews).
  - Conducted 15 reviews of existing or proposed Management Area Projects.
  - Conducted 9 on-site habitat consultations.
  - Participated in 18 chapter meetings, 2 youth events, 4 outdoor shows and 9 field events.
  - Attended 9 chapter banquets.
  - Participated in 22 external outreach events that included about 2000 individuals.
  - Responded to approximately 1,500 individual requests for information.
  - Produced four FAN Update newsletters to nearly 700 members.
  - Prepared four grant applications for habitat and educational projects. Grants generated \$101,326 for habitat projects.
  - Represented RGS on Michigan and Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative Councils, Lake States Resource Alliance, Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association and the National Forest Support Coalition.
- 
-

## **Michigan 2009 Early Season Grouse and Woodcock Hunting Report**

Early season reports from ruffed grouse and American woodcock cooperators allow biologists to quickly assess hunter success and local field conditions across the state of Michigan at the beginning of the grouse season. This report is a summary of their responses for September 15-18, 2009.

Cooperators returned 81 useable surveys. They hunted 468 hours in 45 counties during the survey period. Respondents hunted most in Zone 2, followed by Zone 1, and Zone 3. Hunters reported the highest average flush rates for grouse in Zones 2 and 1, respectively. Individual counties having at least 10 hours of hunting with the highest flush rates for grouse were Grand Traverse, Benzie, Kalkaska, Wexford, and Oscoda. Although the woodcock season was not open during the survey period, cooperators were asked to also count woodcock flushes. Individual counties having at least 10 hours of hunting with the highest flush rates for woodcock were Gladwin, Roscommon, Kalkaska, Grand Traverse, and Wexford.

About 33% of the respondents thought grouse populations were up or slightly up from last year in the areas they hunted, with 34% reporting populations about the same as the previous year and 33% describing them as down or slightly down. About 18% of the respondents thought woodcock populations were up or slightly up from last year while about 36% thought they were the same as last year and 46% thought they were down or slightly down.

The best grouse and woodcock hunting opportunities will continue to be in areas of young early forest successional habitat. Many hunters commented on the warm and dry weather conditions for the opening of the grouse season. Hunters also commented on good food availability for grouse. Some hunters said that they would prefer that grouse season open later in the season when there is less foliage. More information is available on the Michigan DNR website at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/RG\\_early\\_coop\\_2008\\_251858\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/RG_early_coop_2008_251858_7.pdf)

---

## **Videos Offer Info on Ridding Wooded Areas of Invasives**

Four online videos can help landowners and others identify and control three of Wisconsin's most common and problematic invasive plants. The videos, all of which are under 3 minutes in length, can be found on the Take Action on

Invasive Species webpage at [http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/action\\_woodlot.htm](http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/action_woodlot.htm). In addition to a general video, 3 other videos focus on buckthorn, garlic mustard, and honeysuckle -- invasives that are considered particularly problematic in Wisconsin. These invasive plants compete for water and nutrients with trees and native plants, often crowding out desirable growth and negatively affecting wildlife. The videos help viewers identify the invasives and demonstrate the safe use of herbicides to rid an area of the invasive plants.

---

## **RGS Develops State Drummer Fund Program**

Beginning in 2010, RGS chapters with successful events will be able to place a portion of what they raise in state "Drummer Funds" for habitat projects within their state. This new program was recently approved by the RGS Board of Directors and is in response to a call by chapters to locally fund additional habitat projects. Contact your local RGS Regional Director for more information on this important program.

---

## **Two Wisconsin COVERTS Workshops Planned for 2010**

Building on last years success, the Wisconsin Coverts Project will again conduct two workshops in 2010. The workshops for private forest landowners will be held either August 12 - 15 or August 26 - 29 at Kemp Natural Resources Station near Woodruff, WI. These 3-day sessions have had rave reviews from past attendees that have become Covert Cooperators through past workshops.

Now starting its 17th year, 427 cooperators have attended these workshops. Sharing with others what they have learned these Coverts Cooperators have influenced the management of over 700,000 acres of land in Wisconsin. This workshop is highly recommended for those landowners interested in better understanding their role as stewards of their property. For additional information on the workshop contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or by email at [jlneck@wisc.edu](mailto:jlneck@wisc.edu). Attendance is limited. More information is available on the Coverts Project website at [http://forestandwildlifecology.wisc.edu/wl\\_extension/wicovertsproject.html](http://forestandwildlifecology.wisc.edu/wl_extension/wicovertsproject.html). Deadline for applications is June 15th.

**Don't Miss Out!**  
**Enter the 2009/2010 RGS National Raffle Today**  
**Baby Frame 28-Gauge Shotgun with 28 inch barrels**

Made Famous by Winchester

(approx. retail value \$32,000)

Straight English Stock, Walnut

Beavertail forend

Gold RGS Logo Engraving on bottom of receiver

Visit [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org) to see a picture (it's a beauty) of this one-of-a-kind shotgun

**To Purchase Tickets Contact: Gary Zimmer**

**at 715-674-7505 or [rgszimm@newnorth.net](mailto:rgszimm@newnorth.net) or mail the following to:**

**RGS P.O. Box 116 Laona, WI 54541**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tickets @ \$100.00 Each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed

CHECK (Payable to RGS) CASH CREDIT CARD

CC # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

## **Ten Regional Highlights from 2009**

(not ranked in order of importance and not a complete list)

1. Continue to work with outstanding RGS chapters, committees and volunteers who remain passionate about the RGS mission. Five habitat work days were conducted in the region including first time one's by the Flambeau River Chapter near Park Falls, WI and the Chain'O'Lakes Chapter near Eagle River, WI along with the three annual work days sponsored by the NE Wisconsin Chapter (Green Bay) in NE Wisconsin.
2. Attending two successful RGS sponsored youth field days including the huge event put on each April by the West Central Wisconsin Chapter near Marshfield and one put on by the T. Stanton Armour Chapter north of Chicago.
3. Having one of the highest number of on-going RGS sponsored habitat projects in this region since RGS project work began in the mid 1980's.
4. Putting two ASV forestry loaders with mulching heads on the ground in the region. Already in Michigan and Wisconsin hundreds of acres of work has been conducted due in large part to the dedication of a number of RGS members who have helped acquire the ASV's, trucks, trailers and other supporting equipment as well as finding and coordinating work efforts.
5. Seeing the continued success of the Wisconsin Coverts Project that recently completed its 16th year and 17 workshops and working with Coverts Project Staff Jamie Nack, Scott Craven and David Drake. The popularity of these program led to the development of a second workshop in 2009.
6. In 2009, the Iowa DNR, with the support of RGS and other NGO's, received a \$190,000 grant to be used to support forest habitat management on private lands in NE Iowa. RGS members from the Iowa Chapter along with Iowa DNR personnel have worked for many years to promote habitat management programs on the ground that will have a greater effect on forest wildlife populations.
7. Watching the continued development of the River Hills Forest Habitat Project in Missouri and seeing the farsighted efforts of the Mid-Missouri RGS Chapter members in insuring that this

project occurred and was successful. Since the onset of the River Hills Project in 2003, \$190,000 has been raised to support young forest management activities on approximately 3,200 acres in the project area.

8. RGS being invited to speak to a congressional hearing in Appleton, WI on management activities on the Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forest.
9. Seeing the success of the continuing effect that RGS members and staff are having on land management decisions by Federal and state agencies.
10. Seeing an increase in public awareness of RGS and its mission. Using a variety of media outlets, RGS has been more and more in the public eye with each passing year. Over 20 articles, interviews and press releases were completed or conducted in this region in 2009.

---

### **Upcoming RGS "Habitat" Events in the Region**

March 11 - NE Wisconsin Wildlife Seminar with Dan Eklund, US Forest Service Forest Biologist, 7 PM at the Rock Garden Supper Club, Green Bay. Contact Dave Bartz at 920-743-6004 for more info.

March 20 to 21 - Stop by the RGS booth at the Wisconsin Sport Show at the Eau Claire Indoor Sports Center in Eau Claire. To help with the booth contact Gary Zimmer at 715-674-7505 or by email at [rgszimm@newnorth.net](mailto:rgszimm@newnorth.net).

April 9 to 11 - Stop by the RGS booth at the Wisconsin Deer/Turkey Expo at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison. To help with the booth contact Gary Zimmer at 715-674-7505 or by email at [rgszimm@newnorth.net](mailto:rgszimm@newnorth.net).

August 12 to 15 - First 2010 WI Coverts Workshop, Contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or email at [jlneck@wisc.edu](mailto:jlneck@wisc.edu).

August 26 to 29 - Second 2010 WI Coverts Workshop, Contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or email at [jlneck@wisc.edu](mailto:jlneck@wisc.edu).

---

### **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:  
Gary Zimmer, Sally B. Searle Senior Regional Biologist  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
PO Box 116  
Laona WI 54541  
Phone: (715) 674-7505  
email: [rgszimm@newnorth.net](mailto:rgszimm@newnorth.net)

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](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

# Minnesota Region FAN UPDATE

November 2009



## **2009 National Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock Hunt Results**

The National Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock Hunt provides an unparalleled opportunity to study the population ecology of these two important upland game birds. The Hunt is conducted in the same locale, the same time each year, and using the same methods, which provides an outstanding opportunity to study the annual variation of the local ruffed grouse population and how that variation relates to the birds 10-year cycle.

The 2009 Hunt was conducted on 8-9 October and was headquartered out of the Sawmill Inn in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. Due to an increase in ruffed grouse drumming activity documented by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' spring drumming survey, expectations ran high that hunters would find more birds than during the 2008 Hunt.

Hunt results suggest that the 2009 ruffed grouse population is very similar to what was found in northcentral Minnesota in 2008. Because the number of Hunt participants can vary slightly from year to year, the best measure of hunter success is the average number of birds harvested by each hunter each day. In 2008, each Hunt participant harvested 1.16 grouse per day; this number dropped just slightly in 2009 to 1.1 grouse per hunter per day.

One confounding factor this year at the Hunt was leaf cover – virtually all of our seasoned huntsmen and hunters found that there were many more leaves still on the trees and shrubs than in previous years. As all veteran grouse hunters understand, the birds are tough enough to bag when they give you a good look. When flushing behind a screen of leaves, grouse can be especially difficult to hit, which may account for the lower than anticipated harvest at the Hunt this year.

On the flip side, we had reasonably good weather both days of the Hunt this year (although a bit windy the first day), whereas the second day of last year's hunt brought steady rain to northern Minnesota that probably dampened both hunter interest and effort. The proportion of the total grouse harvest that was comprised of birds born this spring was just a bit below the long-term average, which suggests that reproductive success was close to normal in 2009.

The woodcock harvest this year was down substantially from 2008. Each hunter bagged an average of only 1.1 woodcock each day at the 2009 Hunt, whereas the average daily bag last year was over 1.5. This is due in large part to very few migrant birds being present on most hunt areas this year compared to 2008.

## **Ruffed Grouse Society and Department of Natural Resources enhance shrubland in northeast Minnesota.**

The Ruffed Grouse Society provided approximately \$9,000 in funding to restore important shrubland habitats on the Sax-Zim Wildlife Management Area near Eveleth this September. These shrublands can provide important breeding and migration habitats for American woodcock, as well as important year-round cover for the remnant sharp-tailed grouse population that still exists in the area.

The Society and the Department of Natural Resources identified expanses of upland shrubs declining in vigor due to old age and in need of restoration. A private contractor was hired to mow these shrub stands during the fall to encourage the growth of healthy young plants next spring – thereby extending the life of these habitats for woodcock, sharptails, golden-winged warblers and a host of other critters. The implementation of this project is due in large part to the strong support provided by the DNR Wildlife and Forestry professionals stationed at the Eveleth field office.

## Tickets now available for the Ruffed Grouse Society 2009-2010 National Raffle

Tickets are now available for the 2009-2010 RGS National Raffle. The raffle winner will receive a Winchester Model 21 Baby Frame 28 gauge shotgun. This one-of-a-kind gun features 28" barrels choked IC/M with two beads, a straight English stock crafted from AAA fancy feathercrotch walnut to a checkered butt, and a 14 1/2" LOP. The beavertail forend has an ebony insert in the tip. It has a single selective trigger and the RGS logo is hand-engraved in gold on the bottom of the receiver. The approximate retail value of this gun is \$28,000. Tickets are \$100 each with the winner drawn on June 30, 2010. To buy your raffle tickets, contact Dan Dessecker at 715-234-8302 or [rgsdess@chibardun.coop](mailto:rgsdess@chibardun.coop), or print and mail the following order form to:

### RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY

PO Box 2

Rice Lake, WI 54868

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tickets @ \$100.00 Each =

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed

CHECK (Payable to Ruffed Grouse Society)

CREDIT CARD

CC # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## **Minnesota's new source of funding for wildlife conservation**

In November 2008, voters in Minnesota approved a constitutional amendment to increase the state sales tax by 0.375%. One third of the funds generated by this increase are dedicated to the restoration, protection, and enhancement of wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and other wildlife. The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (Council) was subsequently established to make recommendations to the state legislature regarding the disbursement of the funds dedicated to conservation.

Initial projections suggest that approximately \$60 million will be available annually for conservation initiatives. The Council plans to divide this total equally among the three landscape components identified in the amendment – wetlands, prairies and forests. Funds generated through the increased sales tax first became available for disbursement in June 2009.

In March 2009, the Council recommended to the legislature that all \$20 million available for forest wildlife related projects in Fiscal Year 2009 be dedicated to a single project – the Forests for the Future/Upper Mississippi River Project. The goal of the Upper Mississippi River Project is to acquire a permanent conservation easement for 187,000 acres of industrial forestland in Itasca, St Louis, Aitkin, Cass and Koochiching Counties. This land is currently owned by UPM-Kymmene (Blandin). Because the initial estimated total cost of this easement acquisition is \$36 million, the Council has recommended that funds available for forest wildlife related projects in FY 2010 be dedicated to complete the Upper Mississippi River Project.

There is broad support within the conservation community in Minnesota for securing a permanent easement to this vast tract of working forest. Although the economic downturn that occurred in late 2008 has cooled interest in the acquisition and commercial development of these types of properties, development pressure in better economic times would seriously threaten public access to and enjoyment of these wild lands. The Society's Grand Rapids Chapter coordinated the submission of a letter to key legislators voicing support for the Upper Mississippi River Project on behalf of 9 Society Chapters in Minnesota.

To help the Council better understand the essential role of active forest management in the conservation of forest wildlife, the Society helped coordinate an informational workshop for the Council and the public in July. A series of indoor presentations by the Society, the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the Wildlife Management Institute on the status and trends of ruffed grouse, woodcock and other wildlife that require young forest habitats set the stage for an afternoon fieldtrip. The field tour was conducted on a tract of industrial forest land near Grand Rapids and included various stops designed to demonstrate how and why we manage our forests to benefit both rural economies and forest wildlife. Several of the Council members on the tour voiced strong support for the use of thoughtful timber harvest operations as one element of a balanced approach to forest conservation.

The Society is currently working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, various County Land Departments in Minnesota, and other wildlife conservation organizations active in the state to identify opportunities for shrubland

restoration through noncommercial mowing or shearing. These management opportunities will form the foundation for a second proposal to the Council that will be submitted when additional funds become available for forest wildlife related projects."

For more information, please contact Dan Dessecker at [rgsdess@chibardun.coop](mailto:rgsdess@chibardun.coop)



**From:** Mark Banker [mailto:rgsbank@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Fri 9/25/2009 8:42 AM  
**To:** FAN Recipients  
**Subject:** FW: Appalachians Update - Forest Action Network

---

## **Forest Action Network Appalachian Update**

### **Tickets Now Available for the 2009/2010 RGS National Raffle**

Tickets are now available for the 2009/2010 RGS National Raffle. The raffle winner will receive a Winchester Model 21 Baby Frame 28 gauge shotgun. This one of a kind gun features 28" barrels choked IC/M with two beads, a straight English stock crafted from AAA fancy feathercrotch walnut to a checkered butt, and a 14 1/2" LOP. The beavertail fore-end has an ebony insert in the tip. It has a single selective trigger and the RGS logo is hand-engraved in gold on the bottom of the receiver. The approximate retail value of this gun is \$28,000. Tickets are \$100 each with the winner drawn on June 30, 2010. To purchase raffle tickets, contact Mark Banker at 814-867-7946 or [rgsbank@comcast.net](mailto:rgsbank@comcast.net), any RGS staff person, or go to [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

### **Don't Miss Timberdoodle.org**

**Timberdoodle.org** is a new website created by the Wildlife Management Institute that describes in detail woodcock management projects throughout the eastern U.S. Well-known outdoor and nature writer Chuck Fergus manages the information on the website and describes the various projects in his unique and effective style. The website not only describes the projects and provides pictures, but also gives specific direction to the sites for the curious land manager who wants to see what good woodcock management looks like. The curious hunter may also find the directions helpful.....

### **Pennsylvania Bill Would Allow Game Commission to Make the Call on Sunday Hunting**

Pennsylvania is one of the handful of states that does not allow Sunday hunting. House Bill 779, very simply stated, would give the PA Game Commission the authority to make decisions about Sunday hunting as opposed to legislative action, which is what is currently required. If you live in PA, we encourage you to make your voice heard with your state representatives. PA is a state with a very large hunting population. Recent history would suggest that those hunters are not easily convinced to change their traditions, even if it means MORE hunting opportunities. The Society also would like to hear what you think about Sunday hunting in PA.

## **Two Timber Harvests Completed on Forbes State Forest**

The Society has completed its first two timber sales the 2,300-acre Barron Tract of the Forbes State Forest, Somerset County, PA. The two cuts, one 85 acres and the other 65 acres, were done with grouse and woodcock in mind. The area has a healthy supply of grouse, so these fairly large patches of new habitat should mean some very good hunting in years to come.

The tract of land was purchased by the Western PA Conservancy from Lyme Timber Company two years ago and given to the DCNR Bureau of Forestry, Forbes State Forest. The timber rights, however, were conveyed to the Society for 15 years as part of an effort to emphasize habitat management on newly acquired state lands. Appalachian Forest Consultants are administering the sales on behalf of the Society, with more work planned for 2010. The Society was responsible for seeding the skid trails and log decks with RGS Grouse Trail Mix following logging. The Bureau of Forestry has worked extremely well with the Society to make the management go smoothly. More details of this project can be found at [www.timberdoodle.org](http://www.timberdoodle.org).

## **Michigan Preliminary Drumming Results for 2009**

***Since many of you travel to Michigan to hunt grouse, I wanted to pass this information along. Gary Zimmer, RGS Senior Biologist in Wisconsin, gets the credit for providing the info. In summary, last year and this year look pretty much the same.***

Due to personnel limitations, the ruffed grouse drumming survey was not conducted statewide in 2009. However, 42 drumming routes were run in the Upper Peninsula. In 2008, 50 drumming routes were run in the Upper Peninsula. There was no difference in the average number of drums heard per route between 2008 (18.9) and 2009 (18). Because routes were not conducted in Ontonagon and Gogebic counties in 2009, results do not represent those counties.



Ruffed grouse populations have exhibited ten-year cycles in abundance over much of Canada, Alaska, and the Great Lakes states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan (Rusch et al. 1999). Many factors affect grouse populations including changes in habitat and food availability. It is unclear why the population cycles occur, but many theories have been proposed (Rusch 1989). The population in Michigan is expected to peak in 2010. Reported by Al Stewart and Val Frawley, MI DNR - 517-373-1263

## **Dan Holliman Joins RGS as NY/Northern PA Regional Director**

Dan Holliman as the newest member of RGS' team of Regional Directors. Dan is from Syracuse, New York and has been an active member of RGS since 1996. He is also a member of the Conservation Alliance of NY – an umbrella group that represents sportsmen and women. He believes it is key for all RGS members, and potential members, to understand how vital it is to work toward making a difference in the legacy of hunting through active management of habitat.

As an avid hunter, Holliman is passionate about double guns, conservation and dogs. In his spare time, he trains his two English setters, Appalachia and Sierra. Enjoying the outdoors has been a life-long interest for Holliman. He anticipates sharing his passion for conservation by growing new RGS chapters. "I look forward to helping members and non-members alike understand the importance of young-forest habitat, not only for our sporting heritage, but also for many species of wildlife, like deer and songbirds. We must realize that the agenda goes beyond our immediate coverts," says Holliman. "The non-for-profit sector has an important voice in state and local policies that affect our natural surroundings throughout our nation."

Dan may be reached at [rgsdan10@gmail.com](mailto:rgsdan10@gmail.com).

**To modify a phrase used most recently by Alan Jackson and Jimmy Buffet, "It's Grouse Season Somewhere". Many of you are on your way to those places or soon will be.**

**Good luck and have fun!**

Mark Banker  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
Southern Appalachians Region  
State College, PA  
814-867-7946

Ronald P. Burkert

From: Gary Zimmer [rgszimm@newnorth.net]

Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2009 5:24 PM

To: FAN Member

Subject: FAN UPDATE



## Western Great Lakes Region FAN UPDATE

Volume 9, Issue 1

April 15, 2009

### **The Equipment is Coming, The Equipment is Coming!!**

The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) recently received three grants totaling \$182,000 to purchase heavy equipment for managing habitat in the Upper Midwest. RGS has purchased two ASV/Terex PT-100 Forestry loaders (similar to the machine shown above) with mulching heads with grants from the R K Mellon Foundation, the Frey Foundation of Grand Rapids, MI, and the

4/17/2009

Charlevoix County Community Foundation located in East Jordan, MI.

The new pieces of equipment will service Michigan and Wisconsin as well as surrounding states. The versatile equipment will allow the RGS to help public and private partners aggressively manage neglected aspen, alder and brush habitats for ruffed grouse, woodcock and many other species. The RGS and its partners have been operating similar equipment in the Northeast for several years with excellent results.

The equipment program has allowed the Society and its partners to manage high quality habitats that typically are neglected because of the lack of proper equipment. Woodcock in particular have benefitted because large areas of old fields, prime woodcock habitat, that are typically left to convert to forests are now maintained as shrublands.

"We are extremely grateful to our funding partners who have allowed us to grow this program", stated RGS Executive Director and CEO Mike Zagata. "These machines will help us manage critical habitat on public and private lands in two crucial states".

"These pieces of equipment are important tools to help the Ruffed Grouse Society target habitat improvements for woodcock in habitat, like alder, that is not being managed by commercial harvests," adds Gary Zimmer, RGS Senior Biologist in the Western Great Lakes Region. "With this equipment the RGS will be one of the primary implementers of the Upper Great Lakes Woodcock and Young Forest Habitat Initiative."

## **Don't Miss Out! Only 76 Days Left! Enter the 2008/2009 RGS Upland Bird Dream Hunt Raffle Today**

**Thanks to all who have purchased a national raffle ticket so far. If you haven't, please enter soon or you might miss out on a upland game bird hunting trip of a lifetime.**

**First Place Prize - All Expense Paid Trip for Two to hunt from October 3-5, 2009 for sharptail grouse and Hungarian partridge at Bear paw Mountain Outfitters in Havre, Montana followed by participation in the National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in grand Rapids, Minnesota from October 6-9. Both hunters also receive an SKB model 1785 o/u shotgun. Approximate value of package: \$18,000.**

**Second Place Prize - \$1,000 Cabela's Gift Certificate**

**Third Place Prize - Custom fitted Pair of upland hunting boots from Russell Moccasin Co. Approximate value of boots: \$400.**

**Donation for Tickets is \$50 each with winners drawn on June 30, 2009.**

**To Purchase Raffle Tickets Contact: Gary Zimmer**

**at 715-674-7505 or [rgszimm@newnorth.net](mailto:rgszimm@newnorth.net) or mail the following to:**

**RGS P.O. Box 116 Laona, WI 54541**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Tickets @ \$50.00 Each = \$** \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Enclosed**

**CHECK (Payable to RGS)**  **CASH**  **CREDIT CARD**

**CC #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Exp. Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Billing Address** \_\_\_\_\_ **Billing Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

## **New CRP Program Promotes Habitat for Ruffed Grouse in Iowa**

Landowners in Northeast Iowa have a unique opportunity to reverse the downward population trend of Ruffed Grouse, Woodcock, and many types of migrating songbirds. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering a new Continuous

Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) targeted at Early Successional Forest Species such as Ruffed Grouse.

The State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), or Early Successional Habitat program, is meant to develop CRP habitat on marginal crop ground that will provide specific food, nesting and cover needs required by numerous bird species that are showing nationwide decline. Early successional forest habitat is a very young forest, or edge habitat, characterized by a dense growth of saplings and shrubs. Periodic cutting is necessary to maintain this type of habitat. Aspen stands, for example, will die out if they aren't cut every 15 to 20 years.

Oak and Aspen are the preferred tree species for this practice. The oak will be left to grow to maturity to provide food for many species of wildlife, and the aspen will be cut to maintain dense, early successional growth for grouse and songbirds. Shrubs and a narrow grass buffer can also be implemented to maximize sunlight and nutrients next to existing crop ground.

Early Successional SAFE has many of the bonuses that other Continuous CRP programs offer, including a Signup Incentive Payment of \$100 an acre, up to 90% cost share to establish the desired habitat, and an annual rental payment for 10 or 15 years.

Greg Schmitt, DNR Private Lands Biologist for northeast Iowa says, "If anyone wants to plant trees on their marginal cropland and get paid to do it, this program is perfect for them. With the signup incentive, the cost share rates, and annual payment on poorer crop ground, it pencils out very well for a landowner's bottom dollar."

There is no Highly Erodible Land index requirement or a maximum amount for acres offered in Early Successional SAFE. Producers in Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette and Winneshiek counties in Iowa can submit offers to enroll cropland acres for 10 to 15 years. To be eligible for this signup, land must meet basic CRP eligibility requirements. CRP rental rates increased in October, 2008. For more information, contact Greg Schmitt at 563-422-6201, your district forester, or your local FSA office.

## **Forest Service Wins Two Court Decisions in Wisconsin**

Judgements in favor of the US Forest Service were recently received on two vegetation management projects on the Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forest in Northern Wisconsin. On January 12th, District Court Judge Lynn Adelman of the Eastern District Court ruled that the Forest Service had adequately addressed cumulative effects in the Twentymile Project on the Great Divide Ranger District. This project includes over 9,000 acres of vegetative management. The plaintiffs in the case were the Habitat Education Center out of Madison, WI and the Environmental Law and Policy Center from Chicago. They claimed that the Forest Service failed to properly consider the effects of the project on forest species like the American Pine Marten, Northern Goshawk, and the Red-shouldered Hawk.

On March 19th, the same judge also ruled in favor of the Forest Service on similar grounds on the Fishbone Project, on the Washburn Ranger District. This project would impact approximately 5,000 acres within a 22,000 acre project area.

These decisions are good news for finally moving the implementation of the 2004 Forest Plan along but on March 13th the plaintiffs appealed the ruling in the Twentymile Project to the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals and have asked for a stay in awarding any timber sales in the area.

## **Wisconsin COVERTS Project Expands to Include Illinois Residents**

### *Applications Due by June 15th*

Building on its success, the Wisconsin Coverts Project will be expanding to two workshops in 2009. The traditional Wisconsin workshop for private forest landowners will be held August 13 - 16 at Kemp Natural Resources Station near Woodruff, WI. A second workshop targeting absentee landowners who own land in Wisconsin, but reside in Illinois is being supported by the T. Stanton Armour Chicago Land RGS Chapter. This workshop will be held at the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation in Dundee, IL from August 27 - 30. These 3-day sessions have had rave reviews from past attendees that have become Covert Cooperators through past workshops.

Now starting its 16th year, 374 cooperators have attended these workshops. Sharing with others what they have learned these Coverts Cooperators have influenced the management of over 434,000 acres of land in Wisconsin. This workshop is highly recommended for those landowners interested in better understanding their role as stewards of their property. For additional information on the workshop contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or by email at [jlnack@wisc.edu](mailto:jlnack@wisc.edu). Attendance is limited. More information is available on the Coverts Project website at [http://forestandwildlifecology.wisc.edu/wl\\_extension/wicovertsproject.html](http://forestandwildlifecology.wisc.edu/wl_extension/wicovertsproject.html). Deadline for applications is June 15th.

## **Missouri Private Landowner Workshop on April 18th**

The Mid-Missouri Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society and the Missouri Department of Conservation are once again sponsoring a Forest Management Workshop for Private Landowners on Saturday, April 18th on the Bill Haag property near Portland. Starting at 9 AM, the workshop will include forestry and wildlife specialists discussing tree identification, cost share opportunities, forest and wildlife management, and timber harvest methods. An optional dawn tour to listen for drumming grouse is also available. For information call Josh Stevens at 573-592-1400, ext. 4.

## **Forest Management Guidelines for Michigan Publication Now Available**

The Michigan Society of American Foresters has put together a publication of forest management guidelines for both professional

foresters and landowners to assist in the management of our forest resource

The forest management guidelines recognize the renewable nature of forests and the influence of forest management practices on the many uses of the forest including water, recreation, wildlife, timber, and aesthetics. Because of the diversity of forest conditions, values, and ownerships, no set of management guidelines can cover all situations. Professional and landowner judgment must combine scientific knowledge with these guidelines to determine management practices for a particular property.

The goal of these guidelines is to provide for conservation and stewardship of all forest lands in Michigan. The Michigan Society of American foresters challenges landowners, forest managers, forest industries, and timber harvesting contractors to follow these guidelines. They provide a common sense approach to better manage the forest lands of the state. This publication can be found at <http://michigansaf.org/Business/MSAFguide/MainPage.htm>

---

### Upcoming RGS "Habitat" Events in the Region

April 18 - Missouri Forest Management Workshop for Private Landowners near Portland, MO. Contact Josh Stevens at 573-592-1400, ext 4 for more info

April 20 - Wildlife Habitat in Early Successional Forests Workshop at Michigan Technological University in the U J Noblet Forestry Building, Houghton, MI. Contact Michael Rose at 906-281-0899 for info

April 25 - Intro to the Outdoors Youth Education Day near Marshfield, WI, sponsored by the West Central Wisconsin RGS Chapter. Contact Rich Chronquist at 715-387-1163 for info

April 25 - Habitat Work Day on the Oconto Co. Forest near Breed, WI. Contact Dave Bartz at 920-743-6004 for info

May 16 - Habitat Work Day on the Eagle River/Florence District of the Cheq/Nicolet National Forest. Contact Dave Bartz at 920-743-6004 for info

June 15 - Sign Up Deadline for WI Coverts Workshops, Contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or email at [jlack@wisc.edu](mailto:jlack@wisc.edu)

June 20 - Habitat Work Day on the Cheq/Nicolet National Forest near Laona, WI. Contact Dave Bartz at 920-743-6004 for info

August 13 to 16 - WI Coverts Workshop, Contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or email at [jlack@wisc.edu](mailto:jlack@wisc.edu)

August 27 to 30 - WI Coverts Workshop in Illinois, Contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or email at [jlack@wisc.edu](mailto:jlack@wisc.edu)

---

### 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  
Gary Zimmer, Sally B Searle Senior Regional Biologist, Ruffed Grouse Society  
P O Box 116 Laona, WI 54541 Phone (715) 674-7505 email [rgszimm@newnorth.net](mailto:rgszimm@newnorth.net)

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](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)

---

## **RGS Biological Program: The 2009 Annual Report Summary**

Our biologists continued to be a crucial voice for RGS this year by providing their expertise to the state and federal national resource agencies, the media, our members and the general public. Their work as successful fundraisers for habitat projects has enabled RGS to extend our area of influence in 2009. Several of their most critical accomplishments at the national and state level are detailed below.

**This list is a brief summary – for a more complete list please contact your regional biologist.**

### **National/Regional Level Activities:**

#### **Media**

Biological expertise was provided at the 2009 SHOT Show and the RGS National Grouse and Woodcock Hunt, as well as many various regional events.

RGS was represented at meetings for industry leaders: including the US Forest Service, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Lake States Resource Alliance, Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association among others. Work was also completed on the Woodcock Initiative.

Along with participation in numerous media, television and radio interviews, RGS biologists served as expert resources for many newspaper and magazine articles in various publications throughout the year, resulting in a greater outreach of the RGS mission.

#### **Habitat Work and Funds Raised**

A combined total of \$359,000 in gifts and grants was raised for RGS habitat work in 2009, not including funds raised for projects occurring in Alaska.

Revised state maps, illustrating the locations of RGS habitat projects and the number of acres affected by projects, were provided at every banquet.

RGS habitat equipment was used to create grouse and woodcock habitat on 13,504 acres of land throughout the Midwest and Northeast.

#### **Membership Interaction**

Regional quarterly FAN (Forest Action Network) newsletters were e-mailed to members, and continue to be available on the website.

The 2009 regional grouse and woodcock forecasts were completed and available on our website this past July.

The biologists helped staff numerous chapter banquets and events throughout the regions, and provided biological expertise and presentations where appropriate.

Each biologist also responded on an individual basis to member and public inquiries for information, and provided consultations to private landowners.

#### **Alaska**

The Outdoor Heritage Foundation (OHF) for Grouse Ridge Rangers held an annual youth hunter safety and shotgun training program again this year and raised

\$6,000. The OHF for the Rabbit Creek Range held a similar event, and raised \$5,000. The event offered hunter safety training as well as sporting clays exercises.

A "Becoming an Outdoors Woman" RGS event helped to introduce participants to the outdoor lifestyle.

Under Broken Wings held another local pheasant hunt for youth this year and raised \$4,000.

The annual fun shoot raised over \$2,000 this year, and included sporting clays, raffles and lunch.

The Anchorage chapter provided financial support for the study being done by Alaska Pacific University and the University of Alaska regarding the transplanting of ruffed grouse in the Matanuska Valley. This is the second year they have provided a scholarship of \$2,000 to a biology graduate student.

A total of \$22,000 was raised in Alaska this year.

### **Georgia**

The North Georgia RGS chapter, in partnership with the Department of National Resources and US Forest Service, conducted an annual grouse drumming survey in northern Georgia in April of 2009.

Volunteers were engaged in project planning on the Chattahoochee National Forest. Several early successional habitat projects have been closely monitored by the North Georgia Chapter volunteers, meeting an important need in the conservation community.

### **Illinois**

A coverts workshop was promoted in conjunction with the coverts Coordinator for Illinois residents with landholdings in Wisconsin.

Assistance with a local chapter's youth day event was provided, along with aiding in preparations for the annual chapter banquet.

### **Indiana**

RGS volunteers have been a very vocal part of renewed interest in early successional habitat. They attended a series of meetings held by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to formulate a plan to address the severe lack of habitat and dramatically reduced grouse numbers in the state.

Steve Backs, the longtime game bird biologist for the DNR, wrote an excellent piece entitled "The Other Silent Spring – Disappearing Birds of Young Forests", which RGS printed and developed into a widely-distributed publication. The article continues to enjoy marked success and has been reprinted in many publications throughout the Northeast.

### **Iowa**

RGS support for two ongoing habitat projects on state lands in northeast Iowa was coordinated.

A presentation was given at a private landowner workshop, which was coordinated by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). RGS also participated in meetings with Iowa DNR foresters and Area Wildlife Managers.

## **Maryland**

RGS continues to collaborate with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Wildlife Management Institute to implement a woodcock management project. The project will be at the Mt. Nebo Wildlife Management Area in memory of Al Geis. RGS, along with Geis' family and friends, will be overseeing the long-term project.

## **Michigan**

RGS acquired a new ASV PT-100 forestry machine with mulcher, along with a truck and trailer for hauling the equipment. Along with members, RGS facilitated effective operation of machines on state and private land management projects.

Grants for RGS equipment acquisition and habitat work projects were secured.

RGS is involved in four ongoing habitat management projects in the state.

RGS was represented on the Coordinating Council for Michigan Bird Conservation Initiative and the Upper Peninsula Department of Natural Resources Habitat Work Group.

Six on-site private land habitat consultations were conducted.

RGS participated in numerous meetings related to habitat management with local governmental and non-governmental organizations related to habitat management.

## **Minnesota**

RGS provided approximately \$9,000 in funding to restore important shrubland habitats on the Sax-Zim Wildlife Management Area near Eveleth.

A coalition of wildlife conservation organizations, including RGS, continued to work with the Department of Natural Resources on a \$3.8 million proposal to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council to expand shrubland habitats in north-central Minnesota.

RGS continued to interact with various county land departments to expand public understanding of the RGS mission, including efforts to reach private landowners with forestlands adjacent to county lands.

## **Missouri**

Grants were secured for the financial support of the ongoing River Hills project, and payments to project cooperators were coordinated. Since the onset of the River Hills Project in 2003, \$190,000 has been raised to support young forest management activities on approximately 3,200 acres in the project area.

A chapter sponsored private landowner workshop was arranged, along with an annual chapter banquet.

Participated in meetings with state and federal representatives regarding habitat projects.

## **New Jersey**

In conjunction with the New Jersey Early Successional Habitat Alliance RGS worked to advance management and monitoring of woodcock in the southern part of the state. RGS is taking on the role of coordinator for the BCR 30, the Mid-Atlantic Coast



component of the Woodcock Initiative under the auspices of the Wildlife Management Institute.

Chapters continued to take the lead on habitat management initiatives on public lands throughout the state, including the Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and most recently the Manahawkin Wildlife Management Area.

### **North Carolina**

The Jerry Smathers Memorial Project at Cold Mountain State Game Lands continues to progress.

The Asheville Chapter, in conjunction with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, worked to complete a road project that provides access to hundreds of acres of forest. A 140-acre timber sale has been marked and is ready to be cut.

The Franklin Chapter worked with the US Forest Service to seed openings and trails with RGS Trail Mix. Volunteers and staff attended meetings and wrote letters to support timber and wildlife projects on the National Forests in the western part of the state.

### **Ohio**

A second year of contract work to clear exotic shrubs from reclaimed mine lands in favor of native shrubs and grasses on the Wayne National Forest was completed. The total project will impact more than 800 acres.

The Cincinnati chapter funded a clover seeding project on the Shawnee State Forest.

### **Pennsylvania**

RGS continued to oversee major projects throughout the state, including projects on game lands, state forests, Corps of Engineers land and private lands, and has impacted tens of thousands of acres.

RGS anticipates it will be managing forestlands owned by CONSOL Energy for grouse and woodcock habitat in southwestern Pennsylvania on two tracts of land totaling nearly 7,000 acres.

Grouse and woodcock habitat management is now approaching 2,000 acres at Raystown Lake. Two chapters combined funds to install another logging road at SGL 110 in Berks County, helping to extend an already large and lengthy project on that game lands.

Two timber sales have been let on the 2,300 acres where RGS was granted timber rights, and the cutting is intended to serve as a forest management model. Proceeds will go into the RUFF (Restoring Upland Forests' Future) endowment for the biologists.

### **Tennessee**

A cooperative effort with the University of Tennessee is underway to improve education and research on oak management and prescribed burning. This includes RGS authoring a chapter focused on early successional oak forests in a manual aimed at private landowners who wish to maintain oak on their land.

RGS volunteers and staff continue to work proactively with the Forest Service to support timber and wildlife management projects on the Cherokee National Forest.

### **Virginia**

Cooperative efforts with the George Washington National Forest staff and other public and private partners to develop the Wallace Tract Woodcock Project progressed this year. The project, which includes nearly 800 acres of land, will likely utilize a stewardship agreement where the value of harvested timber pays for other non-commercial habitat work adjacent to the Cowpasture River in Bath County.

A new chapter near Richmond has started planning grouse and woodcock educational workshops to be held in 2010.

### **West Virginia**

RGS is working with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Monongahela National Forest to develop a stewardship agreement on the Buzkirk Tract near White Sulphur Springs. Timber value would be used to pay for additional non-commercial management such as pole-timber regeneration and seeding and day-lighting of roads.

RGS also signed a Master Stewardship Agreement with the Forest Service Regions 8 and 9, which will facilitate the supplemental agreements for forest specific projects.

In conjunction with the West Virginia DNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, RGS continued a 72-acre alder and aspen management project on private lands adjacent to the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge. An additional 15 to 20 acres of alder and aspen regeneration were completed in 2009, making the 10-year project about 25% complete.

### **Wisconsin**

The acquisition of a new ASV PT-100 forestry machine with mulcher and a truck and trailer for hauling the equipment was coordinated. Operation of the machine on state and federal land management projects was planned, and future private land projects were organized with the help of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Grants were secured for equipment acquisition, habitat work projects and program support.

RGS conducted field reviews of nine existing or proposed Management Area Projects. RGS involvement in six ongoing habitat management projects and five on-site private land habitat consultations were coordinated.

RGS provided comments on proposals of numerous state and federal wildlife agencies, as well as attending many of the different organizations' meetings relating to habitat management.

Oral testimony at a Congressional Hearing on Forest Issues in Northern Wisconsin was presented by RGS. A Cost Share Agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for woodcock management work was finalized.

In partnership with federal and state agencies, RGS completed annual ruffed grouse drumming and breeding bird surveys.

**Northeast Regional Report:**

In 2009 RGS was in process of filling the open biologist position in the Northeast area. Biologist Andy Weik, woodcock biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's at Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge in Maine, joined RGS in January, 2010. A detailed report of the states in his region –Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont – along with Canada, will be covered in entirety in next year's biological program annual report. Read more about Andy in the Ruffed Grouse Society magazine's Spring 2010 issue *Staff and Board Updates*.

**RGS biologists are:**

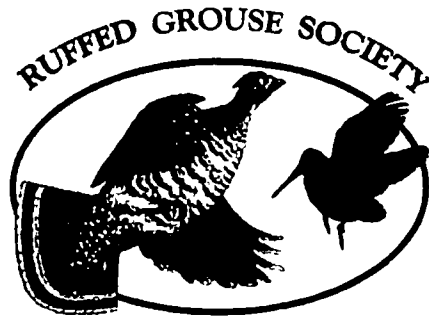
Mark Banker, Senior Regional Biologist, Southern Appalachians

Dan Dessecker, Director of Conservation Policy, Minnesota

Andrew Weik, Northeast Regional Biologist

Gary Zimmer, Sally B. Searle Senior Regional Biologist, Western Great Lakes

The Eastern Great Lakes biologist position is vacant at this time.



*Hunters were the first Conservationists  
The Ruffed Grouse Society and its members continue that great tradition*

**THE RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY  
2008 – 2009 “RUFF” CAPITAL CAMPAIGN  
(Restoring Upland Forests’ Future)**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Established in 1961, the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is the only international wildlife conservation organization dedicated to promoting conditions favorable for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and related early forest wildlife in order to sustain our hunting tradition and outdoor heritage.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) has launched the RUFF Capital Campaign to raise \$5 million over the next two years. These funds, when added to RGS’ existing endowment funds of \$6 million, will fully



endow the Society’s team of six biologists (\$4 million) and fund the purchase of a headquarters building for the Society (\$1 million). This campaign will enable the RGS to expand projects and activities that further the RGS mission of enhancing habitat for wildlife that rely on early successional forests for survival.

## **WHO WE ARE**

The Ruffed Grouse Society's membership consists primarily of grouse and woodcock hunters who support science-based conservation and management efforts to ensure the future of all wildlife species, both hunted and non-hunted, that depend upon early successional forests. The RGS, headquartered in Coraopolis, PA, employs a team of five wildlife biologists who work with private landowners and local, state and federal governmental agencies interested in improving habitat for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other songbirds and wildlife that require similar habitat. The Society does this through individualized programs to help private and public landowners and by working with government agencies to develop a science-based body of laws, regulations and practices that encourage ecologically sound forest management practices.

The RGS team also includes regional directors who help organize and sustain local chapters whose members share a common interest and passion for these birds and other wildlife. These chapters not only provide a local focus and kinship for the sport; they also support land management projects initiated and supported by the Society. Local chapters sponsor banquets and other events that bring people with common interests together and raise funds that further the RGS' conservation, education, habitat management and research programs. These events help promote conservation and recruit new members, including youth and women.

## **WHAT WE ARE ABOUT**

RGS activities focus on hunting ruffed grouse and woodcock and enjoying the environment in which they live and share with other wildlife. In order to preserve this legacy it is vital to secure the habitat that provides them with food, cover from predators, shelter and a place

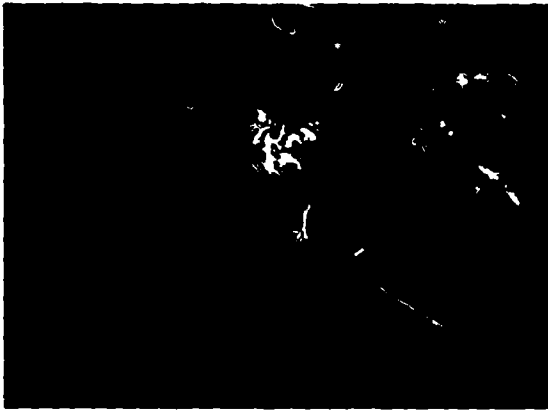


to breed and rear their young. As part of its mission, the RGS

- (1) emphasizes active management of young forests or “habitats” by using tools, like controlled fire and forest cutting, recognized as being effective by Aldo Leopold, the American father of wildlife management.
- (2) educates the public about the habitat requirements of game and non-game birds explaining that the undergrowth provided by the young forests that they live in, unless actively managed, will give way to larger trees that shade out the plants that are home to ruffed grouse and woodcock, as well as many songbirds, rabbits and deer.
- (3) cultivates public support for active forest management demonstrating that clear-cutting as a forest management tool, when properly applied, is both necessary and ecologically sound.

*RGS is also about enjoyment*—walking in the woods and pausing at the sound of what seems to be an old John Deere tractor and realizing it is a grouse drumming in spring, going afield with the expectation of bagging a “partridge” or a “timber doodle,” or being overtaken with pride as your dog carries its head high as it moves into the wind, locks on point and waits for you to flush the bird. RGS members understand uttering an “aw shucks” and being completely surprised when the bird flushes across an opening and evades what they thought were well-placed number 8s. They appreciate opportunities to invite a friend to share a fine meal of grouse and all the trimmings and listening to stories of their hunting experiences. RGS members enjoy banquets where friends with a common interest in conservation come together to have fun and help provide the funding needed to make it all happen.

Perhaps most important of all: RGS is not just about its members today. It is also about our grandkids and their kids, for without the RGS’ work, these places will not be around for them or the birds to enjoy.

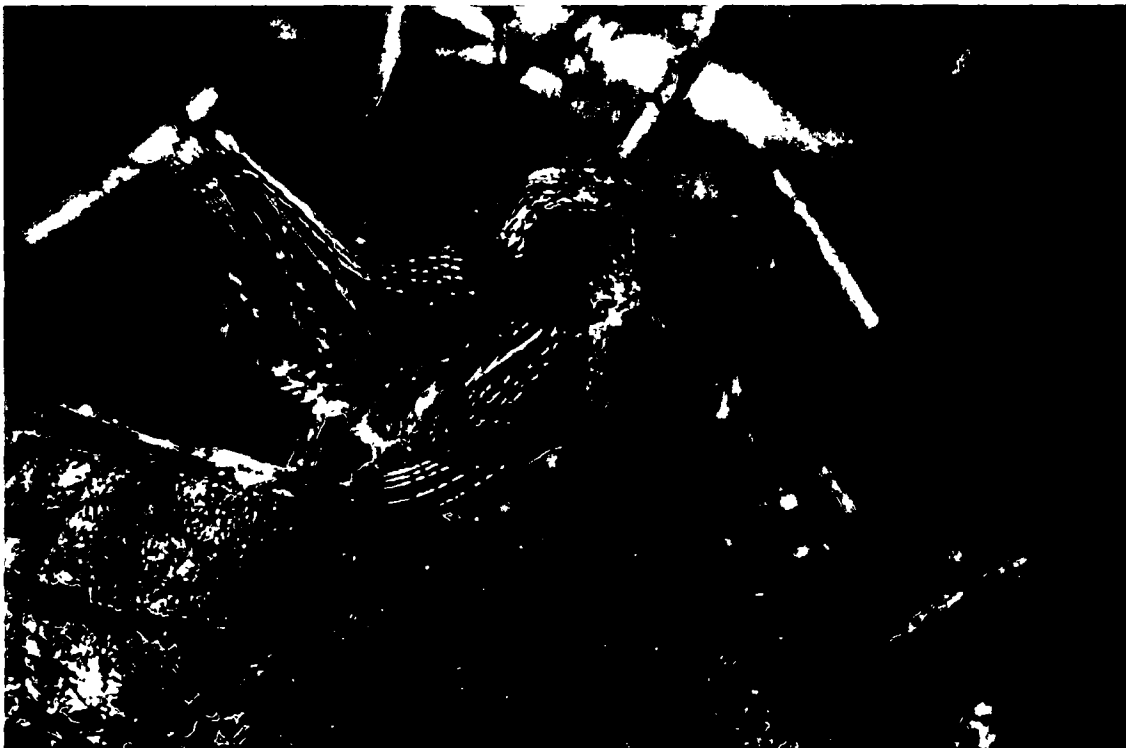


### **FULFILLING THE RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY MISSION**

The work of the RGS includes:

- *Helping* assure that the traditions and ethics of hunting that have been given to us are passed on to those who succeed us
- *Promoting* a “code of ethical behavior” characterized by respect for our game resources, expectations with regard to the hunting experience and an unwavering commitment to proper stewardship of that resource
- *Enhancing*, through ecologically sound wildlife management practices, the environment for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other forest wildlife including at least 43 species of neo-tropical songbirds.
- *Conducting* and/or sponsoring research that will lead to a better understanding of the biology and ecological requirements of these species
- *Sponsoring* land management programs on private and public lands that will maintain or enhance the environment for these species
- *Engaging* shooting sportsmen and women and informing them of the past, present and future of the sport so as to enable our members to fully appreciate its values and the resources necessary to sustain it for future generations

- *Educating* the public and legislative bodies about:
  - The need to manage forest lands scientifically and ensure that those who manage the land understand that nature is dynamic and that the plants that provide birds the cover, food, shelter from predators and a place to rear their young will, without active management, be replaced by plants that do not meet these requirements
  - Ways to provide incentives for landowners to manage for ruffed grouse and American woodcock and wildlife in general
  - Ways to encourage and provide public access to the places where ruffed grouse, woodcock, and other related wildlife live so that they can be enjoyed
  - The economic contributions associated with the recreational pursuit of these birds





## CAMPAIGN GOAL

The goal of the 2008-09 Ruffed Grouse Society RUFF Capital Campaign is to raise \$5 million dollars. These funds will be used to

- Increase the RGS endowment by \$4 million to reach \$10 million and fully fund the RGS' biologists and their essential work
- Enable RGS to purchase a headquarters building for \$1 million.

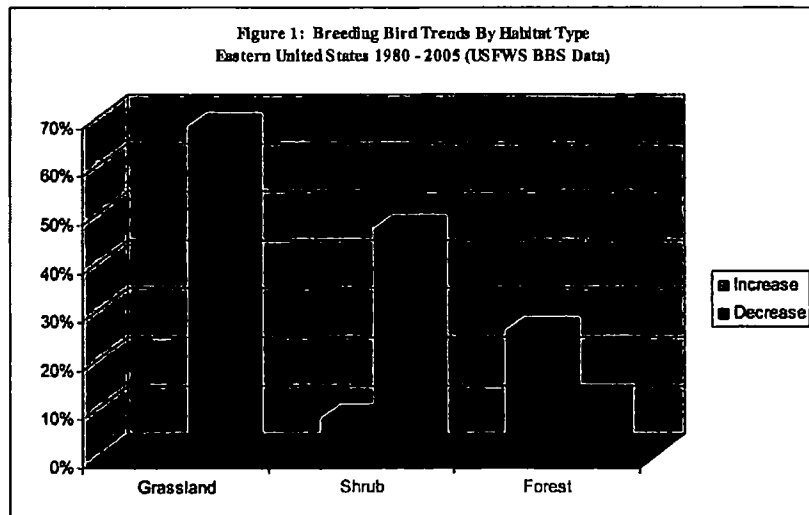


At present RGS has about \$3.5 million in its endowment. It also has the timber rights on 2,300 acres of land donated by the R. K. Mellon Foundation worth between \$2.6 and \$3 million. Together these assets total about \$6 million. Therefore, to meet its endowment and property objectives, RGS must raise \$5 million.

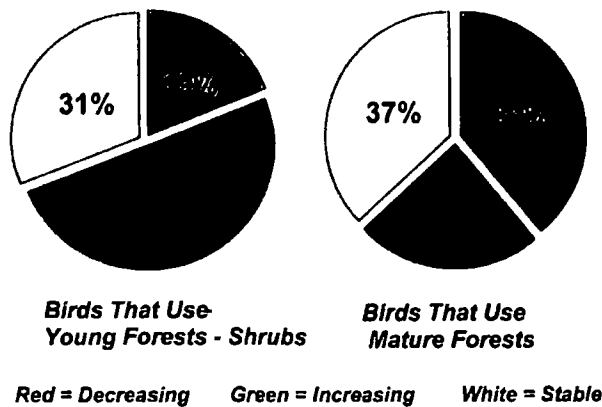
## STATEMENT OF NEED

**The Problem:** As a result of changing demographics people are becoming less rural and more urban and as a consequence there has been a loss of understanding about man's relationship with the land. We see society transitioning from a "conservation" ethic (implying "wise-use") to a preservation ("hands off") approach. At the same time, the public has a growing concern for the environment. That concern, coupled with the hands off approach, has created a media driven public perception that we are running out of trees and that the only good tree is a mature tree. Since perception often drives policy, new laws and regulations based on misperception and poor science make it increasingly difficult for natural resource professionals to manage forests in a scientifically based fashion.

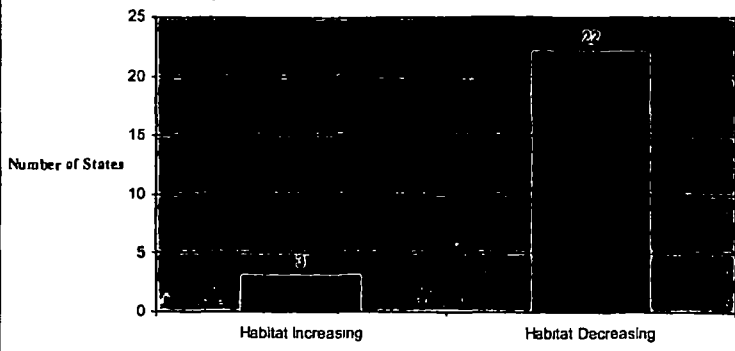
As a result, the nation is losing its diversity of forested habitats as the young forests are replaced with taller tree species that shade out the young forest species. To the wildlife whose survival depends upon a range of age classes, including early successional or young forests, this situation is critical. (See Figures 1 -5) As an example of this negative trend, the ruffed grouse is listed as a “species of greatest conservation need” in *all* of the northeastern states except Maine - largely as a result of this trend toward more mature forests.



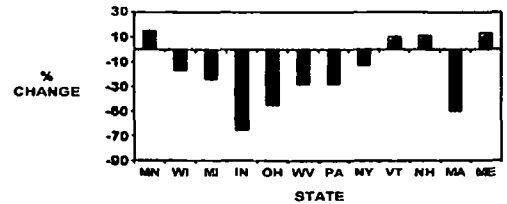
**Figure 2: Breeding Bird Population Trends**  
Eastern United States 1980 - 2005 (USFWS BBS Data)



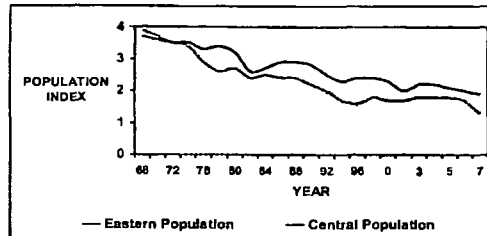
**Figure 3: Ruffed Grouse habitat is decreasing in most states in the eastern United States**  
Adopted from USDA Forest Service FIA Data



**Figure 4: Young (1-20 years old) deciduous forest habitat trends (1985 – 2005) – USDA Forest Service FIA Data**



**Figure 5: American Woodcock population trends – by Survey Region - US Fish & Wildlife Service Data 2007**



**THE SOLUTION: Biologists Who Address the Problem:** The Ruffed Grouse Society currently has five professional wildlife biologists assigned to those states representing the primary ruffed grouse and woodcock habitat. (The Michigan biologist position is currently unfunded and vacant.) Their work is essential to the Society’s mission. Serving as biologists, conservationists, and wildlife consultants they

(1) Assist the Regional Directors in educating chapters and committee members about:

- Sound forest management practices
- Ways to conduct a local habitat management project
- How to engage in the legislative and regulatory processes at the local, state and federal levels in order to promote ecologically sound forest management practices on both public and private lands

(2) Educate the general public about the need to properly harvest trees to produce the early

successional forest habitats needed by a variety of wildlife.

- (3) Conduct and support research that furthers the RGS' mission
- (4) Engage in the legislative and regulatory process to educate legislators and policy makers about the benefits of providing incentives for landowners to manage for wildlife and the positive economic consequences that accrue to communities when they do.
- (5) Provide science-based advice and testimony in litigation over forest management plans and practices
- (6) Comment on forest management plans developed by public land management agencies
- (7) Assist private landowners who wish to manage their property for wildlife, including supporting the RGS' educational program, called "Coverts", which is specifically designed to serve private, non-industrial forest landowners
- (8) Serve on advisory boards for both public and private forest management bodies
- (9) Secure grant funding to support the mission
- (10) Partner with other organizations who share the mission
- (11) Assist in building the RGS membership base

**Funding the Biologists:** Each biologist costs the Ruffed Grouse Society approximately \$100,000 for salary, benefits, office, communications, vehicle and travel. By increasing the RGS endowment to \$10 million and using a 6% spending rate, the Society can fund all six biologists and their work. As a result RGS will be in a stronger position to grow its programs and expand its services, with clear benefits to forest habitat management and the wildlife that flourish in early successional forests.

**Purchasing a Building:** The Ruffed Grouse Society presently rents about 7,000 square feet of office space and 2,500 square feet of contiguous warehouse space for storing banquet merchandise. The

monthly rent is about \$9,500 (not including utilities). If RGS were to purchase a similar building, it would realize an annual savings of about \$100,000 that could be used for mission specific projects.

## CURRENT RGS PROGRAMS:

### Management Area Program (MAP) Acreage



The ultimate goal of the Ruffed Grouse Society is to create quality habitat for ruffed grouse and American woodcock and provide quality hunting in as

Over the past 20 years, the RGS has improved approximately 495,570 acres of forests and shrubland for grouse, woodcock and 43 species of songbirds and other wildlife across 28 states.

many places as possible. The intensive nature of managing for grouse and woodcock often means that months or years of work by the RGS biologists may be required before effective habitat management

results. No other nonprofit conservation organization focuses on grouse and woodcock, and very few actively manage for the other wildlife species that occupy grouse and woodcock habitat. Thus, none of the other conservation organizations have been able to match RGS' successful Management Area Program (MAP) in terms of creating new and improved habitat for grouse, woodcock and other early successional forest wildlife.

## Education Programs

**“Coverts”:** The vast majority of forests that support grouse and woodcock habitat are in private hands. Under its “Coverts” program, RGS has worked to establish university extension education programs for private landholders in 11 states. Although some states have renamed the program to give a more local flavor, the concept remains the same: intensive training in forest and wildlife management for private landowners with the expectation that they share their knowledge with others. These programs are run with an impressive amount of expertise and passion and are audited regularly by our biological staff. The RGS biologists often participate as lecturers at these training sessions.



Coverts A Wildlife Management Program For Private Landowner

**Workshops and Seminars:** RGS is widely recognized as the best source of information on grouse and woodcock ecology and management. The biological staff addresses dozens of professional, civic, private landowner, hunter, academic, and conservation groups every year in nearly every state



across the range of grouse and woodcock. They provide a mixture of practical advice on habitat management and the sound science supporting effective land management. Many times RGS biologists step in to train state and federal biologists on the specifics of managing for grouse and woodcock.

**Conservation Plans:** The “Ruffed Grouse Conservation Plan” was published in September, 2006. The Society coordinated the work of over 50 natural resource professionals in the United States and Canada to complete this range-wide assessment of ruffed grouse habitats and populations. This plan outlines the clear relationship between ruffed grouse and young forests and the very real danger to grouse, song birds and other early-forest wildlife when young forest habitats begin to disappear.

The "American Woodcock Conservation Plan" was coordinated by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, and the RGS wildlife biologists contributed their expertise by authoring several important chapters. This plan identifies specific habitat management steps required to restore American woodcock populations to levels found in the 1970s. The "American Woodcock Conservation Plan", viewed in concert with the "Ruffed Grouse Conservation Plan," paints a clear picture of the actions required to secure the future for ruffed grouse and woodcock as important elements of our wildlife heritage.

### Local Projects

The most tangible evidence of the RGS' efforts to fulfill its vision are



local habitat projects on public lands that

RGS has nearly 490 habitat/conservation projects to its credit.

increase the number of grouse, woodcock and other wildlife. RGS chapters consider such local projects as positive proof that their volunteer efforts are

worthwhile. RGS biologists work closely with local chapters and state and federal agencies to plan and



implement meaningful habitat projects on public property. Recently, the acquisition of heavy Caterpillar tree-harvesting equipment, made possible by a grant from the R. K. Mellon Foundation, has greatly enhanced the RGS' ability to implement management projects across the Eastern US and energize chapters that get involved. Nothing is more rewarding than

personally making a significant positive impact on wildlife habitat.

## Consulting

**USDA's Forest Service:** The USDA Forest Service administers vast tracts of national forest throughout the range of grouse and woodcock. In some states, particularly in the Appalachian Mountains, the majority of public land is National Forest, and its management is extremely important to the RGS' membership. RGS biologists spend countless hours attending public meetings and providing professional expertise on National Forest planning and management efforts. They often work for years with the Forest Service before a project is implemented or a plan is completed. It requires a tremendous amount of commitment to work so intensively with one agency. The eventual benefits are widespread and long-lasting, however, and very important in reaching the RGS' objectives.

**Advisory/Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) Review Boards:** In 2008 the RGS' Executive Director was invited to serve on the Board for the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. The RGS' biological staff represents the organization and its membership on numerous public and private advisory boards and steering committees that help chart the future of forest and wildlife conservation in North America. As an example, in 2006, a Society biologist was asked to serve on the newly formed Sporting Conservation Council. The 12-member Council is a fully sanctioned federal advisory committee designed to provide input to the Secretaries of the US Departments of Agriculture and the Interior on issues related to wildlife conservation and sport hunting. In addition, Society biologists have been utilized as third party auditors during forest certification reviews, another testament of the scientific expertise of this group.



**Private Land Consultations:** When individual and corporate forest landowners are interested in managing their land for grouse, woodcock and other wildlife, they often turn to



the RGS' biologists. The RGS currently does not charge for this service, which normally includes a personal visit and assistance connecting the landowner to the proper resources, but landowners often make a donation to help defray the cost. Since private lands contain the vast majority of the potential habitat, our biologists take the time to walk and talk with private landowners whenever asked.

## **Research**

### **National Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock Hunt (NGWH) provides longest running study:**

The National Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock Hunt in northern Minnesota provides an unparalleled opportunity to research the population ecology of these two important upland game birds. Because the NGWH is conducted in the same locale, at the same time each year and using the same methods, it provides an outstanding opportunity to study the annual variation of the local ruffed grouse population and how that variation relates to the birds' 10-year cycle. In addition, the NGWH gives natural resource professionals a first glimpse of the sex and age composition of the year's woodcock harvest which can provide insight into the reproductive success enjoyed by woodcock the previous spring. In 2006, a summary of the data collected during the hunt's first 25 years was published. Additional research findings from this important longitudinal study will be published in the scientific literature in 2008.



## **Partnerships**

**Partnerships with Government Agencies:** The biological staff works closely with federal, state and county agencies on projects of mutual interest. Often funds from the RGS are matched, sometimes several times over, by individuals and organizations to increase the impact on the ground. Our biologists

coordinate numerous such projects, many of which would not move forward without the involvement and persistence of the RGS staff.

**Partnerships with Conservation Groups:** In August 2000, representatives from 36 of the nation's leading wildlife conservation organizations met in Missoula, Montana, to discuss a shared vision. That vision—to build unity and harness the collective strength of sportsmen and women to address present and future wildlife conservation challenges—became the mission of the newly formed American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP). The Ruffed Grouse Society, a founding member, led this consortium in 2003. The Society plays an active role in AWCP, regularly developing positions on issues of national importance to forest wildlife management. Leadership positions are shared with the other partner organizations to garner additional support, resulting in a broad coalition of wildlife conservation groups providing the influence needed to turn these positions into policies. The success of this networking was witnessed by the passage of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 and the 2007/08 Farm Bill.

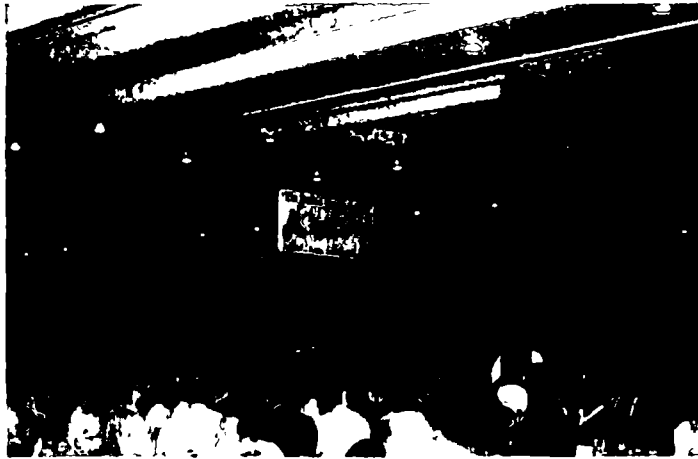
### **Fundraising**

**Grants for Conservation:** RGS currently has no formal development staff. Society biologists have taken on the task of submitting numerous grants to support on-the-ground habitat management, the acquisition of land management equipment and educational outreach to resource managers, private landowners, the media and the general public. In

\$443,000 in grant money was obtained in 2007 to support the RGS mission in nine states.

recent years RGS biologists have raised more than \$20,000 in Missouri for habitat management, over \$200,000 for equipment acquisition in the Northeast, \$25,000 in Minnesota for woodcock habitat development, \$8,000 to print and distribute the Ruffed Grouse Conservation Plan, and \$57,000 for youth education in Pennsylvania.

**Chapter Relations:** Each year, RGS chapters host fundraising banquets. Often it is the work of the



biologists that makes the difference between a chapter that merely survives and one that thrives. RGS biologists cover many states and chapters, with each chapter having diverse interests and expectations. It requires tremendous time management and people skills to maintain chapter interest, energy, and

involvement. And all of this is done with an eye on the RGS' ultimate goal: *improving the environment for ruffed grouse, woodcock and other wildlife of young forest habitats.*

**PLEASE JOIN THE RGS BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF IN THE EXCITING 2008-09 RUFF CAPITAL CAMPAIGN TO RAISE \$5 MILLION TO FULLY ENDOW THE SOCIETY'S BIOLOGIST POSITIONS AND PURCHASE A HEADQUARTERS BUILDING.**

To make a donation, please contact The Ruffed Grouse Society at 888.564.6747.

# Ruffed GROUSE SOCIETY

2008 RGS Banquet  
Program Cover with  
Corporate Sponsor Ads

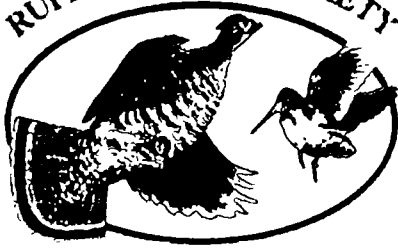


*Autumn Encounter*

Proudly presenting the Ruffed Grouse Society's 2008 Print of the Year,  
*Autumn Encounter* by Daniel Cliburn.

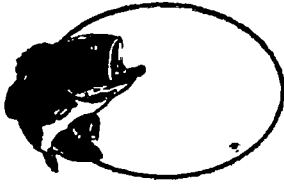
The Ruffed Grouse Society gratefully acknowledges its Corporate Sponsors (featured inside).

RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



# Corporate Sponsors

*The Ruffed Grouse Society gratefully acknowledges the support of its Corporate Sponsors. The work in which RGS is involved is critical to the well-being of young-forest wildlife. The special help extended to the Society by its conservation partners who have made the exceptional commitment of becoming Corporate Sponsors is deeply appreciated.*



sportDOG<sup>®</sup>  
BRAND  
Gear the way you'd design it.

 **POLARIS**  
The Way Out.

 **PURINA**®

 **BERETTA**

*Kimber*

**Remington**

**BOISE**®



 **FEDERAL  
PREMIUM**

**Smith & Wesson**®

**BOYT**

HARNESS  
COMPANY

**L.L.Bean**®

**STEINER**   
GERMANY

®

*Cabela's*

WORLD'S FOREMOST OUTFITTER

**LP**  
BUILDING PRODUCTS

**Ugly Dog**  **Hunting**®

 **CONSOL**

**FILSON**®  
Since 1897

**MeadWestvaco**

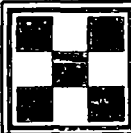


**CÆSAR  
GUERINI**

**ORVIS**®  
SPORTING TRADITIONS  
Since 1856

A M M U N I T I O N

# Partners in Conservation



PURINA



Hunting in the thick cover where ruffed grouse and American woodcock live demands much from both bird hunters and bird dogs.

To be successful, you've got to be ready. And a big part of being ready means having your canine hunting partner in top form, both in training and conditioning.

That's where Purina® Pro Plan® brand dog food helps provide the edge.

Purina, long dedicated to the welfare of sporting dogs, has for several years been a partner with the Ruffed Grouse Society in the campaign to improve the environment for young-forest wildlife.

As a Ruffed Grouse Society Conservation Partner, Purina plays a significant role in benefiting grouse, woodcock and the many other wildlife species that need young-forest cover to thrive.

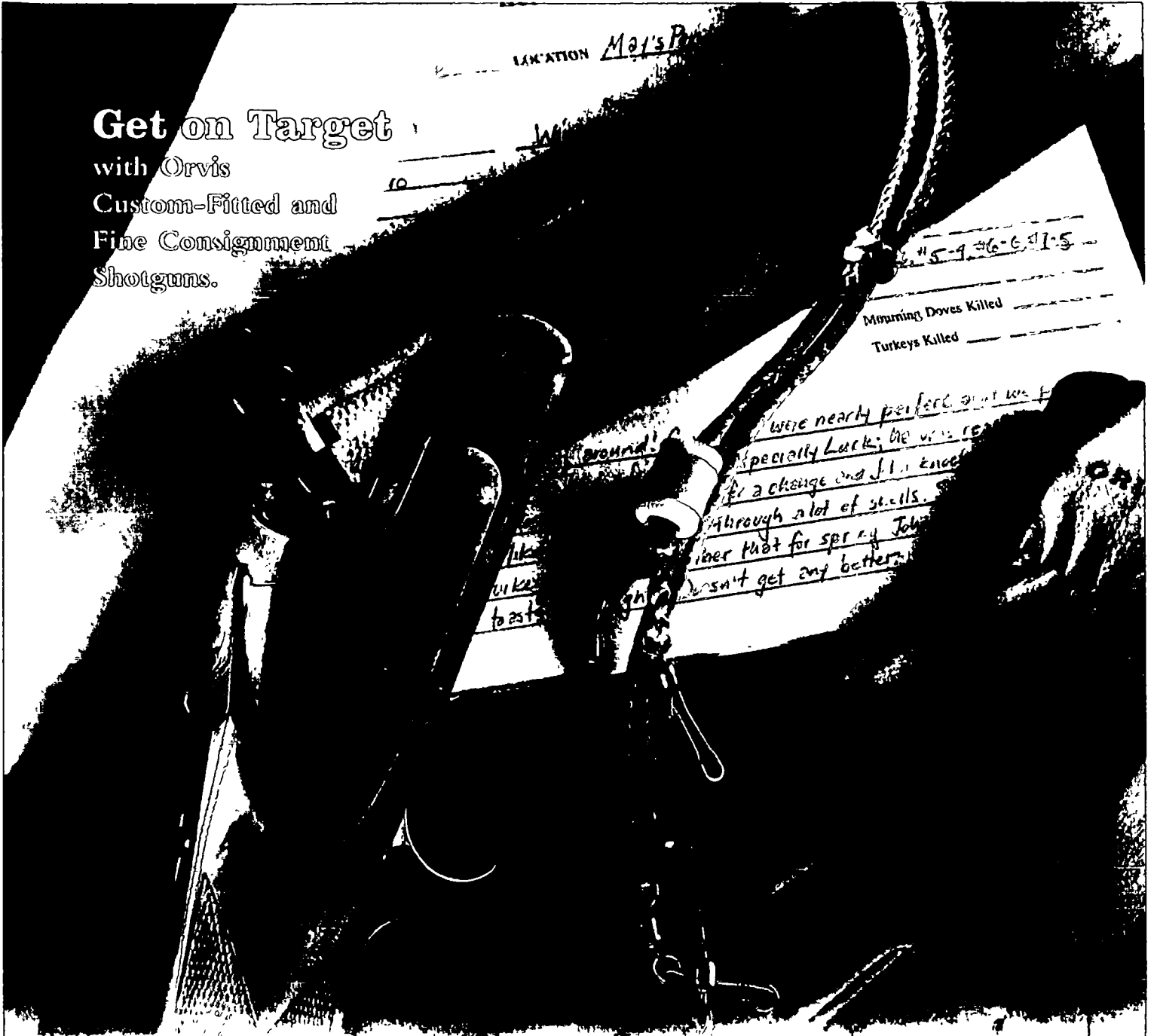
For more information about the care and feeding of working dogs go to [proplan.com/rgs](http://proplan.com/rgs).



# Get on Target

with Orvis

Custom-Fitted and  
Fine Consignment  
Shotguns.



## Custom-Fit and Consignment Shotguns

*Make your days afield more memorable than ever.*

Make your days of hunting and shooting more successful, enjoyable, and memorable. A gun custom-fitted to your specific build helps you mount, swing, and get on target with greater consistency. That consistency results in more hit birds and clays and more fun afield. Choose from our selection of custom styles and models of Caesar Guerini and Arrieta shotguns—our gunsmiths of 29 years will custom fit your gun to your specifications, so you can enjoy the benefits of a custom-fit shotgun for years. You'll find that the same care and expertise put into our

custom-fit shotguns also goes into selecting our fine-grade consignment shotguns, offered to you only after close inspection and pricing advice by our master gunsmiths. Thousands of fine sportsmen receive Orvis mailings and visit our Orvis stores and website to browse our selection, so your shotgun is sure to get the attention and the price it deserves. For help with your gun selection please, contact John Rano at The Orvis Gun Department at 802-362-2580, e-mail him at [ranoj@orvis.com](mailto:ranoj@orvis.com), or visit [www.orvis.com/customshotguns](http://www.orvis.com/customshotguns)

# ORVIS

EST. 1856

ONLY RANGER XP™ AND RANGER RZR™

THE POLARIS RANGER XP™ AND RANGER RZR™ ARE THE MOST VERSATILE UTVs IN THE WORLD. THEY CAN TAKE YOU TO THE MOST REMOTE LOCATIONS AND HAUL OUT THE BIGGEST TROPHIES. THEY CAN TAKE YOU TO THE MOST REMOTE LOCATIONS AND HAUL OUT THE BIGGEST TROPHIES. THEY CAN TAKE YOU TO THE MOST REMOTE LOCATIONS AND HAUL OUT THE BIGGEST TROPHIES.

Tackle the roughest terrain and haul out the big trophy with the RANGER XP. Take the tightest trails to the most remote sites with the RANGER RZR. Either way, you're taking the hunt to a new level.



For more information, see your local Polaris RANGER™ dealer or visit [polarisindustries.com](http://polarisindustries.com).

 POLARIS™  
**RANGER RZR™**  
RAZOR-SHARP SIDE X BIG PERFORMANCE.

 POLARIS™  
**RANGER™**  
HARDEST WORKING. SMOOTHEST RIDING.

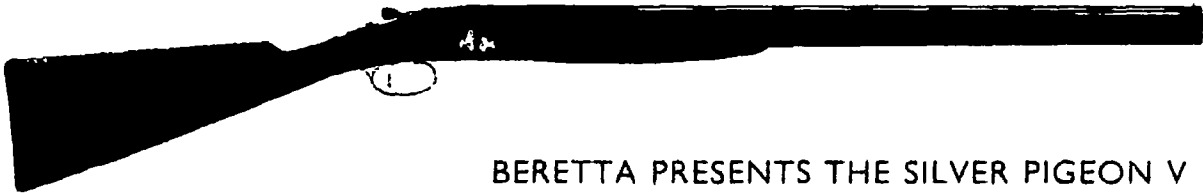
Vehicle depicted is actual photography provided by professional riders in a controlled environment. Polaris RANGER RZR™ and RANGER XP™ are general purpose recreational utility vehicles and are not intended for use in off-road public lands or paved surfaces. All Polaris vehicles will void dealer license. Polaris products are for use by persons 12 years old and older, able to grasp hand holds, and must wear safety harness. Always use seat belts at all times and use proper riding technique and proper riding ability. Never carry more than one passenger at any time. Avoid excessive speeds, sharp turns, being parked, operating in the terrain, P-dog and other off-road conditions. For more information, visit [polarisindustries.com](http://polarisindustries.com). © 2003 Polaris Industries Inc.





ONE LOOK AND YOU KNOW IT'S BERETTA.  
ONE TOUCH AND YOU KNOW IT'S THE BEST.

THE UPLAND SPORTSMAN COLLECTION  
687 SILVER PIGEON V, \$1,000 • MEN'S UPLAND GORDDURAN JACKET, \$195



### BERETTA PRESENTS THE SILVER PIGEON V

500 years of Italian craftsmanship yield flawless reliability and refinement in Beretta's Silver Pigeon V. Imitated but never equaled, the Silver Pigeon series is the world's finest collection of over-and-under shotguns, unrivaled in fit and feel. As one of its most distinctive members, the durable Silver Pigeon V includes 12- and 20-gauge models as well as 28-gauge and .410-bore shotguns. Each offers appropriate weight and a properly scaled frame for exceptional balance, instinctive pointability, and handling. Available in pistol and English grip versions, with color-cased frames and gold-filled game bird inlays, it's truly a masterwork. See it, and an extensive selection of upland clothing and accessories, at your Beretta dealer.

SHOP 24 HOURS A DAY AT [WWW.SHOPBERETTA.COM](http://WWW.SHOPBERETTA.COM)

FOR A FREE GUN LOCK, CATALOG OR INFORMATION ON BERETTA FIREARMS,  
SPORT CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES, OR TO LOCATE A DEALER NEAR YOU,  
VISIT [WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM](http://WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM) 800.636.3420.



[InsureYourGunRights.com](http://InsureYourGunRights.com)



# BERETTA

500 YEARS. ONE PASSION.

[WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM](http://WWW.BERETTAUSA.COM)

BOYT

BOYT HARNESS COMPANY

GENERAL PURPOSE SAFETY BELTS - ACCESSORIES

shock absorbers, fall arrestors

CLIMBING ACCESSORIES

collars, ladders, footholds, anchors, bags

WORKING ACCESSORIES

goggles, chisels, tools



# About the Print of the Year



The cover is *Autumn Encounter* by Daniel Cliburn of Covington, Georgia. As the Ruffed Grouse Society unveils its new Banquet Sponsor Rewards program with additional options for the sponsors, what was formerly known as the Habitat Sponsor Print, beginning with *Autumn Encounter*, becomes the RGS Print of the Year. The Habitat Sponsor Print has been the traditional means of recognizing the banquet sponsors' contributions. The Print of the Year will be presented to those who choose it over the alternatives. Prints may also be purchased by contacting Ruffed Grouse Society Headquarters at (888) 564-6747.

Daniel Cliburn, creator of the 2008 Print of the Year painting, started on his road to a painting career at an early age when he began drawing dinosaurs, which elicited the praise and encouragement from his parents that inspired him to continue drawing.

Now a full-time artist, he credits the help and encouragement of family and friends as the catalysts that assisted him to "finally start to take my artistic ability more seriously, instead of just a hobby."

With his three-year-old daughter Danielle as motivation, he feels driven to use his talents. "I look forward to sharing the love of art with her," he says.

For more of Daniel Cliburn's art, go to [www.daniel-cliburn.com](http://www.daniel-cliburn.com).

## New Sponsor Rewards Program

The Ruffed Grouse Society is revising its format for recognizing the contributions made by its banquet sponsors with a new program to reward the sponsors. This program, which went into effect Jan. 1, 2008, will partially replace the current program, whereby sponsors were presented a new "Sponsor Print" each year they became a banquet sponsor. The new program is intended to help the banquet committees retain existing sponsors and recruit new ones.

**The rewards program will provide sponsors with three options.**

- 1) A sponsor may elect to take a \$20 credit and use that credit to buy RGS merchandise on RGS' website. Once a sponsor receives a code with his or her sponsorship thank-you letter, the sponsor may elect to make the purchase on-line or call the RGS toll-free number (888) 564-6747.
- 2) A sponsor may elect to receive an unframed print, either the new 2008 Print of the Year or an available unframed Sponsor Print from a preceding year. Photos of past Sponsor Prints are available on the RGS website.
- 3) As a third option a sponsor may elect to participate in a national drawing at the end of the fall banquet season. There will be seven tickets drawn, where initially there were to be six drawn. The first winner would win the first item in the list (opposite) and so on until all tickets are drawn. The sponsors who elect this option will be assigned a ticket number, or numbers, for the drawing by RGS National. (One ticket for a \$250 sponsor; two tickets for a \$500 sponsor; and four tickets for a \$1,000 sponsor.)

**The following items will be offered as prizes:**

Guerini Forum grade O&U in 12-, 20- or 28-gauge – MSRP \$7,350

Kimber—winner's choice of the SXS or O&U Grade II 20-gauge SXS Valier – MSRP \$5,000, or Grade II 20-gauge O&U Marias – MSRP \$5,800

Kimber—winner's choice of the SXS or O&U Grade II 20-gauge SXS Valier – MSRP \$5,000, or Grade II 20-gauge O&U Marias – MSRP \$5,800

Guerini Magnus grade O&U in 12-, 20- or 28-gauge – MSRP \$3,495

Choice of any pair of Steiner binoculars with an MSRP of \$1,600 or less

Choice of any pair of Steiner binoculars with an MSRP of \$1,600 or less

**And NEW since the program's inception:**  
Cabela's \$1,000 gift certificate



OUR TRIBUTE TO  
**THUNDER.**

**THE CONSERVATION GUN OF THE YEAR.**

Lightning at the roar of wings, the Premier Ruffed Grouse Edition Over & Under has the same superb balance, awesome pointing characteristics and rugged reliability as our other Premier series shotguns, but showcases the Ruffed Grouse Society logo in gold on both sides of its deep-blued frame. A portion of the proceeds goes to support the Ruffed Grouse Society and its efforts. You'll find the only thing faster and smoother than a grouse in the timber, is the gun we built in its honor.

PREMIER RUFFED GROUSE EDITION


**PREMIER RUFFED GROUSE EDITION**

*Features: 20 gauge / 26" barrel / Oil-finished walnut stock and fore-end / Deep-blued receiver with gold Ruffed Grouse Society logo on both sides / Straight-grip, English-style stock / 5 ProBore™ choke tubes / Hunting Schnabeled fore-end / Solid barrel filets / 7mm rib / Ivory front bead and steel midpost / FAA-approved lockable hard case*

**Remington**®

C O U N T R Y

[www.REMINGTON.com/PremierOU](http://www.REMINGTON.com/PremierOU)



*Welcome*  
**FISHERMEN,  
HUNTERS,  
AND  
OTHER  
LIARS.**

Welcome, outdoorsmen! We built it just for you. It's true. Your local Bass Pro Shops® store is the only one of its kind. Sure, you'll discover in all our stores the same Low Price Guarantee, expert sales associates, and the best selection of outdoor products around. But the specific gear you'll find is unique to each location, because we understand that the Kansas grasslands are very different from Ohio hardwoods. And that's no lie.



**Outdoor World**



Shop online at  
[basspro.com](http://basspro.com)

For a FREE catalog  
1-800-BASSPRO

For an adventure in itself  
Visit Our Stores Nationwide



**FEDERAL  
PREMIUM®**  
AMMUNITION

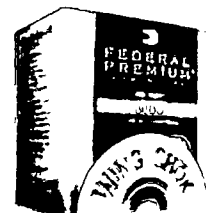


**This Dog Will Chase And Fetch All Day...  
If Your Shot Is True.**

*I wouldn't suggest taking your dog for a walk in muddy, briar-infested fields unless you're ready to shoulder your shotgun and fold a bird from 20 yards. A good dog knows when the upland season is on, and you'd better bet his adrenaline will be pumping long before he finds your first feathered target. Federal Premium® Wing-Shok® is the best at knocking down even the fastest birds. Its copper-plated Premium load will not only help fill your vest, it'll keep your four-legged hunting partner happy too.*



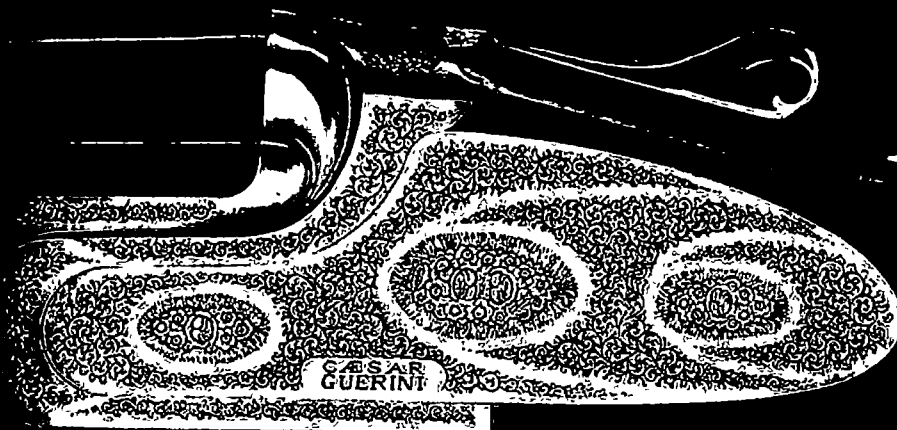
PROUD SPONSOR OF  
RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY  
HABITAT PROJECTS



www.federalpremium.com  
© 2007 FEDERAL PREMIUM

**Every Shot Counts®**

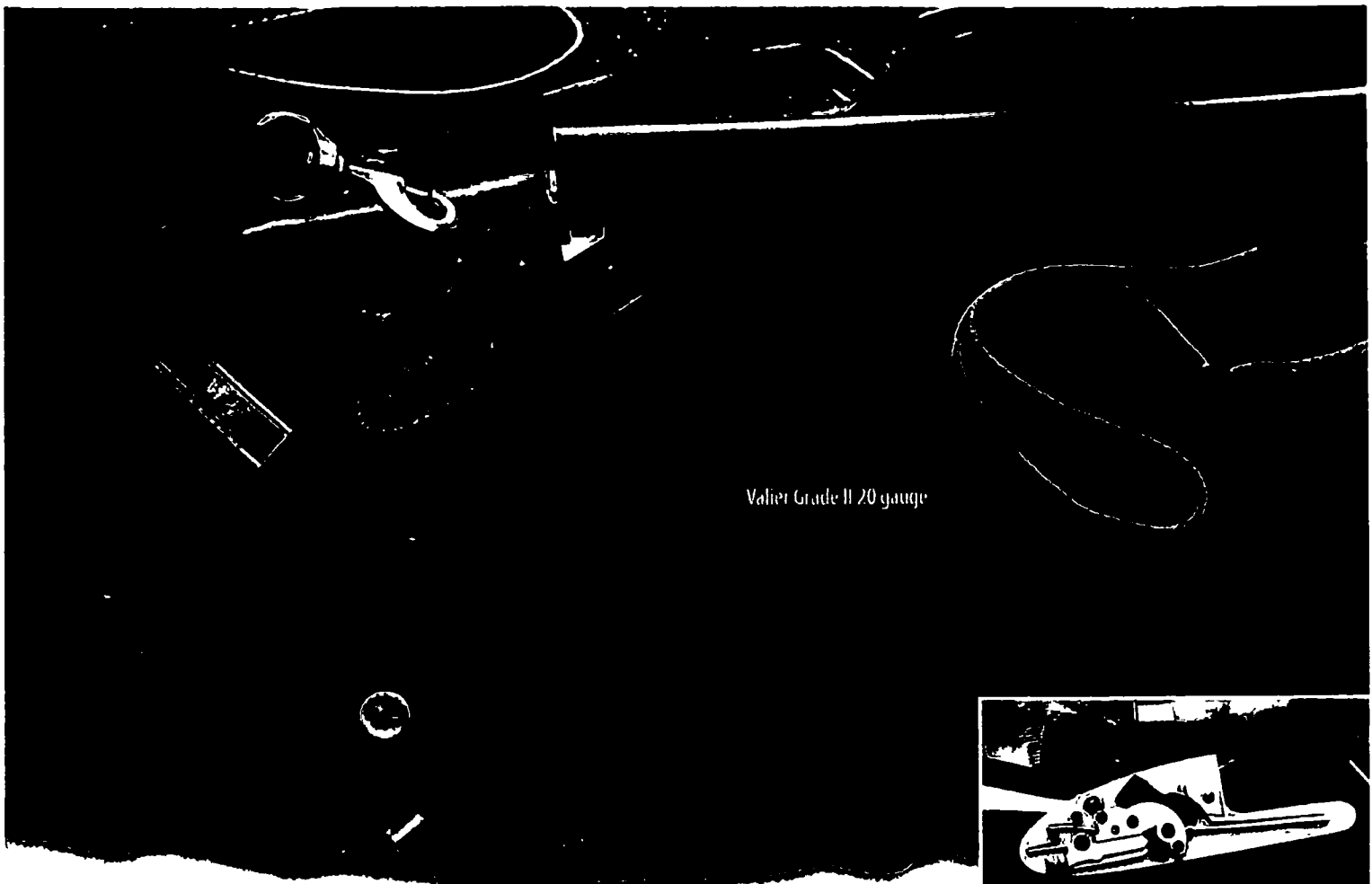
# The Essex... A Tradition of Quality, A Modern Classic.



The Essex Field over/under is a creation that bespeaks a level of old world quality and craftsmanship seldom found today. Fine English scroll-and-bouquet engraving on a hand polished coin receiver recalls classic design elements of the British gun making tradition. The barrels incorporate a solid and tapered top rib. A Deluxe Turkish walnut stock finely checkered to 26 lines-per-inch with a traditional oil finish makes the Essex an example of understated elegance that is destined to become a modern classic. Invest in a work of Italian art – the Essex – available only through authorized Caesar Guerini dealers.

 CAESAR  
GUERINI

(410) 901-1131 | [www.gueriniusa.com](http://www.gueriniusa.com)



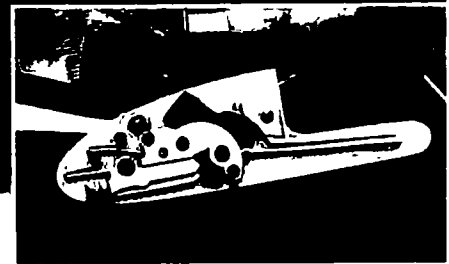
Valier Grade II 20 gauge

## A Best Gun. The Best Performance.

The Kimber® Valier is a lively seven-pin hand-detachable sidelock like an English best. Superior to five-pins, boxlocks and certainly to those with false sideplates, seven-pin sidelocks have an intercepting safety sear and an extra pin anchoring the bridge to provide added stability for the lock. Until now, they have been unaffordable, and Spanish copies have come up short. The Valier™ brings welcome change.

Available in 16 and 20 gauge, Valier shotguns are offered in two grades. Grade I is stocked in grade three Turkish walnut, has extractors, chrome-lined barrels and an articulated front trigger. Grade II models feature stunning grade four Turkish walnut and automatic ejectors. Both have traditional fixed chokes in IC/M.

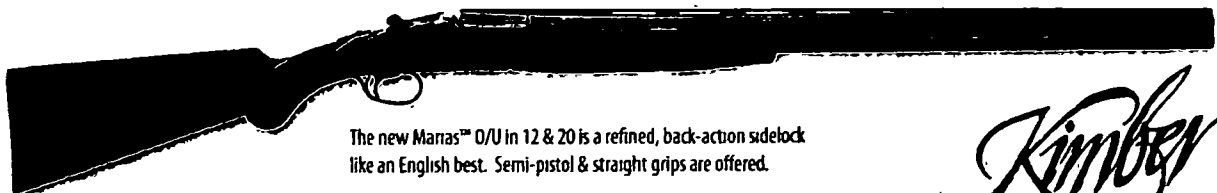
Kimber shotguns are sold directly to consumers or through dealers. Those interested should contact Richard Grozik at (888) 243-4522 x 237 or [shotguns@kimberamerica.com](mailto:shotguns@kimberamerica.com). For a limited time, an autographed copy of Grozik's book "Game Gun" is included with each purchase.



The Valier is a true back-action sidelock with exceptional trigger pulls and flawless function. Internal parts are hand-polished and jeweled.



Valier shotguns are available with three finishes – color case, blue and stunning bone charcoal (pictured). Barrels are Belgian rust blue



The new Maras™ O/U in 12 & 20 is a refined, back-action sidelock like an English best. Semi-pistol & straight grips are offered.

Information and specifications are for reference only and subject to change without notice. Firearm safety is every gun owner's responsibility. Use and store all firearms safely. Teach everyone in your home, especially children, proper firearm safety. Kimber firearms should only be purchased and used in complete compliance with all national, state and local laws. All suggestions for use in this ad or any Kimber literature must be taken within the context of these laws. Kimber firearms are shipped with a California-approved cable lock as a safety measure. Additionally, pistols are shipped in a lockable high impact case. Use of the cable lock at all times is encouraged when a firearm is in storage. Kimber owners may request a free cable lock by mail, include \$10 for postage and handling. Copyright 2006, Kimber Mfg., Inc.

For complete information on Kimber firearms please send \$2 to:  
Kimber, Dept. 909,  
One Lawton Street, Yonkers, NY 10705  
call (800) 880-2418  
or visit [www.kimberamerica.com](http://www.kimberamerica.com)



*Hunters were the first  
conservationists, and  
the Ruffed Grouse  
Society and its members  
continue that great tradition.*



## **This is the RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

### **Who We Are**

The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is a national conservation organization headquartered in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. The Society employs a team of wildlife biologists to work with landowners, both private and government – including on local, state and federal levels – who are interested in improving their holdings for ruffed grouse, woodcock and the other songbirds and wildlife that have similar requirements. The Society's field biologists provide individualized attention, with specific programs to help landowners, and by working with local, state and federal governments to develop land management assistance programs.

RGS also has a team of regional directors who help organize chapters with members who share a common interest in grouse and woodcock as well as other wildlife. These chapters help support land management projects that improve conditions for ruffed grouse, woodcock and the species that are associated with them. The chapters also sponsor banquets that bring people with common interests together socially to honor their peers and to raise funds to support our conservation programs.

RGS also sponsors shooting and hunting events to promote conservation and to raise funds to support its conservation programs.

### **What We Are About**

RGS is about ruffed grouse, woodcock and the other wildlife that share the places where they live. It is

about the environment or habitat that provides them with food, cover from predators, shelter and a place to breed and rear their young. It is about actively managing those young forests or "habitats" by using tools, such as controlled fire and forest cutting, recognized as effective by Aldo Leopold, the father of the wildlife management profession.

It is about educating the public concerning the habitat requirements of the birds and mammals, both game and non-game, of young forests. It is about explaining that these precious areas of young forest, unless actively managed, will give way to trees that will shade out the plants that are home to ruffed grouse, woodcock, many songbirds, rabbits and deer.

It is about gaining support to actively manage using controlled fire and timber harvest, and about putting forth a convincing argument that clearcutting as a forest management tool, when properly applied, is ecologically sound.

It is about walking in the spring woods and pausing at the sound of



PHOTO BY TIMOTHY C. FLANIGAN



what seems to be an old John Deere tractor and realizing it is a grouse drumming. It is about going afield with the expectation of bagging a grouse or "partridge." It is about being overtaken with pride as your dog carries its head high as it moves into the wind, locks on point and waits for you to flush the bird. It is about uttering an "aw shucks" and being completely surprised when the bird flushes across an opening and evades what you thought were well-placed number 8s.

It is about inviting friends to share a fine meal of grouse and all the trimmings and listening to how your spouse backed you up on the shot after yours felled a young aspen. It is about gatherings called banquets where friends with a common interest in these birds and their conservation come together to have fun and provide the funding needed to make it all happen.

It is really not about us at all, it is about our grandkids and their kids, for – without our help – these places will not be there for them or the birds to enjoy.

*Established in 1961 the Ruffed Grouse Society is the international wildlife conservation organization dedicated to promoting conditions suitable for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and related wildlife to sustain our hunting tradition and outdoor heritage.*

### **Mission**

Conservation, stewardship or "wise-use" of renewable natural resources, is the Ruffed Grouse Society's mission. We fulfill that mission by:

Enhancing, through ecologically sound wildlife management practices, the environment for ruffed grouse, woodcock and other forest wildlife that utilize or require thick, young forests

Conducting and/or sponsoring research that will lead to a better understanding of the biology and ecological requirements of these species

Sponsoring land management programs on private and public lands that will maintain or enhance the environment for these species

Educating the public and legislative bodies about the:

Economic contribution associated with the recreational pursuit of these birds

Need to scientifically manage forestlands with the awareness that nature is dynamic and that the plants that provide food, cover and shelter from predators, and a place to rear their young, will, unless they are actively managed, be replaced by plants that do not meet these requirements

Ways to provide incentives for landowners to manage for these species

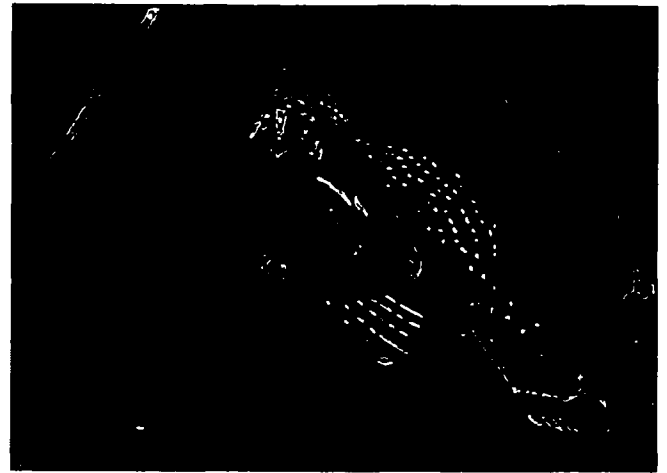
Ways to encourage and provide public access to the places where ruffed grouse, woodcock and other related wildlife lives so that they can be enjoyed

**LP Building Products** are made using wood from third-party certified wood procurement systems and certified forests.

The green attributes built into LP products are recognized in green building certification programs across North America.

Join LP in protecting and developing Ruffed Grouse habitat.

In the Lake States, where LP SmartSide® Trim & Siding are made, contact LP about forest land and ruffed grouse habitat management options.



For land management help, contact  
Larry Heathman  
715.224.2774  
larry.heathman@lpcorp.com

**LP**  
BUILDING PRODUCTS

**SMARTSIDE®**  
TRIM & SIDING

Proudly made in the Lakes States



LP OSB



LP TopNotch



LP TechShield



LP SolidStart



LP SmartSide



LP CanExel



LP Moulding

BUILD WITH US:

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LP AND LP PRODUCTS, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.LPCORP.COM](http://WWW.LPCORP.COM).



## LEGENDARY OUTFITTERS OF PREMIUM OUTDOOR GEAR SINCE 1961.

At Cabela's, we know taking care of the details is the best way to make sure your trips to woods and waters produce big memories. That's why we offer an incredibly comprehensive selection of hunting, fishing, camping and outdoor gear. All backed by our 100% Satisfaction Guarantee.

### 3 Ways To Shop

**CATALOG** - Call 800.761.0066 for a FREE Catalog

**INTERNET** - Visit [cabelas.com](http://cabelas.com)

**RETAIL** - Call 800.581.4420 for store information



# Cabela's

WORLD'S FOREMOST OUTFITTER®  
Hunting • Fishing • Outdoor Gear

Proud partner of



LL Bean—Official Boot Sponsor of  
the Ruffed Grouse Society



We've been outfitting wingshooters for 95 years with gear that stands up to the rigors of the field. Our newest upland boots are crafted from extra-tough bison leather that can take the punishment of pushing through brush and over rough terrain better than traditional cowhide leather. They're lined with waterproof, breathable Gore-Tex® and cushioned for long-lasting comfort.

**FOR A FREE CATALOG**

Call 800-791-8164 or [shop llbean.com](http://shop.llbean.com)



**LL Bean**

# Some Natural Resources Help Energize the World, Others Need Our Energies to Help Improve Their World

A leading producer of coal and natural gas, CONSOL Energy also maintains a corporate policy of developing or donating surplus property for wildlife enhancement, recreational use and conservation.

This is acreage with incredible potential as fish and wildlife habitat. And CONSOL Energy is exploring innovative ways to improve the food and cover that will benefit a variety of wildlife throughout its various operating areas. Sites range from forested areas, through farmlands, to sagebrush prairie.

A part of CONSOL Energy's effort involves partnering with leading wildlife and conservation groups, such as the Ruffed Grouse Society, the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. CONSOL Energy is committed to environmental stewardship, sustainable forestry programs and related initiatives.



**CONSOL ENERGY**

CONSOL Energy – using its energies to give wildlife a boost.  
*Responsible coal-mining benefits the land and all those who make it their home.*

# You said "What if...?" We said "Why not?"



## Introducing the most advanced beeper / trainer system available.

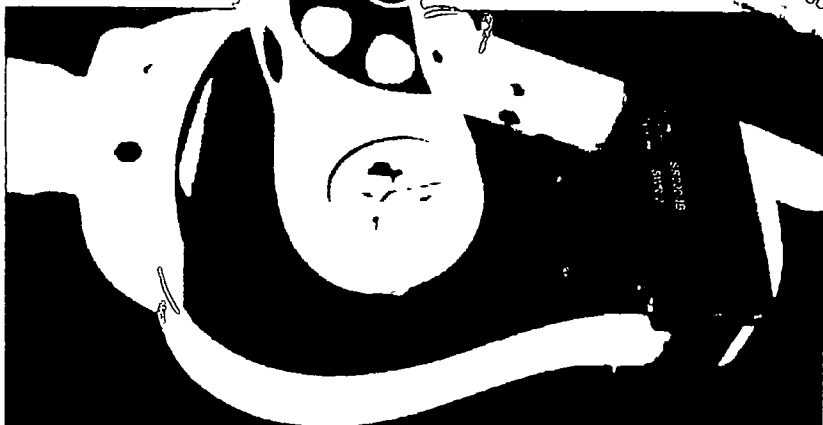
As both product designers and hardcore hunters – and with the input of our hunter friends – we've developed an innovative combo system that answers your needs better than any other. The UplandHunter™ 1850 features an easy-to-use transmitter that controls all training collar and beeper functions – in fact (unlike low-tech designs), you can change beeper functions just by pushing a transmitter button, without taking the beeper apart. By beeping every second when your dog is on point, the beeper allows you to find your dog pointing birds in heavy cover. It's wireless, making it the only system that lets you control the beeper and receiver separately, and eliminating internal collar wire breaks that can end your hunt early. The system is versatile enough to expand to two dogs. And the unique UplandBlaze™ orange makes the transmitter easy to spot if it's dropped in the brush. Want to keep birds from flying? Our RealHawk™ memory chip produces actual recorded hawk screeches, not digital fakes. Check out this amazing 3/4-mile system. It's miles ahead of the rest.



"I changed to SportDOG Brand® because I need a durable, reliable product. Their company and staff really understand what I need in a 21st century dog training collar."

Rick Smith, SportDOG Pro Staff  
Rick Smith Kennels  
Rick Smith Seminars  
Crozier, Virginia

UplandHunter™ 1850



Gear the way you'd design it.™

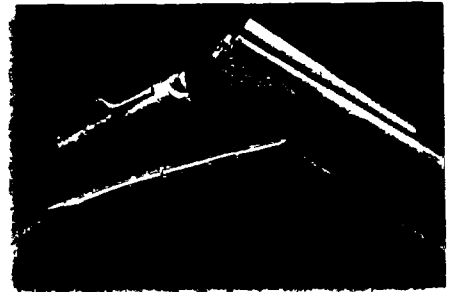


National Sponsor

www.sportdog.com  
1-800-732-0144



Smith & Wesson set out to develop a shotgun that not only measured up to our heritage, reputation and loyal customers – but one that would also make history, both personally and in a grander sense. One that would rest in your hands as an elegant and trusted hunting partner, worthy of being handed down for generations to come. This fine shotgun's Heirloom Warranty™ is proof of our confidence in the gun by not only warranting the shotgun for the life of the original owner, but also the life of the person they declare to be the heir of this fine product.



And so the Elite Series™ came into being from the workbenches of our experts and some of the world's finest artisans. Every facet of each gun's creation is quite literally hand-fitted, hand-carved, hand-engraved and hand-assembled to exacting detail as a matter of personal pride.



*Elite Series*™



**Smith & Wesson**  
smith-wesson.com

NASDAQ: SWHC



THE WILDLIFE AND ITS  
HABITAT CANNOT SPEAK,  
SO WE MUST  
AND WE WILL.

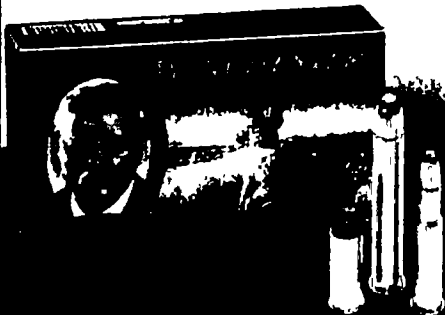
BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT



WINCHESTER  
AMMUNITION

# BULLY!

NEW FOR 2008—THEODORE ROOSEVELT™  
150-YEAR ANNIVERSARY COLLECTOR'S CARTRIDGES



Roosevelt's legacy as a leader in conservation and sportsman is carried on by Winchester® Ammunition with a limited edition collector's series of ammunition featuring three of the most popular calibers of the 1900's:

- 405 Winchester
- 30-30 Winchester
- 45 Colt

The Theodore Roosevelt™ limited edition cartridges feature nickel-plated shellcases, specially designed Roosevelt headstamps and come in collectible, embossed packaging.



WWW.WINCHESTER.COM

For MeadWestvaco,  
sustainability is  
more than a goal.

It's a guiding principle.



As a leader in our industry and as a responsible partner to our customers, MeadWestvaco builds sustainability into every decision we make, from business strategy to forest management that provides a habitat for wildlife. Sustainability shapes everything MeadWestvaco does—and every packaging solution we create for customers and consumers around the world. [meadwestvaco.com](http://meadwestvaco.com).

**MeadWestvaco**

# It's cut-up and clean-up time at your local STIHL dealer.

**\$139<sup>95</sup>**



## **BG 55 Handheld Blower**

Makes cleanup work much easier.  
The quality of STIHL at a great price.

### **Standard Features**

- Primer bulb and throttle lock ensure fast starts
- Round nozzle for increased air volume
- Two-ringed piston for extended life
- Two-stage air filter is easy to remove and replace

### **Optional Accessories**

- Vacuum kit
- Gutter cleaning kit
- Flat nozzle



**\$189<sup>95</sup>**  
14" bar

## **MS 170 Chain Saw**

Includes many of the same excellent design  
features as our professional models

### **Standard Features**

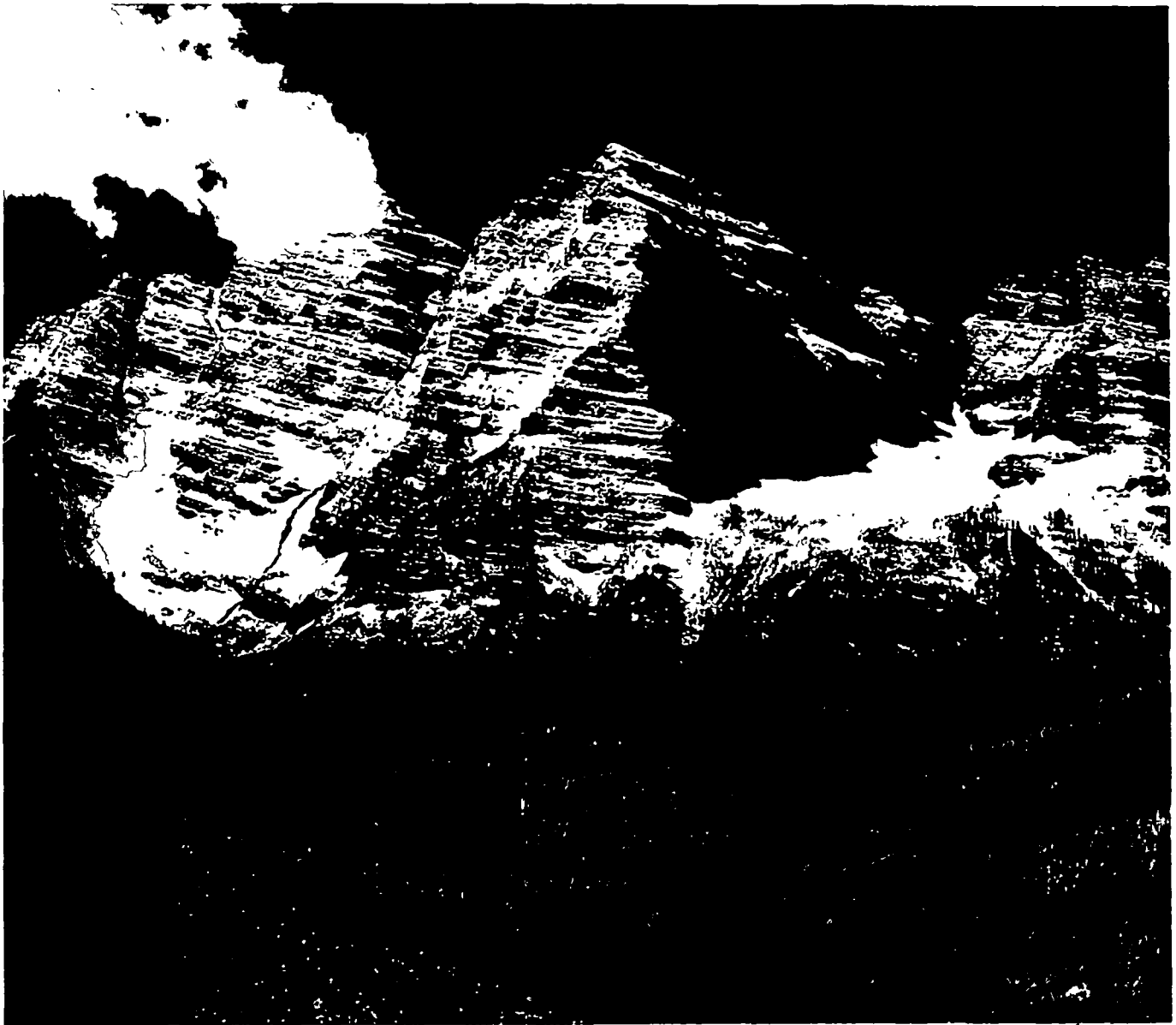
- STIHL Quickstop<sup>®</sup> chain brake system
- Master Control Lever™

- Anti-vibration system
- Easy-off filter cover
- View-through oil and gas tanks

● **STIHL - 8,000 Servicing Dealers Nationwide.** ●

Find your local STIHL dealer at  
**[stihlusa.com](http://stihlusa.com)**

**STIHL<sup>®</sup>**



## **At Boise, we've made sustainability a win-win proposition.**

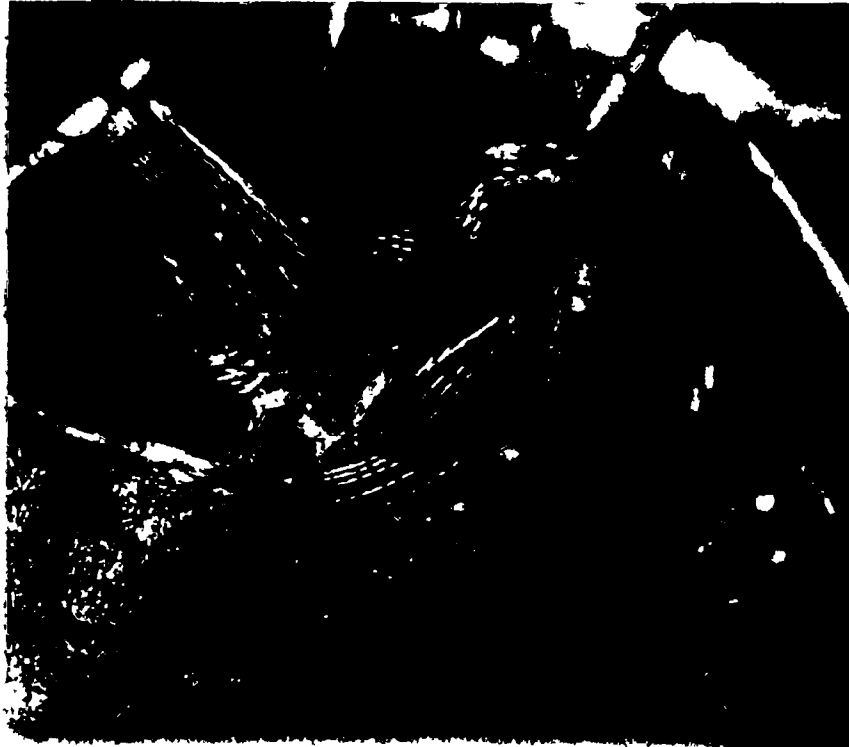
With more than 40 years of experience, Boise takes a balanced approach to successfully managing the environment and our bottom line. Our line of premium recycled papers, sold under the ASPEN™ brand, range from 30 to 100% post-consumer recycled fiber. The ASPEN line is available in multiuse and technology office papers as well as envelope, printing and imaging grades. It's just part of our focus on combining superior marketplace performance with responsible corporate citizenship. And proof of our worldwide commitment to preserving natural resources and improving technology for a greener tomorrow.

BOISE and ASPEN are trademarks of  
Boise Cascade, L.L.C., or its affiliates.

**BOISE®**

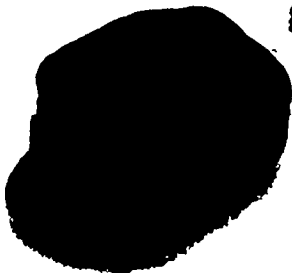
# FILSON®

Since 1897



**F**ilson is honored to support the Ruffed Grouse Society in its efforts to conserve wildlife and places our customers enjoy. Since 1897, Filson has been outfitting serious outdoorsmen. Our products

are often handed down from generation to generation. Protecting wildlife and habitat for future generations is part of the legacy we share with the Ruffed Grouse Society.



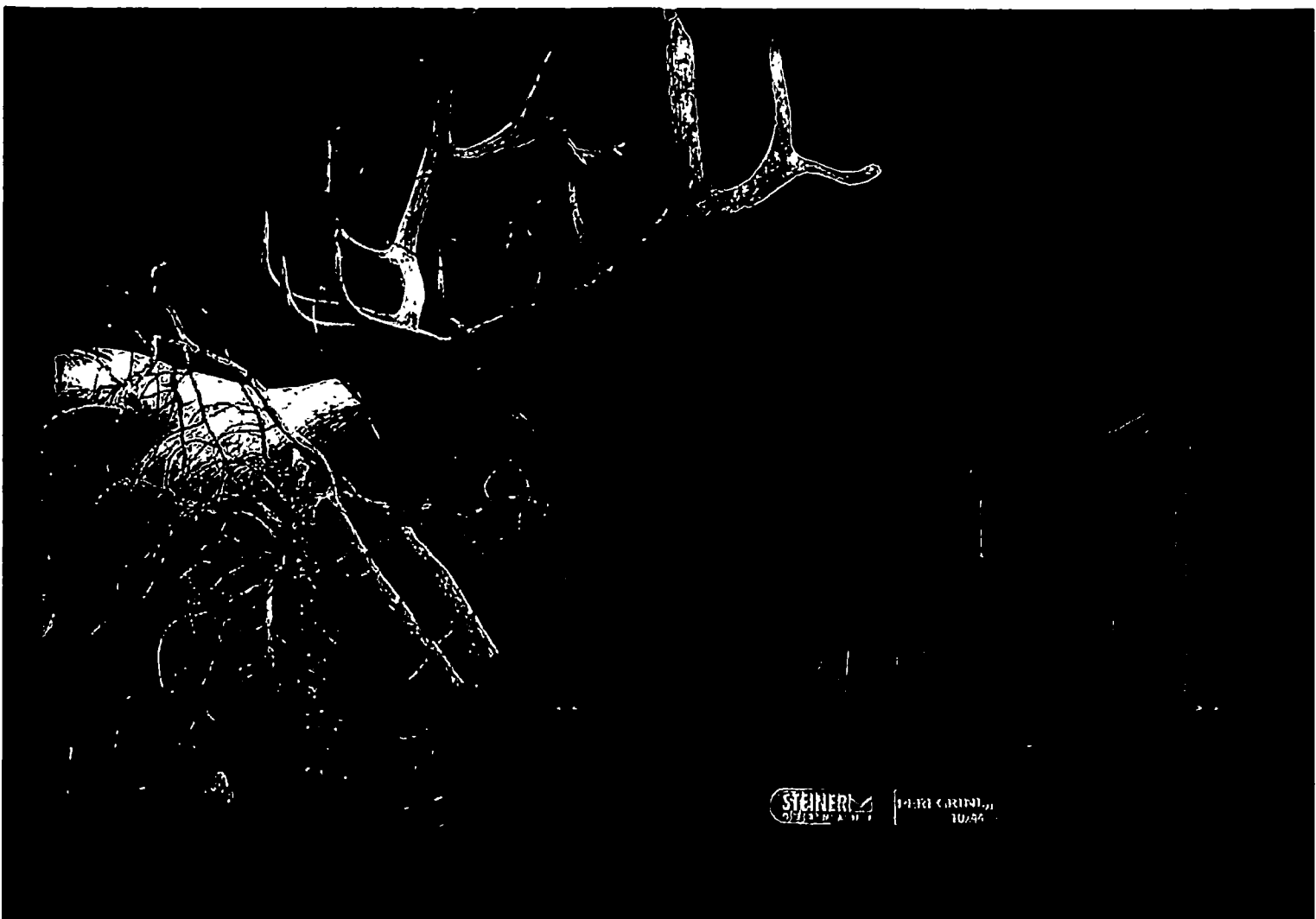
Blaze Orange  
Upland Hat



Tin Cloth Game Bag

***“MIGHT AS WELL  
HAVE THE BEST.”***

Free Catalog 800-624-0201 [www.filson.com](http://www.filson.com)



STEINER OPTIK GERMANY  
P-101 CARTRIDGE 10/52

# The Moment of Truth

You've scouted for months, stalked for days. Now you're crawling; it's your last day, and there he is.

With the new Steiner Peregrine XP binocular, you'll see into the darkest shade under dense foliage even at twilight. The pinpoint, optical resolution is simply brilliant and extremely sharp. These are just a few of the new Peregrine XP's unique features you'll get when you use these remarkable binoculars for your *moment of truth*.

If you're a serious hunter, looking for a serious binocular, visit [www.steiner-binocular.com](http://www.steiner-binocular.com) or call 800-257-7742 for a dealer near you.



**STEINER**   
GERMANY  
[www.steiner-binoculars.com](http://www.steiner-binoculars.com)

*Want birds?*



Hunt with an **Ugly Dog**  
and support the **Ruffed Grouse Society**.

Please join us in keeping the covers thriving and the birds flying.

**UglyDog**  **Hunting**®

The Ugly Dog Hunting Company has serious gear for you, your dog, and the hunt.

- rugged, hunt-tested field gear
- men's and women's upland clothing and boots
- dog kennels, gear, vests, and training equipment

Shop online at [www.uglydoghunting.com](http://www.uglydoghunting.com) or call toll-free for a catalog: 877-982-7054.

# ruffed GROUSE

SOCIETY



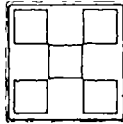
*Autumn Delight*

Proudly presenting the Ruffed Grouse Society's 2009 Print of the Year, *Autumn Delight* by Georgette Kanach.  
The Ruffed Grouse Society gratefully acknowledges its Corporate Sponsors (featured inside).





# **PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION**



**PURINA**



Hunting in the thick cover where ruffed grouse and American woodcock live demands much from both bird hunters and bird dogs.

To be successful, you're got to be ready. And a big part of being ready means having your canine hunting partner in top form, both in training and conditioning.

That's where Purina® Pro Plan® brand dog food helps provide the edge.

Purina, long dedicated to the welfare of sporting dogs, has for several years been a partner with the Ruffed Grouse Society in the campaign to improve the environment for young-forest wildlife.

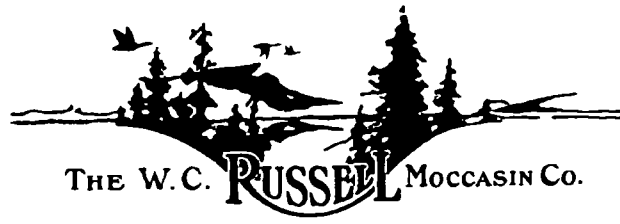
As a Ruffed Grouse Society Conservation Partner, Purina plays a significant role in benefiting grouse, woodcock and the many other wildlife species that need young-forest cover to thrive.

For more information about the care and feeding of working dogs go to [proplan.com/rgs](http://proplan.com/rgs).



# RGS 2009 Corporate Sponsors

The Ruffed Grouse Society gratefully acknowledges the support of its Corporate Sponsors. The habitat work to which RGS is dedicated is critical to the well-being of all types of young-forest wildlife. The special help and cooperation our conservation partners have extended to RGS by making the exceptional commitment of becoming Corporate Sponsors is deeply appreciated.





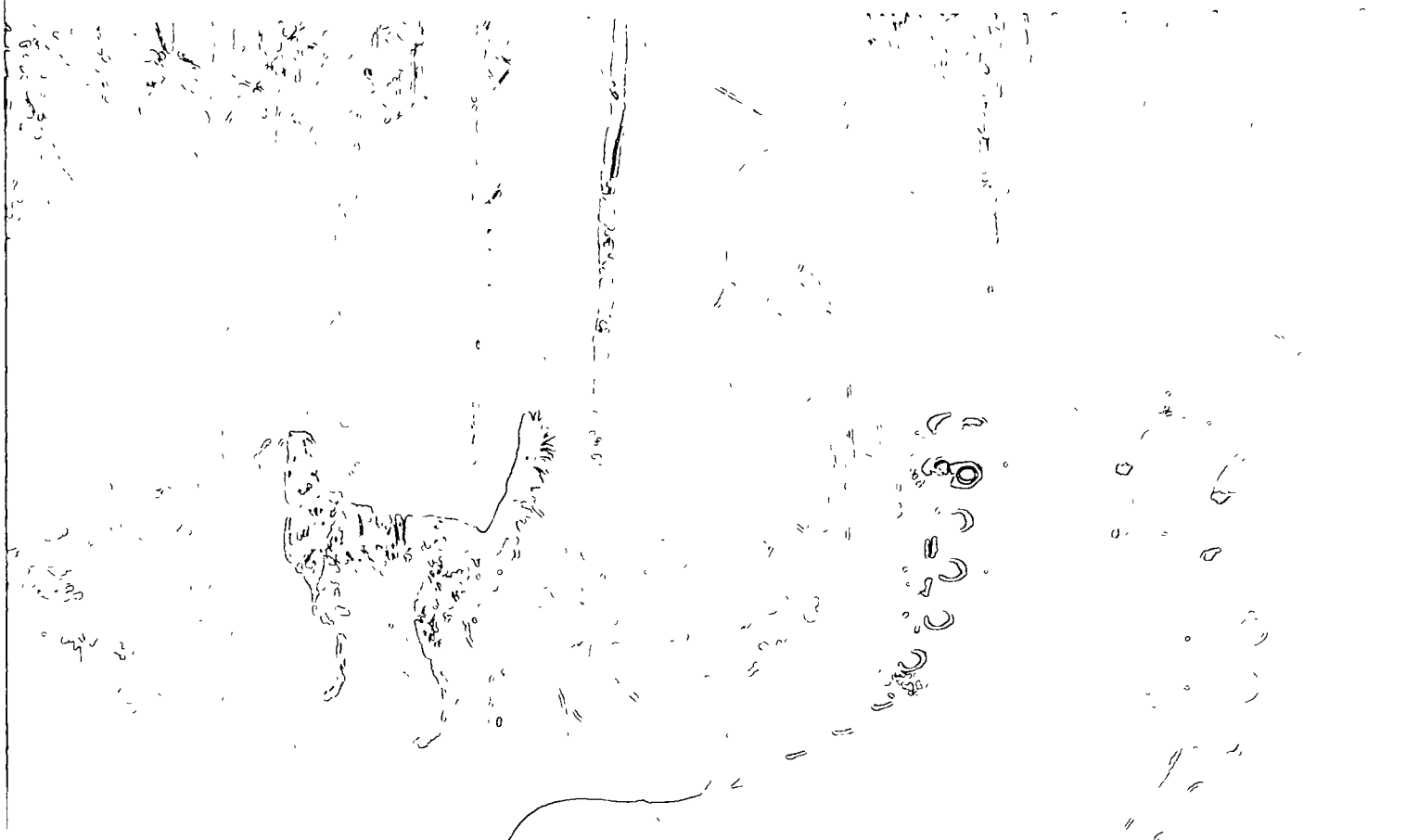
*Ruffed Grouse Society*  
**7**  
**SERIES**

SKB proudly presents a Limited Edition of 20 and 28 gauge Over & Unders. Available in 28" & 26" barrels. Featuring Fancy American Black Walnut Stock and Forend, Automatic Ejectors, Manual Safety, Selective Trigger, Briley Choke Tubes.

The Ruffed Grouse Society depends upon members, volunteers, staff, landowners and corporate sponsors to insure that this and future generations can enjoy ruffed grouse, woodcock, songbirds, deer and many other types of wildlife that depend upon young forest habitat.

**WWW.SKBB**

# J. L. Bean—Official Boot Sponsor of the Ruffed Grouse Society

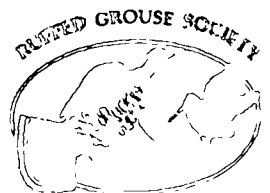


We've been outfitting wingshooters for over 97 years with gear that stands up to the rigors of the field. Our upland boots are crafted from tough yet supple kangaroo leather and rugged canvas that can take the punishment of pushing through brush without weighing you down. They're lined with waterproof, breathable Gore-Tex™ and cushioned for long-lasting comfort.

**Bean's Gore-Tex Kangaroo Leather/Fabric Cap-Toe Upland Boots**  
Available in Men's whole and half sizes Medium D and Wide EE 7 to 12, 13. Women's Medium B 6 to 11

FOR A FREE CATALOG  
Call 800-791-8164 or [shop llbean.com](http://shop.llbean.com)

J. L. Bean



J. L. BEAN IS PROUD TO BE THE OFFICIAL BOOT SPONSOR OF THE RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY

# Some Natural Resources Help Energize the World, Others Need Our Energies to Help Improve Their World

A leading producer of coal and natural gas, CONSOL Energy also maintains a corporate policy of developing or donating surplus property for wildlife enhancement, recreational use and conservation.

This is acreage with incredible potential as fish and wildlife habitat. And CONSOL Energy is exploring innovative ways to improve the food and cover that will benefit a variety of wildlife throughout its various operating areas. Sites range from forested areas, through farmlands, to sagebrush prairie.

A part of CONSOL Energy's effort involves partnering with leading wildlife and conservation groups, such as the Ruffed Grouse Society, the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. CONSOL Energy is committed to environmental stewardship, sustainable forestry programs and related initiatives.



**CONSOL ENERGY**

CONSOL Energy – using its energies to give wildlife a boost.  
*Responsible coal-mining benefits the land and all those who make it their home.*



GEAR THE WAY YOU'D DESIGN IT.™

*Clay Thompson & Queen*  
SportDOG Brand Sales Manager



The UplandHunter™ 1850 Remote Trainer/Beeper Combo

BORN AND PERFECTED IN OUR  
**1850 ACRE OFFICE.**

[SPORTDOG.COM](http://SPORTDOG.COM)



**FEDERAL  
PREMIUM**  
AMMUNITION



**This Dog Will Chase And Fetch All Day...  
If Your Shot Is True.**

*I wouldn't suggest taking your dog for a walk in muddy, bear infested fields unless you're ready to shoulder your shotgun and fold a bird from 20 yards. A good dog knows when the upland season is on, and you'd better bet his adrenaline will be pumping long before he finds your first feathered target. Federal Premium® Wing-Shok® is the best at knocking down even the fastest birds. Its copper-plated Premium lead will not only help fill your vest, it'll keep your four-legged hunting partner happy too.*



PROUD SPONSOR OF  
RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY  
HABITAT PROJECTS

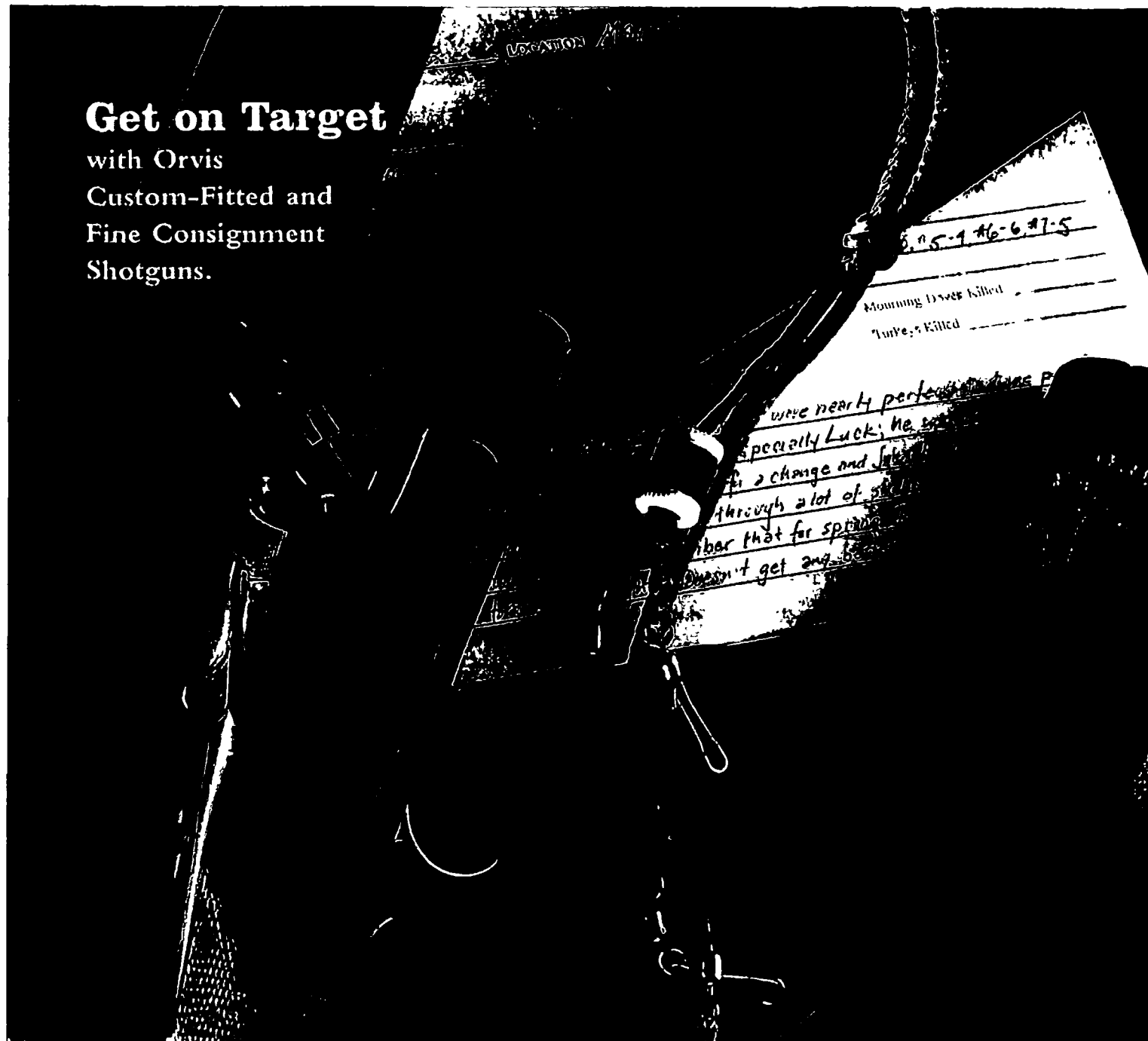


www.federalpremiumf.com  
© 2007 FEDERAL PREMIUM

**Every Shot Counts®**

# Get on Target

with Orvis  
Custom-Fitted and  
Fine Consignment  
Shotguns.



## Custom-Fit and Consignment Shotguns

*Make your days afield more memorable than ever.*

Make your days of hunting and shooting more successful, enjoyable, and memorable. A gun custom-fitted to your specific build helps you mount, swing, and get on target with greater consistency. That consistency results in more hit birds and clays and more fun afield. Choose from our selection of custom styles and models of Caesar Guerini and Arrieta shotguns—our gunsmiths of 29 years will custom fit your gun to your specifications, so you can enjoy the benefits of a custom-fit shotgun for years. You'll find that the same care and expertise put into our

custom-fit shotguns also goes into selecting our fine-grade consignment shotguns, offered to you only after close inspection and pricing advice by our master gunsmiths. Thousands of fine sportsmen receive Orvis mailings and visit our Orvis stores and website to browse our selection, so your shotgun is sure to get the attention and the price it deserves. For help with your gun selection please, contact John Rano at The Orvis Gun Department at 802-362-2580, e-mail him at [ranoj@orvis.com](mailto:ranoj@orvis.com), or visit [www.orvis.com/customshotguns](http://www.orvis.com/customshotguns)

**ORVIS**  
SPORTING TRADITION  
Since 1856



**LP Building Products** are made using wood from third-party certified wood procurement systems and certified forests.

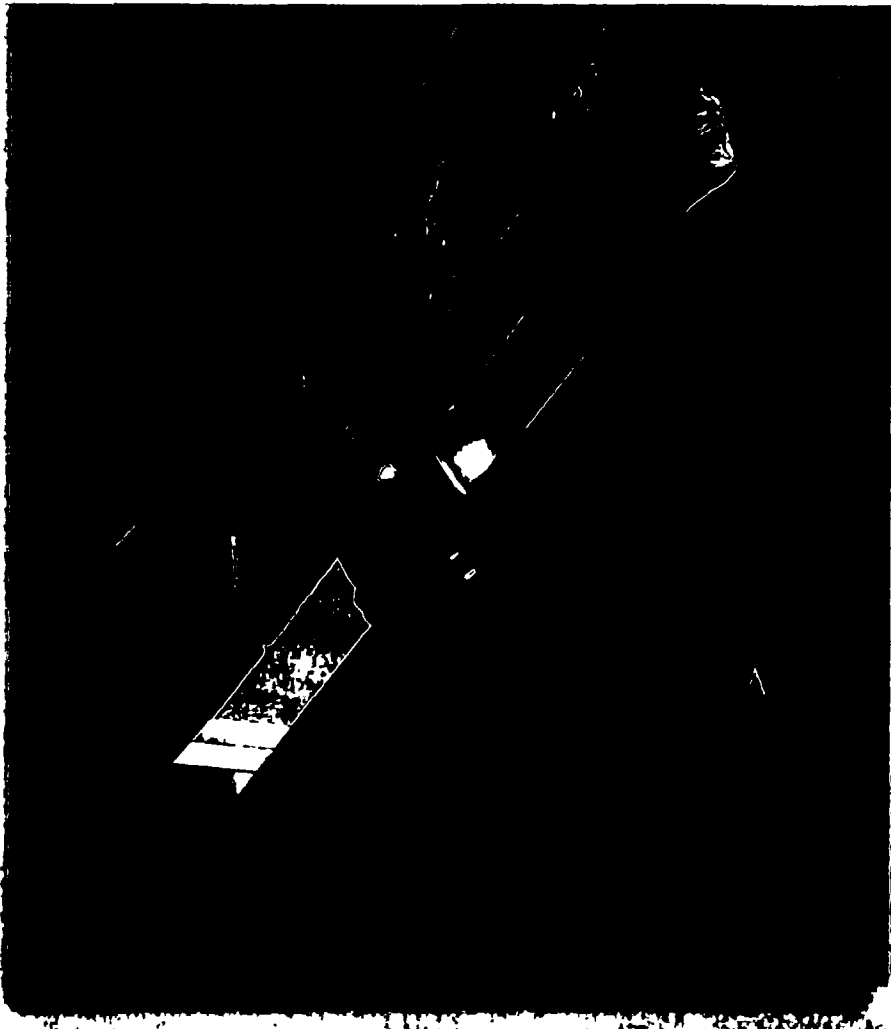
The green attributes built into LP products are recognized in green building certification programs across North America.

Join LP in protecting and developing Ruffed Grouse habitat.

Contact LP about forest land and ruffed grouse habitat management options in the lake states.



For land management help, contact  
Larry Heathman  
906.542.7321  
larry.heathman@lpcorp.com



LP SolidStart Engineered Wood Products

## There's Lumber. And Then, There's Better.

LP® SolidStart® Engineered Wood Products are designed to outperform traditional lumber. They offer superior strength, durability and consistency—with no knots, splits or voids. They're available in longer lengths than lumber as well. That means more design flexibility, faster installation and no need for culling. Plus, all are backed by a Lifetime Limited Warranty. LP SolidStart Engineered Wood Products. Better than lumber.

**LP** **SOLIDSTART**  
ENGINEERED WOOD PRODUCTS

LSL | LVL | I-Joists | Rim Board | LPCorp.com

# Perfection Redefined...



## Model "Imperial"

- Self-opening action.
- Locking screws fitted throughout internally.
- Bone charcoal case hardening.
- Hand detachable pin with locking stud.
- Finest hand picked engraving.
- Exhibition quality walnut.
- Diamond Chequering.
- Locked hinge pin.

AYA's Imperial shotgun embodies the very highest level of quality you have come to expect from AYA. The Imperial boasts exquisite hand picked engraving, bone charcoal case hardening, and exhibition quality walnut, making it one of the most elegant shotguns available today. AYA has also taken great care to ensure the Imperial functions as beautifully as it looks. Crisper trigger pulls, smoother opening, and lively handling are to be expected from this masterpiece. The Imperial has not been made to a price, but to a level of fit, finish, and function unmatched in Spanish gunmaking.

AYA USA • P.O. Box 647 • Old Saybrook, CT 06475 • 860.388.3989  
[www.aya-fineguns.com](http://www.aya-fineguns.com) • [aya-usa@aya-fineguns.com](mailto:aya-usa@aya-fineguns.com)

New England Custom Gun Service, Ltd. • Plainfield, NH • 603.469.3450  
[www.newenglandcustomgun.com](http://www.newenglandcustomgun.com) • [bestguns@comcast.net](mailto:bestguns@comcast.net)





## Are you ready for a blower with power?

STIHL has a blower that's right for you. We offer an entire line of backpack and handheld blowers, including low-noise and electric models. Ask your STIHL Dealer which blower is right for you.

[stihlusa.com](http://stihlusa.com)

**STIHL**®

# Russell Moccasin...best in the woods

## RGS-Branded Russells for RGS Members

The Signature South 40 Birdshooter™ is the finest upland bird hunting boot made...waterproofed leather, triple vamp construction for all day comfort and support and light as a feather. The lady-like Judy's Boot™ is made with buttery-soft heirloom French Veal leather...also triple vamp...light weight with exceptional water resistance. Both feature deeply embossed Ruffed Grouse Society logos on the uppers. Check them out on the RGS web site or on the Russell Moccasin web site. Custom fitted and handcrafted for a perfect fit and comfortable days in the grouse coverts. Russell's partnership with RGS sets aside a significant portion of the proceeds to support vital grouse habitat.



Judy's Boot



Signature South 40 Birdshooter



285 S.W. Franklin • PO Box 309  
Berlin, WI 54923  
950-361-2252  
[www.russellmoccasin.com](http://www.russellmoccasin.com)

*Hunters were the first  
conservationists, and  
the Ruffed Grouse  
Society and its members  
continue that great tradition.*



## **This is the RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**

### **Who We Are**

The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is a national conservation organization headquartered in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. The Society employs a team of wildlife biologists to work with landowners, both private and government – including on local, state and federal levels – who are interested in improving their holdings for ruffed grouse, woodcock and the other songbirds and wildlife that have similar requirements. The Society's field biologists provide individualized attention, with specific programs to help landowners, and by working with local, state and federal governments to develop land management assistance programs.

RGS also has a team of regional directors who help organize chapters with members who share a common interest in grouse and woodcock as well as other wildlife. These chapters help support land management projects that improve conditions for ruffed grouse, woodcock and the species that are associated with them. The chapters also sponsor banquets that bring people with common interests together socially to honor their peers and to raise funds to support our conservation programs.

RGS also sponsors shooting and hunting events to promote conservation and to raise funds to support its conservation programs.

### **What We Are About**

RGS is about ruffed grouse, woodcock and the other wildlife that share the places where they live. It is about the environment or habitat that provides them with food, cover from predators, shelter and a place to breed and rear

their young. It is about actively managing those young forests or "habitats" by using tools, such as controlled fire and forest cutting, recognized as effective by Aldo Leopold, the father of the wildlife management profession.

It is about educating the public concerning the habitat requirements of the birds and mammals, both game and non-game, of young forests. It is about explaining that these precious areas of young forest, unless actively managed, will give way to trees that will shade out the plants that are home to ruffed grouse, woodcock, many songbirds, rabbits and deer.

It is about gaining support to actively manage using controlled fire and timber harvest, and about putting forth a convincing argument that clearcutting as a forest management tool, when properly applied, is ecologically sound.

It is about walking in the spring woods and pausing at the sound of what seems to be an old John Deere tractor and realizing it is a grouse drumming. It is about going afield with the expectation of bagging a grouse or "partridge." It is about being overtaken with pride as your dog carries its head high as it moves into the wind, locks on point and waits for you to flush the bird. It is about uttering an "aw shucks" and being completely surprised when the bird flushes across an opening and evades what you thought were well-placed number 8s.

It is about inviting friends to share a fine meal of grouse and all the trimmings and listening to how your spouse backed you up on the shot after you felled a young aspen. It is about gatherings called banquets where friends with a common interest in these birds and their conservation come together to have fun and provide the funding needed to make it all happen.

It is really not about us at all, it is about our grandkids and their kids, for – without our help – these places will not be there for them or the birds to enjoy.



*Established in 1961 the Ruffed Grouse Society is the international wildlife conservation organization dedicated to promoting conditions suitable for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and related wildlife to sustain our hunting tradition and outdoor heritage.*

### **Mission**

Conservation, stewardship or "wise-use" of renewable natural resources, is the Ruffed Grouse Society's mission.

We fulfill that mission by:

Enhancing, through ecologically sound wildlife management practices, the environment for ruffed grouse, woodcock and other forest wildlife that utilize or require thick, young forests.

Conducting and/or sponsoring research that will lead to a better understanding of the biology and ecological requirements of these species.

Sponsoring land management programs on private and public lands that will maintain or enhance the environment for these species.

Educating the public and legislative bodies about the:

Economic contribution associated with the recreational pursuit of these birds.

Need to scientifically manage forestlands with the awareness that nature is dynamic and that the plants that provide food, cover and shelter from predators, and a place to rear their young, will, unless they are actively managed, be replaced by plants that do not meet these requirements.

Ways to provide incentives for landowners to manage for these species.

Ways to encourage and provide public access to the places where ruffed grouse, woodcock and other related wildlife lives so that they can be enjoyed.



Smith & Wesson set out to develop a shotgun that not only measured up to our heritage, reputation and loyal customers – but one that would also make history, both personally and in a grander sense. One that would rest in your hands as an elegant and trusted hunting partner, worthy of being handed down for generations to come. This fine shotgun's Heirloom Warranty™ is proof of our confidence in the gun by not only warranting the shotgun for the life of the original owner, but also the life of the person they declare to be the heir of this fine product.



And so the Elite Series® came into being from the workbenches of our experts and some of the world's finest artisans. Every facet of each gun's creation is quite literally hand-fitted, hand-carved, hand-engraved and hand-assembled to exacting detail as a matter of personal pride.



*Elite Series*™



**Smith & Wesson**  
smith-wesson.com

NASDAQ: SWHC

FOR MWV

SUSTAINABILITY IS

MEADWESTVACO'S

IT'S A GUIDING PRINCIPLE.



As a leader in our industry and as a responsible partner to our customers, MWV builds sustainability into every decision we make, from business strategy to forest management that provides a habitat for wildlife. Sustainability shapes everything MWV does — and every packaging solution we create for customers and consumers around the world. [mww.com](http://mww.com).

**MWV** MEADWESTVACO





## OUR TRIBUTE TO **THUNDER.**

### THE CONSERVATION GUN OF THE YEAR.

Lightning at the roar of wings, the Premier Ruffed Grouse Edition Over & Under has the same superb balance, awesome pointing characteristics and rugged reliability as our other Premier series shotguns, but showcases the Ruffed Grouse Society logo in gold on both sides of its deep-blued frame. A portion of the proceeds goes to support the Ruffed Grouse Society and its efforts. You'll find the only thing faster and smoother than a grouse in the timber, is the gun we built in its honor.

PREMIER RUFFED GROUSE EDITION

### PREMIER RUFFED GROUSE EDITION

Features: 20 gauge / 26" barrel / Oil finished walnut stock and fore-end / Deep-blued receiver with gold Ruffed Grouse Society logo on both sides / Straight-grip, English-style stock / 5 ProBore™ choke tubes / Hunting Schnabeled fore-end / Solid barrel filets / 7mm rib / Ivory front bead and steel midpost / FAA-approved lockable hard case

# Remington

C O U N T R Y

[www.REMINGTON.com/PremierOU](http://www.REMINGTON.com/PremierOU)

# FILSON®

Since 1897



**F**ilson is honored to support the Ruffed Grouse Society in its efforts to conserve wildlife and places our customers enjoy. Since 1897, Filson has been outfitting serious outdoorsmen. Our products

are often handed down from generation to generation. Protecting wildlife and habitat for future generations is part of the legacy we share with the Ruffed Grouse Society.



Blaze Orange  
Upland Hat



Tin Cloth Game Bag

***“MIGHT AS WELL  
HAVE THE BEST.”***

Free Catalog 800-624-0201 [www.filson.com](http://www.filson.com)

BOYT

BOYT HARNESS COMPANY

Outfitting the upland bird hunter since 1901.

UPLAND BIRD HUNTING APPAREL

shirts • pants • jackets • vests

GUN DOG ACCESSORIES

collars & leads • dog food bag • gun dog bag

HUNTING ACCESSORIES

gun cases • slings • duffels



[www.boytharness.com](http://www.boytharness.com) • 1.800.550.2698

# Innovation

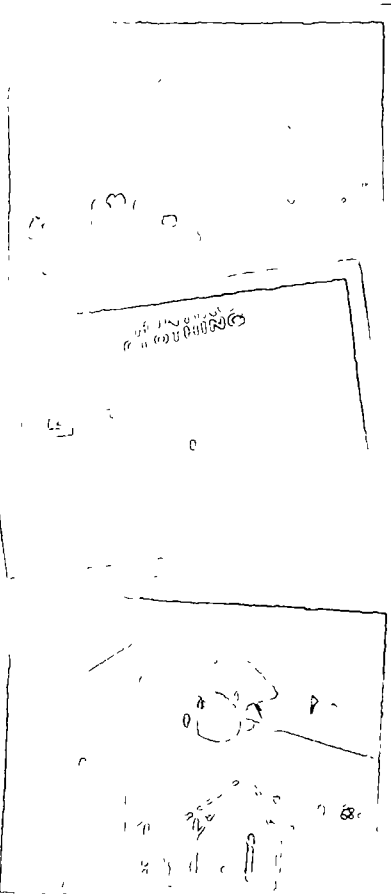
When Caesar Guerini set out to defy the stigma that a fine Italian shotgun has to be an extravagant luxury - we forged a model that set us apart from the competition. Introducing the Maxum, an over/under that embodies all the finest qualities of the Italian gun maker's art without the extravagant cost. To achieve this goal, we developed a unique engraving process combining precision lasers with the time-honored tradition of hand engraving. The result, a finely crafted shotgun of unsurpassed beauty and precision. See the Maxum at your local Caesar Guerini dealer. Become a collector of fine Italian art.



CAESAR  
GUERINI

410.901.1131

[www.gueriniusa.com](http://www.gueriniusa.com)



*Make room*  
FISHERMEN,  
HUNTERS,  
— AND —  
OTHER  
ILLUSTRATIONS.

Welcome outdoorsmen, we built it just for you. It's true. Your local Bass Pro Shops store is the only one of its kind. Sure, you'll discover in all our stores the same Low Price Guarantee, expert sales associates, and the best selection of outdoor products around. But the specific gear you'll find is unique to each location, because we understand that no two situations are alike when it comes to fishing and hunting in your area. And that's no lie.

Proud Sponsor of the Ruffed Grouse Society



Shop online at  
[basspro.com](http://basspro.com)

For a FREE catalog  
1-800-BASS PRO

For an adventure in itself  
Visit Our Stores Nationwide

**This packet of materials contains the attachments for the Ruffed Grouse Society's IRS 990; specifically referenced in Part III questions 4a. to 4c.**



# The Other Silent Spring

## Disappearing birds of young forests

by Steven Backs

Wildlife Research Biologist, Indiana Fish and Wildlife Department of Natural Resources

First published in RGS Summer 2009 Vol 21, Issue 2 RGS is a quarterly publication of the Ruffed Grouse Society

Toll Free:  
888-564-6747

www.ruffedgrousesociety.org

Rachel Carson's classic book *Silent Spring* sounded the alarm over the long-term effects of the misuse of pesticides, especially those that persist for decades in the environment. Carson described how the misuse of pesticides, in particular DDT, unintentionally led to raptor eggshell thinning and negatively impacted populations of non-target songbirds either by direct poisoning or indirectly through their food sources. The premise of her historic book was if corrective actions were not taken soon, eventually the sounds of spring would disappear. Carson was dismissed by some as an alarmist and her credibility was attacked by the chemical industry. Over time the truth of her warnings became quite evident in field studies and led to a new awareness in the use of pesticides.

Although not as insidious as pesticides, a similar decline is occurring with populations of birds and other wildlife that utilize grasslands, prairies, and young dense forest habitats. The vitality of these habitats is measured not only by their existence, but also by the time since the last major vegetative disturbance. Historically, these habitats followed natural, catastrophic destructive events such as firestorms, tornadoes, and massive insect infestations. Young, regenerating forests lay scattered across the predominantly forested landscape where patches of old forests eventually died and had fallen in on themselves. The process of constant, destructive change and death in the natural environment is the youthful renovation of habitats which result in a rich diversity of wildlife. Every species' existence is in a constant flow of temporarily disappearing and recolonizing in a diverse, ever-changing environment.

Forest environments are amazingly resilient. As long as there are connective forested corridors or pathways, wildlife can generally find those habitats that suit their specific life needs. Unfortunately, in many areas, man has chopped up the landscape to the point where these regenerative natural forces no longer function to the same extent as they did historically. Broken forested corridors are often not suitable pathways for wildlife recolonization and a fractured landscape can not be easily repaired without displacing human development.

Beginning in the 1930's, Indiana was entering a period of reforestation following an initial burst of human settlement when many forests were cleared to build and heat homes, communities, and provide space for agricultural crops and grazing. While there were a few public agency programs

❧

These three birds [the American woodcock, the ruffed grouse and the whip-poor-will] ... are "coal mine canaries" telling us by their absence that young forest habitats are quickly disappearing. Are we listening? Do we hear the emptiness? Will we listen?

❧

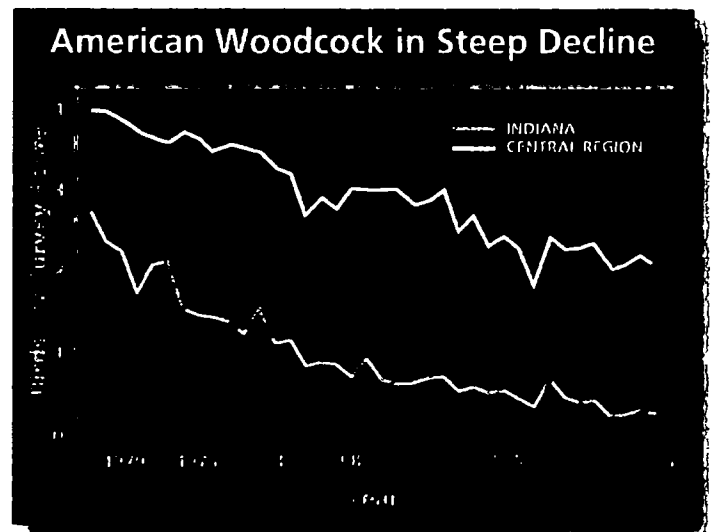
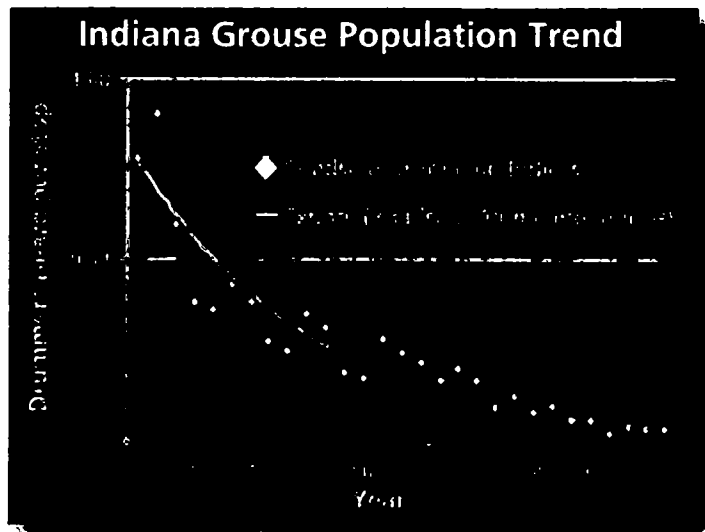
for planting trees, most of today's forests returned in the same resilient way they had historically, regenerating on their own following natural destructive events. Along with the resurgence of young forests came the wildlife species whose life and vitality depends on the dense thickets and brushy fields.

Some of the easily identifiable avian icons of young forest habitats are ruffed grouse, American woodcock, and whip-poor-wills. These birds are more often heard than seen, because their brown, mottle cryptic appearance helps camouflage them against predators, especially the females who are ground nesters. Naturalists have frequently described the distinctive courtship displays of these birds as harbingers of spring.

In late March through April a male ruffed grouse proclaims his breeding territory by engaging in a "drumming display" upon a downed log, a tree root wad, or a small mound of earth in a protective woody thicket. The male grouse beats his wings rapidly creating a vacuum of air, producing a low hollow, drumming sound similar to the sound of an antique tractor motor starting or the distant pounding of rubber automobile tires on a rough country road. When you are relatively close to a drumming grouse, you can feel the sound as much as hear it, probably because the sound waves created by the air vacuum resonate off a person's head and chest. Besides proclaiming the male's territory, the drumming sound attracts female ruffed grouse that come to the male to breed. The best time to hear a grouse drumming is at dawn the first week of April, although this year-round resident may drum occasionally at other times of the year.

The courtship display of a male American woodcock is a combination of a nasal "peenting" sound made on the ground in a small forest opening or brushy field followed by a short 30-40 second circular aerial flight that ends with the flute-like twittering of air passing through the male's wings as he quickly spirals down to the same spot to peent again. Like the ruffed grouse, the male woodcock conducts these repetitive displays not only to proclaim a breeding territory but to attract females for breeding. Migratory woodcock generally arrive in early March and begin their dawn and dusk courtship displays in late March through to early May.

Whip-poor-wills begin arriving in late March and the males will begin distinctive, repetitive "whip-poor-will" calls in mid April from dark to the early dawn hours. The calling of a whip-poor-will continues through the summer with the intensity influenced by moon phases and the breeding





cycle. Depending on a person's perspective the calling, which can vary from a few dozen calls to several hundred repetitions, can either be entertaining or an incessant disturbance, especially if you are trying to hear something else or sleep.

Unfortunately, populations of ruffed grouse, woodcock, whip-poor-wills along with many other young forest birds like yellow-breasted chats, towhees and golden winged warblers have dramatically declined as the majority of our forests reach maturity. In the public's zeal to protect natural areas, there is a public misconception of not "seeing the forest for the trees." Vegetative disturbance is a means of revitalizing habitat diversity within a very dynamic forest ecosystem that needs young trees just as much as old trees.

Ruffed grouse populations in Indiana are now less than 3% of what they were just 25 years ago. Ruffed grouse have essentially disappeared from neighboring Illinois and have already done so in a number of areas in Indiana where they existed just two or three decades ago. Breeding ground surveys for woodcock conducted in Indiana are showing a similar decline. Not too many years ago, on our way to conduct grouse drumming surveys we frequently saw the reddish-pink eyes of whip-poor-wills sitting along the forest roads. The incessant calling of whip-poor-wills was an annoyance as we tried to count the number of drumming grouse. Now we no longer see the whip-poor-will eyes in the headlights and frequently hear neither grouse, nor whip-poor-wills, nor woodcock.

These three birds and distinctive calls are "coal mine canaries" telling us by their absence that young forest habitats are quickly disappearing. Are we listening? Do we hear the emptiness? Will we listen? It's happening not only here, but across the eastern United States.

In his book, "Restoring North America's Birds - Lessons from Landscape Ecology" (2000) noted ornithologist, Dr. Robert Askins, titled one chapter, "Another Quiet Decline: Birds of the Eastern Thickets" that recorded the plight of birds of young forests. Public perceptions are often a hard nut to crack, even when there are biological facts to the contrary. We tend to mix our emotions with our perceptions as to how the world should

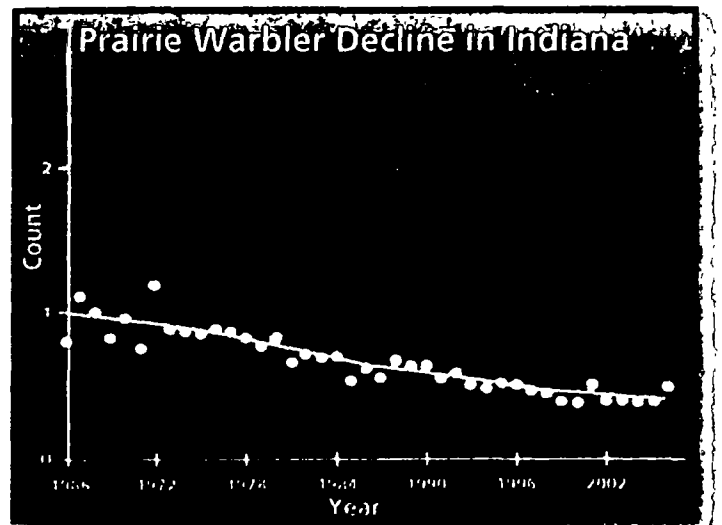
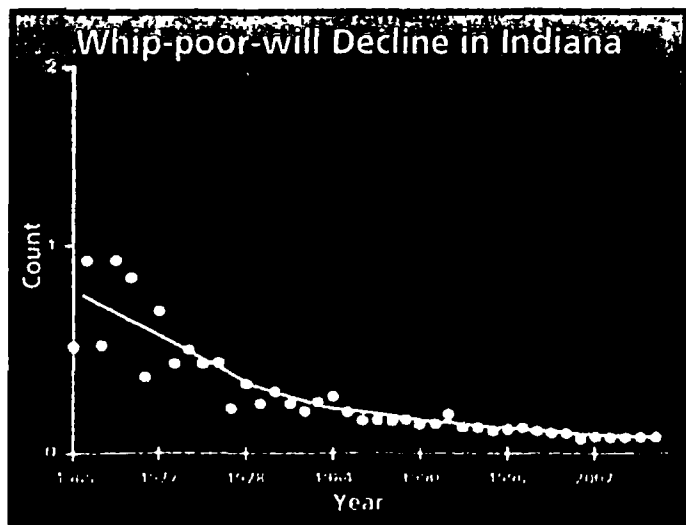
be, even if we are only seeing a snap-shot of history frozen on one beautiful sunrise or sunset. We tend to see forests as only large, mature trees while mentally discriminating against young, small trees that have an equal value in providing viable habitat for wildlife. We fail to recognize that some wildlife use old forests, some use young, and some use both.

We, as humans, have permanently modified the earth and there is no going back to a completely natural world without dismissing ourselves from this earth. It's now our incumbent responsibility as good land stewards to assure a diversity of habitats exists in what remains of our forests. We have to get past our biased perspectives and recognize that dramatic vegetative disturbances are temporary and are always an important revitalization of dynamic forest ecosystems.

While man-made disturbances like harvesting timber or prescribed fires may not be natural, nor pretty at the outset, they are manageable tools that can be directed to specific forest stands to replicate or mimic the effects of natural disturbances in creating and maintaining a diversity of habitats. Logging is not just about removing renewable, woody commodities from a forest; timber harvesting is a very useful tool in managing vegetation to assure a variety of habitat types for a diversity of wildlife.

To hear the drums of a grouse, the peents of a woodcock, and the calls of the whip-poor-wills are as refreshing as the cool crisp forest air we breathe. The increasing empty silence of our woodlands is a sign that our world is less healthy, and is a testament to our failure to act.

Our failure to maintain a diversity of habitat types in our forests is benign neglect for those wildlife species needing young forests to survive. A managed forest is still a forest, if left to be a forest after a natural or man-made disturbance. The key is to keep our forests as forests and not let them disappear under a growing sea of asphalt or be converted to some other non-forest land use. An active timber management program under the guidance of professionally trained natural resource managers perpetuates a renewable resource while maintaining a diversity of habitats for wildlife.





# Placing Wildlife At Risk By Ignoring Ecological Principals

## THE NEED TO MANAGE PUBLIC LANDS

By Dr. Michael Zagata  
Chief Executive Officer of the Ruffed Grouse Society

Wildlife of all sorts depends upon plants and other animals for their survival. That may not be a profound statement, but beneath the surface it is not well understood, and that lack of understanding has, over several decades, put many species, both hunted and non-hunted, at risk.

The "State of the Birds" report issued in 2009 by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, U.S. Committee and the U.S. Department of Interior indicates that many Eastern forest birds dependent on disturbed or early-successional forest or natural disturbance (including pine barrens) are suffering consistent and troubling declines. These include golden-winged warbler, whip-poor-will, prairie warbler, Eastern towhee, and field sparrow, and popular game species such as Northern bobwhite and American woodcock.

### The Link Between Species and Habitat

The place that provides wildlife with the food, cover, breeding opportunity and shelter that it needs for survival is called habitat. Grouse hunters refer to it as a "covert" and bird watchers have their favorite birding spots. Two ecological principles hold true for

abundant food sources are gone along with the thick understory or cover that afforded protection from predators - and so are the grouse.

### Habitat Waits for No One, i.e. the dynamics of plant succession

It's time now to talk about what drives the change that occurs with habitats over time. Ecologists have a term for that change. They call it plant succession - in other words one plant community is succeeded by another. That sounds good when you say it fast, but what does it mean, what are its consequences and what drives the process? The last question is, believe it or not, the easiest to answer. Sunlight, which is needed by green plants in order for them to make food (photosynthesis), or the lack of it, drives the process of plant succession and thus the changes that occur to habitats over time.

Let's start with a relatively simple scenario. You have just built your dream home adjacent to some wonderful birding areas. Part of that process involves some landscaping, including a new lawn. The site for the lawn is cleared and possibly fertilized. Now you have a choice - to wait for Mother Nature to "seed" your lawn with whatever blows in or to plant grass seed. If you plant



Golden Winged Warblers  
Photo by Isador Jeklin/CLO

within the geographical range they occupy, be present.

◆ That habitat is dynamic, i.e. it does not remain the same, or of the same "value" to the species that depend upon it, over time. That is a very important concept to further explore so that we fully comprehend its significance to the species involved. Bird watchers know this and grouse and woodcock hunters know it, but they may not be consciously aware that they know it. For example, when I was a boy there

◆ Not all wildlife depends upon the same habitat for their survival. For example, a birder wanting to observe a meadowlark or bobolink doesn't go to a mature forest to find them. Neither does a grouse hunter go to a cornfield to find grouse. Thus we have some new and exciting information to apply when we undertake the management of land for wildlife: if we want to be successful, we need to know what species we are managing for and what specific kind of habitat it needs, not just to survive, but to prosper. We also know that we often find more than one species of wildlife in what appears to be the same or similar habitat. For example, we generally find the wood thrush and scarlet tanager associated with pole-stage or middle-age forests. Aldo Leopold, author of *A Sand County Almanac* and generally recognized as the "father of wildlife management", put it quite well when he said "As the community goes so goes the species" and the line from the 1989 movie *A Field of Dreams* put it another way: "Build it and they will come". Both versions embody the ecological principle that when a place has the space and other plants and animals that a specie or group of species needs for their survival they will, if that place is

observe waterfowl on the open water. Over time, the cattails began to grow and encroach on the open water. That encroachment continued until the pond became a good place to watch red-winged blackbirds clinging to the cattails, but with the open water fully engulfed by the cattails waterfowl no longer used it. The pond had slowly changed, due to an aggressive plant, toward becoming more land than water. The same is true of a grouse cover that I hunted as a boy. At the time I found grouse there in abundance, the plant life consisted of crab apples, viburnums, beaked hazel, young hemlock and a thick ground-cover of other plants adjacent to a once-logged forest now moving toward "foresthood" once again. Today, that same area is occupied by pole-stage maples and adult hemlocks – both of which prevent light from reaching the forest floor during the growing season. Without sunlight, the green plants that produce the food and cover grouse and other wildlife rely upon are unable to flourish. As a result, the previously

considerable maintenance (mowing, fertilizers, weed and insect killers, etc.) to keep it healthy and "weed" free. If you choose to allow Mother Nature to provide the seed, she will indeed do that. In either case, plant succession will have started as the bare ground will become covered with green plants that can capture sunlight and use it to produce "food" for wildlife. Mother Nature's seeds will be quite hardy plants, called pioneer species that can survive under harsh conditions, like the lack of moisture, normally



Boblink, Female  
Photo by Christopher Taylor, [www.kiwifoto.com](http://www.kiwifoto.com)



## Wildlife Diversity Through Forest Management

lethal to lawn grasses. We often refer to these plants as "weeds" indicating they are unwanted by us -- at least in our lawn. By the following summer, there will be quite a mix of what you want (grass) and don't want (weeds) and you likely will mow the new yard. Mowing does two things -- it favors the grass that is invigorated by mowing and thwarts the annual weeds that didn't yet get to produce seeds. If you keep maintaining, in other words "managing", your lawn it will stay as you want it.

However, keeping it that way requires energy in the form of regular maintenance, i.e. your sweat and petroleum-based products like gasoline for the mower and weed eater, fertilizer, insecticides and herbicides. Why is that the case -- because of plant succession. It's easier to answer that question if we ask ourselves what happens if we don't manage or maintain the lawn. Let's take a hypothetical case where, for whatever reason, you abandon that home in upstate New York or Michigan for five years and the lawn isn't mowed. You return one summer day and are greeted by a lawn overwhelmed with tall weeds, some blackberry stems and very little grass. What happened? Quite simply, the grass which is relatively short and shade intolerant (won't grow in the shade of taller plants) was replaced by taller plant species that shaded it out. If left alone for a long enough period, your lawn will become a beech-maple-yellow birch-hemlock forest. This happens because the grass, then annual weeds, then perennial weeds, then plants



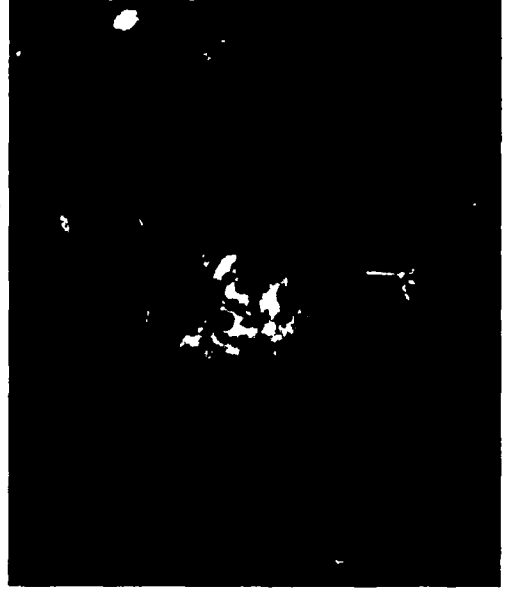
Prairie Warbler

doesn't happen at once, isn't always "just right" and doesn't immediately, at the turn of a switch (unless impacted by fire, wind or a timber harvest) disappear. A birding area or grouse covert develops over time as the plant community evolves as we have described. A good covert will persist at its peak for about ten years and then slowly begin to decline in quality. As the habitat deteriorates or becomes marginal the impact of predators may increase. However, that doesn't mean that total mortality will increase because other causes of mortality may decline at the same time.

One very important side note is that plant succession doesn't always require going back to bare ground to start the process over again. For example, if a mature aspen stand is harvested (clear-cut) that cut will allow sunlight once again to reach the forest floor and the aspen, which is uniquely adapted for this scenario, will immediately sprout suckers from its roots that may grow

for 20 years or more. How can that be? The goldenrod plants aren't that tall and they are crushed back to ground-level each year by the frost and weight of the snow. Goldenrod plants aren't designed to play fair. Their roots release a chemical that inhibits the growth of other, nearby plants. Over time, seeds of taller plants will find suitable sites on which to germinate and shade will once again drive the on-going process of plant succession. Until then, those acres are occupied by a species indicative of a habitat-type that provides little in the way of benefits for many bird species facing a decline in their habitat(s).

Another relatively recent phenomenon is the lack of a transition or brushy phase of plant succession that once occupied the area where a pasture or mowed field butted up against the beginnings of a forest. Those areas, referred to as "edge" are rich in their mix of plant species and thus in wildlife. They are, however, on the wane as fields now abut directly with forests. This phenomenon is easily observed as one drives along most any of the Eastern interstate highways and pays close attention to what he or she is seeing. That same trip during the winter



referred to as brush (honeysuckle, beaked hazel, dogwood, crab-apple, etc.), then early forest trees like aspen, white birch and ironwood which get even taller, then intermediate forest trees like cherry and finally the lasting stage consisting of beech, birch, maple and hemlock whose branches and leaves produce, during the summer growing season, a dense canopy of leaves that blocks all sunlight from reaching the forest floor. Again, it is important to fully understand that it is sunlight, or the absence of sunlight, that drives this process of continuing habitat change. Even though the young forest trees like aspen are taller than the plants beneath them they can not persist longer than the life span of the adult tree. This is the case because the aspen seedling can not survive in the shade of the adult aspen. It is also important to understand that a given birding spot or grouse covert

begin to snare out other young plants responding to that same sunlight.

## Plant Succession: *It Isn't A Set Progression*

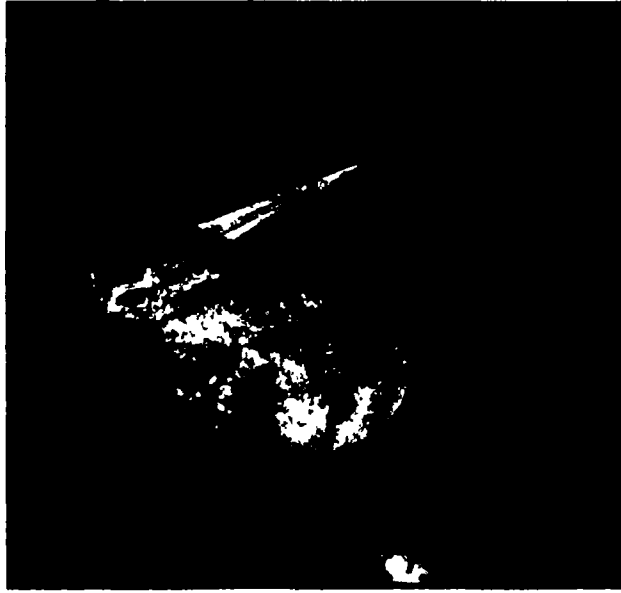
Another important point is that plant succession doesn't always move at the same pace. One site or location, blessed with fertile soil and adequate moisture, may rapidly progress through the stages that eventually lead it a mature forest. Another site may, because one or more factors that limit plant growth are not present in the right amount, stay at an early forest stage like white birch for an unusually long time. This often happens when a "poor" site is burned or scarified (has the surface disturbed) and then invaded by white birches. Because the white birch is an "invader" or pioneer species it is able to survive under conditions where other trees can not. Thus it persists on the landscape, or a rock cut along a highway, until conditions on that site change over time to a point where the seeds of other, taller, tree species can germinate and grow. When that happens, the white birches will be replaced as shade from the taller species inhibits their ability to produce food via photosynthesis. Sunlight, water and fertile soils, or their absence, aren't the only factors that can alter the pace of succession. When a pasture is allowed to go fallow, or un-mowed or untilled, within a relatively short time that site may be invaded by goldenrod. If you live in the northern third of the country, you've seen its golden flowers atop a woody, greenish brown stem as you drive most anywhere during August. Indeed, across the fields in the Northeast, tens of thousands of acres of them are awash with it as more farms continue to be abandoned – and they may stay that way

months when the leaves are off the deciduous trees will also provide a unique opportunity to observe the lack of an understory of shorter vegetation that would, if present, provide food and cover for wildlife beneath those trees. That condition is not limited to small patches of timber, but rather tends to persist for miles along those roadways. Yes, some of those mature trees are oaks and produce acorns or "mast", but not on a consistent, regular basis. What do deer, turkeys and grouse eat during the winters when the fall mast crop was poor?

The last stage of plant succession, often referred to as the climax stage because of its duration, will, if undisturbed by man or nature, persist for hundreds of years – well beyond the life of one adult tree. This happens because the seedlings from those tree species can germinate and prosper in the shade of the "parent" or adult trees overhead. Thus this stage of plant succession is able to perpetuate itself. Later, we'll look at the ramifications of that fact on the wildlife that depend upon it, as well as the other, earlier successional stages or habitats, for their survival.

## Man's Impact on Nature's Process of Plant Succession

Now that we share a common background in the basic ecological principles that impact upon wildlife and its habitat, let's look at what's happened over time with regard to the ever-changing landscape where those habitats occur. In order to do this, we'll select just one hardwood producing state from the Mississippi River eastward because it will typify what has happened in each of those states. New York is somewhat typical



American Woodcock  
Photo by T.C. Flanigan,  
[www.natureexposure.com](http://www.natureexposure.com)



Fire or

in that it was heavily logged and farmed up until the 1950s. As a result, we have a historic, as opposed to pre-historic or "Mother-Nature controlled" record. In the late 1940s, about 100,000 family owned dairy farms went out of business and, as a result, around 10,000,000 acres of farmed lands went fallow. Therefore there were about 10,000,000 acres in the early successional (much in bare ground or grasses) stage of the plant succession process. Coupled with that phenomenon are the tens of thousands of acres of forested lands that had, at about the same time and often for the third time, been harvested and thus were occupied by plants typical of an early stage of plant succession. This scenario repeated itself from Indiana eastward to the New England states. Up until the mid-1980s, clear-cutting was the main harvesting technique used on forest-company lands occupying the 10,000,000 acres comprising the un-organized townships of northern Maine. However, passage of the Maine Forest Practices Act in 1989 has severely curtailed clear-cutting as a management tool and thus the early

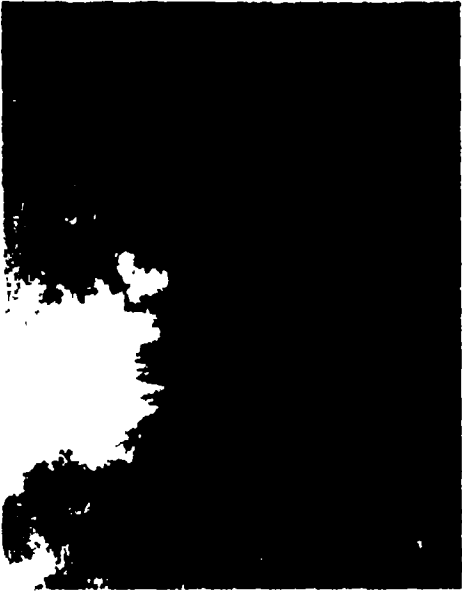


Timber Harvest =

and changing agricultural practices. However, although both groups are nibbling at the edge of the cause, the central issue driving the declines is forest aging and it's much more difficult to get people excited about because it's insidious (not immediately observable) and because the public has been misled to believe that we are, as a nation, running out of trees.

### Changing Popular Perceptions: The Struggle to Introduce Ecological Principles into Forest Stewardship

How does all of this information relate to the title of this article: PLACING WILDLIFE AT RISK BY IGNORING ECOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES? It's difficult to tell exactly when the "public", or self-proclaimed "public interest" groups, decided that the trained wildlife and forestry professional needed to be supplanted by public sentiment and perception. After all, those professionals often worked for the "public" and thus need to be accountable. That is, of course, true. However, for the reasons outlined below,



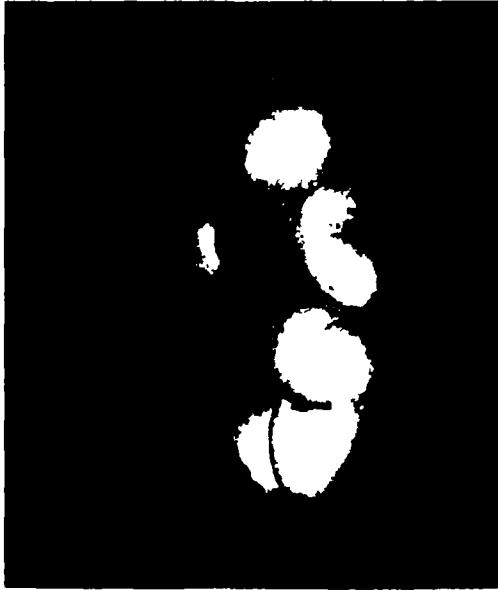
Reinvented Young Forest

for future generations – again, a laudable goal. However, both of these programs are wanting from an ecological basis in terms of their ability to succeed. Neither program has a dime in it for the management or stewardship of those acquired lands, many acres of which are in pasture, fields, woodlots, etc. – the things that give diversity and character to the landscape. What do we all now know will be the ultimate fate of those acres unless they are managed with a specific goal to the contrary in mind? They will, over time, become a beech-birch-maple-hemlock northern hardwood forest and the species now inhabiting them will have their leases vacated? They will either have to move elsewhere or perish from starvation, lack of nesting sites or drumming logs and predation. Is that really what we want? Is that what we intentionally set out to do?

### We Have a Choice

We can preserve the land base upon which vegetation grows and wildlife depends, but we can not "preserve" that vegetation unless it is in the later or climax stage of plant succession without actively managing

northern Maine may fall victim to well-intentioned but ecologically naive policy makers. Many of those clear-cut acres are only now about 25 years along in their successional process, but will soon give way to the spruce-fir forest type of Northern Maine and the mourning warblers will be evicted from their short lease on that site.



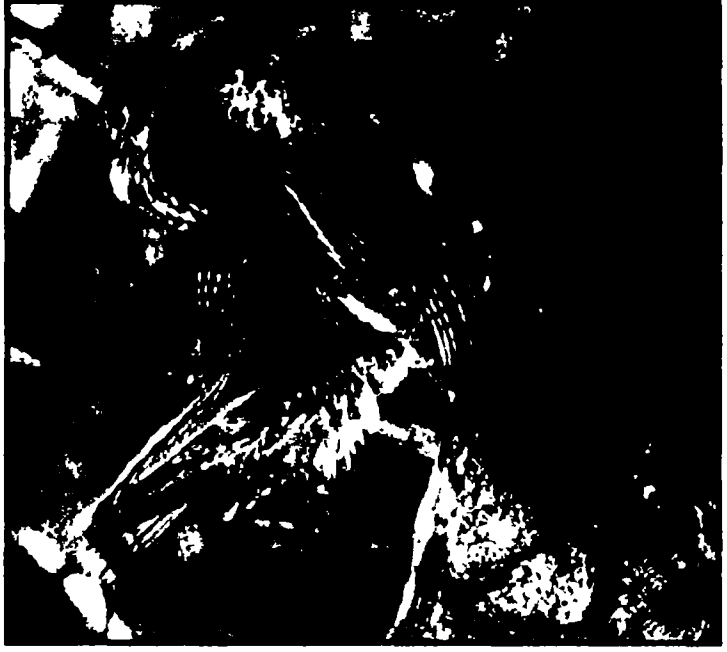
**Ruffed Grouse Chicks** – Photo by Paul Carson

As those very early successional habitats, created by the scenarios described above, began to age and be occupied by taller, more shade tolerant species of “brush”, alders and aspen, state wildlife agencies found themselves blessed with an abundance of game that responded positively to those ecological changes. Game and non-game populations alike blossomed and both birders and hunters took to the fields and woods in great numbers. Things were good. It was not uncommon for a New York or Pennsylvania deer hunter to see 40 deer a day or flush 25 grouse. That was in the 1960s. Let’s fast forward to today. Things have dramatically changed. Hunters are complaining about the lack of game and the impact of predators; and birders are focused on forest fragmentation

accountability have been replaced by attorneys who argue a case not on its ecological merits, but on a point of law or process. We have moved to a process that focuses on determining the impact of an action and then reducing or mitigating that impact (a good thing) but have placed far too little emphasis on identifying the impact of not taking the proposed action, i.e. a cut on a National Forest intended to create early successional habitat for neo-tropical songbirds that may be experiencing population declines. By not focusing on the adverse impact of not taking the proposed action, we have allowed ourselves to abdicate our responsibility under the “Public Trust Doctrine of Law” to assure the long-term viability of early, as well as late, successional species.

If only the science explained above was well understood and applied in both policy-making and political decision-making. One can only hope for that day, but it is not yet here. Again, New York lends itself well to helping elaborate on that point. While serving as Commissioner/CEO of New York’s Department of Environmental Conservation for Governor Pataki, I was fortunate in being able to assist him in gaining passage of a State-wide “Environmental Bond Act” totaling \$1.75 billion. The governor later went on to use a good portion of it to acquire close to one million acres of land in order to “protect” it for future generation – a laudable goal. The City of New York negotiated a historic “Watershed Agreement”, which I signed on behalf of the State, in order to avoid the need to install an EPA mandated water filtration system for its up-state reservoirs. Part of that agreement involves the acquisition of tens of thousands of acres within the watershed that will be “protected”

concurrent processes going on that provide the diversity of habitats wildlife need. One process is plant succession that slowly, yet methodically, moves from the early stage occupied by plant species that are shade intolerant toward plant communities that are shade tolerant. If left unmolested, the process would eventually lead to plant communities consisting of shade tolerant plants, like the Northern hardwood forests, and wildlife that need the early or younger stages would be eliminated. However, natural events like fire, blow-downs and climate change have historically disrupted that orderly progression and created diversity by allowing light to once again reach the forest floor and restart the cycle. For numerous reasons, man has done his best to eliminate fire and to favor the older successional stages. The result is that we



**Ruffed Grouse** – Photo by Paul Carson

# ***A threefold treasure of the uplands we must cherish or lose – habitat, wildlife, hunting.***

There is no way to separate the three. RCS' past successes have been extremely satisfying. But now we have to build on those successes and do even better in the future. Wildlife populations have been left in tatters at times, and habitat components have taken their hits from exploitation – from pressures of expanding civilization. We cannot afford to let anything even close to past misfortunes again overtake our wildlife resources.

Even though in recent years hunters have frequently been demonized, they are the ones who have most passionately come to the defense of wildlife species and the habitats that must be in place for flourishing wildlife populations. And in the round-robin state of affairs, thriving populations of game birds and mammals must exist as a vital component if hunters are to pass on a strong and vibrant sporting-hunting tradition.



Photo by Tim Flanigan



**We're looking at *your* potential.**



*Help ensure the future of young-forest  
wildlife and upland hunting.*

Add your voice and support to the campaign  
for more and better young-forest habitat.  
Become a Ruffed Grouse Society member.

Please contact us at:

451 McCormick Road, Coraopolis, PA,  
15108.

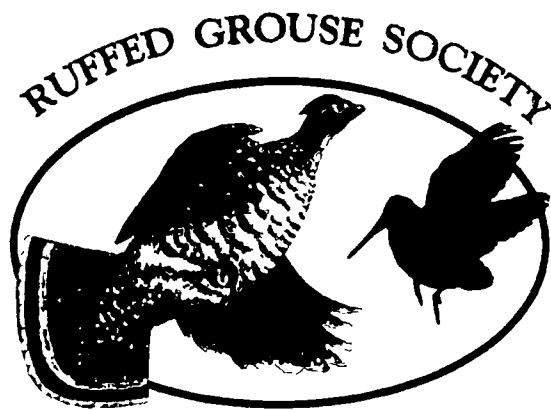
RGS is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.

(412) 262-4044 toll free (888) 564-6747

[rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org)

[www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)





## RGS Overview

# RUFFED GROUSE CONSERVATION PLAN

*Unless we change our policy regarding the management of forests from Minnesota eastward – both public and private – to recognize the need for a mosaic of age classes from very young to mature, we face the potential of having ruffed grouse, American woodcock and dozens of neo-tropical songbirds becoming increasingly imperiled. These are species dependent on young-forest and shrubland habitats, and indeed the ruffed grouse is already recognized as a “species of greatest conservation need” in some New England states. According to the Ruffed Grouse Conservation Plan, roughly two million acres need to be put into active management for young, or as scientists call them “early successional,” forests in order to return to proposed 1980 population levels.*

Once you’ve heard a drumming ruffed grouse, watched the eloquent spring sky dance of the American woodcock or flushed either bird in the fall, you will never – whether a hunter or not – forget the experience. Unfortunately, fewer and fewer people each year encounter grouse or woodcock. This is so even though technically, at least, the ruffed grouse remains North America’s most widely distributed upland game bird.

Beginning in 2003, the Resident Game Bird Working Group of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies gathered together a cadre of experts tasked with creating a plan using viable and pragmatic initiatives to help point the way to more enlightened stewardship of a precious resource. The work would not only benefit the ruffed grouse but also the dozens of other wildlife species, both birds and mammals, that share the ruffed grouse’s habitat on public and private lands. The resulting study, the Ruffed Grouse Conservation Plan, with the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) as a sponsor (and RGS Director of Conservation Policy Dan Dessecker a co-author) was released late last year. The plan, while offering



important insights, also makes clear how far conservationists have to go to save grouse and woodcock, as well as the dozens of songbirds whose presence birdwatchers and other nature lovers have long taken for granted. Two things are certain: (1) this is not a hunting vs. non-hunting issue, and (2) time is running out.