

Ruffed Grouse Society &
American Woodcock Society

and

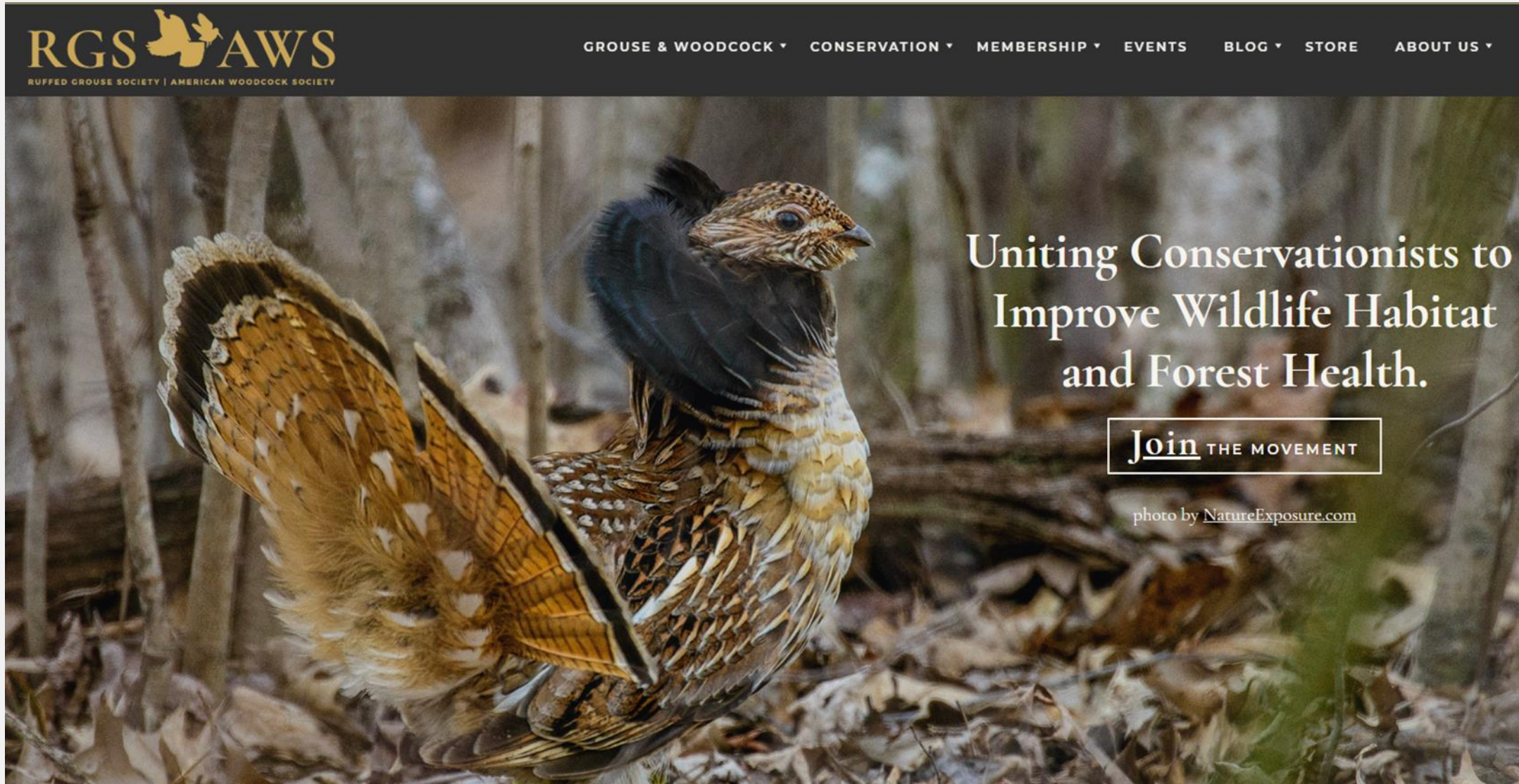
US Army Corps of Engineers



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Background on RGS



Uniting Conservationists to
Improve Wildlife Habitat
and Forest Health.

[Join](#) THE MOVEMENT

photo by [NatureExposure.com](https://www.natureexposure.com)

✕ – *Have identified grouse and woodcock as a species of concern*

RUFFED GROUSE



WOODCOCK



The Bigger—Picture



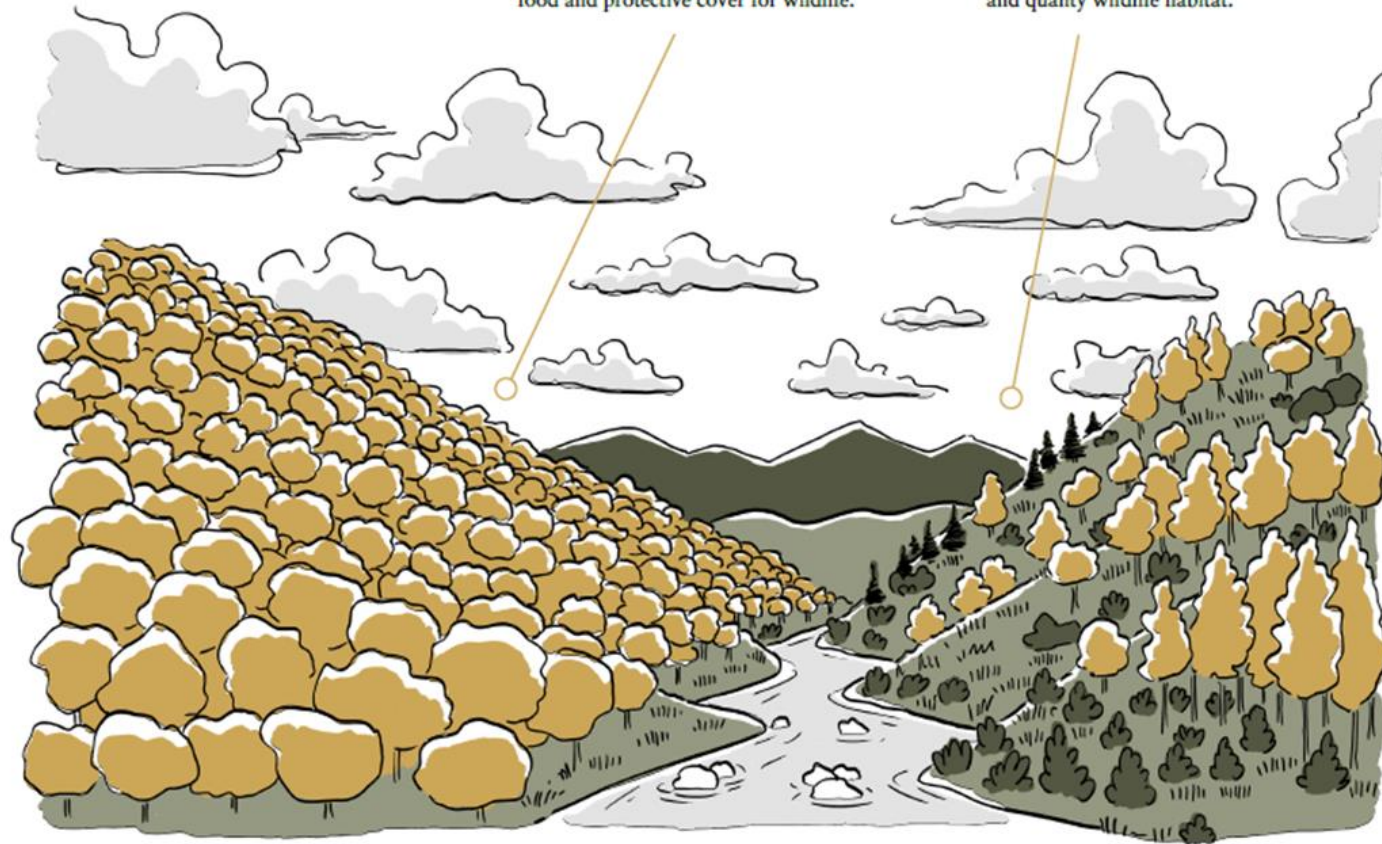
A healthy forest is a fully functioning ecosystem. It sequesters carbon, filters water, cleans the air, and provides homes for wildlife. Current research shows the link between loss of forest diversity and wildlife declines. Grouse and woodcock are bellwethers and their declines mirror trends for dozens of forest wildlife. The problem is lack of sustainable forest management.

SINGLE-AGED FOREST

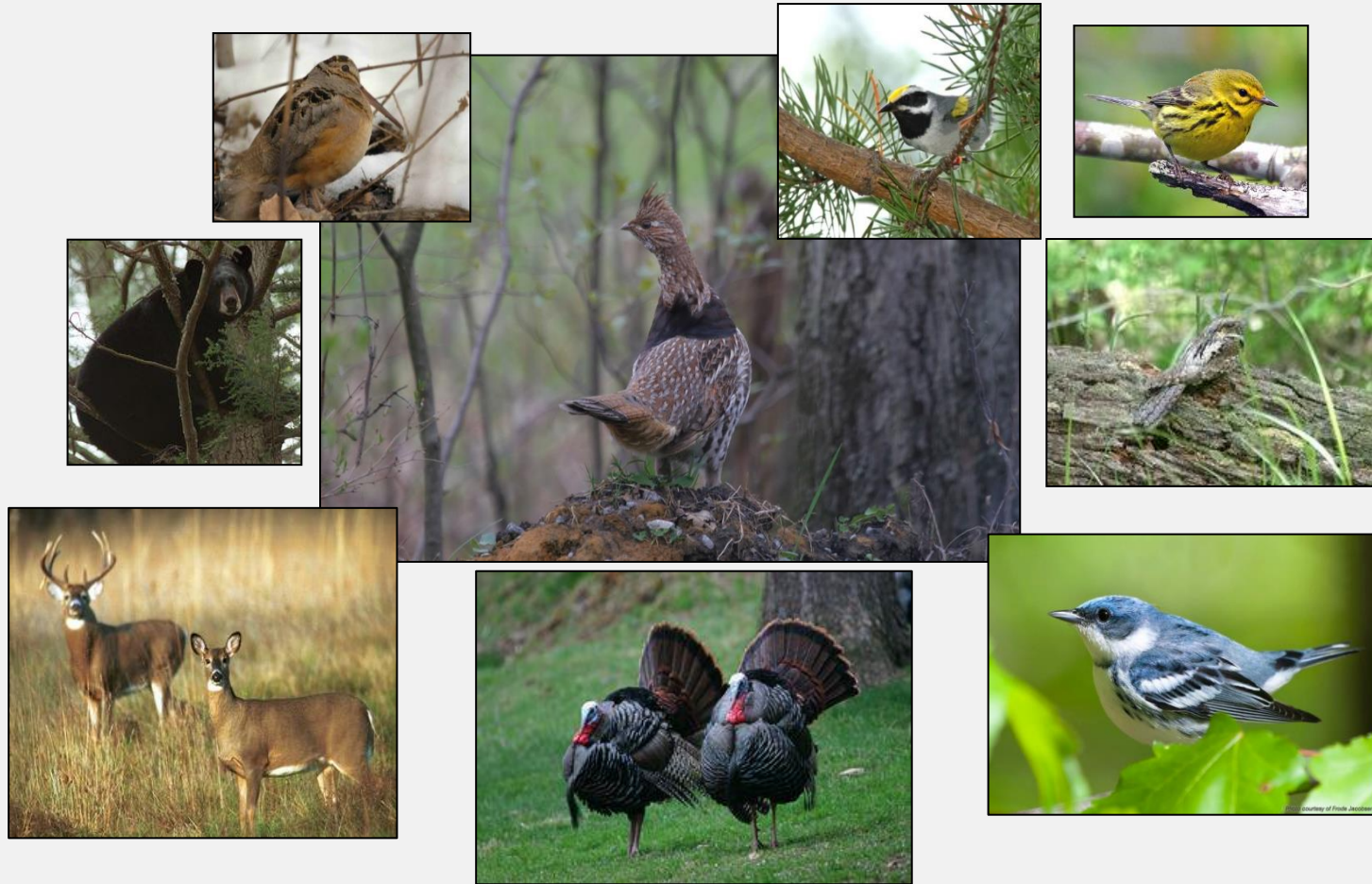
Susceptible to threats like disease, wildfire and invasive species, while lacking necessary food and protective cover for wildlife.

HEALTHY, DIVERSE FORESTS

Resilient to threats, providing whole ecosystem benefits like clean air, clean water, and quality wildlife habitat.



Diversity is paramount to the success of many.



“The cost of failure is species extinction. If we look at trends from now out to 2050, within our lifetimes, we are witnessing extinction of a species where it has persisted for some 25,000 years. An extinction caused by our actions and inactions. It’s not just any species, if we lose the bellwether, other wildlife in turn will fall.”

Benjamin C. Jones, PhD
RGS & AWS President & CEO

Dynamic Forest Restoration

Improving Forest Habitat
and Health with Dynamic
Forest Restoration

A SHIFTING MOSAIC APPROACH



Dynamic Forest Restoration Plans are operational frameworks to implement management over 5-10 years. Dynamic Forest Restoration Plans provide a tangible means to take bites (large, meaningful bites) out of the elephant.

- Preferably, larger scale projects (1,000+ acres)
- Maintain 30-55% old forests
- Maintain 30-55% middle-aged forests
- Restore 15% young forest cover over time
- Address threats to forest health (invasives, disease, etc)
- Use a variety of management tools, including mechanical and chemical veg management, commercial timber harvest, prescribed fire in fire-adapted forests

RGS Regions and Forest Conservation Directors



RGS & AWS Forest Conservation Team

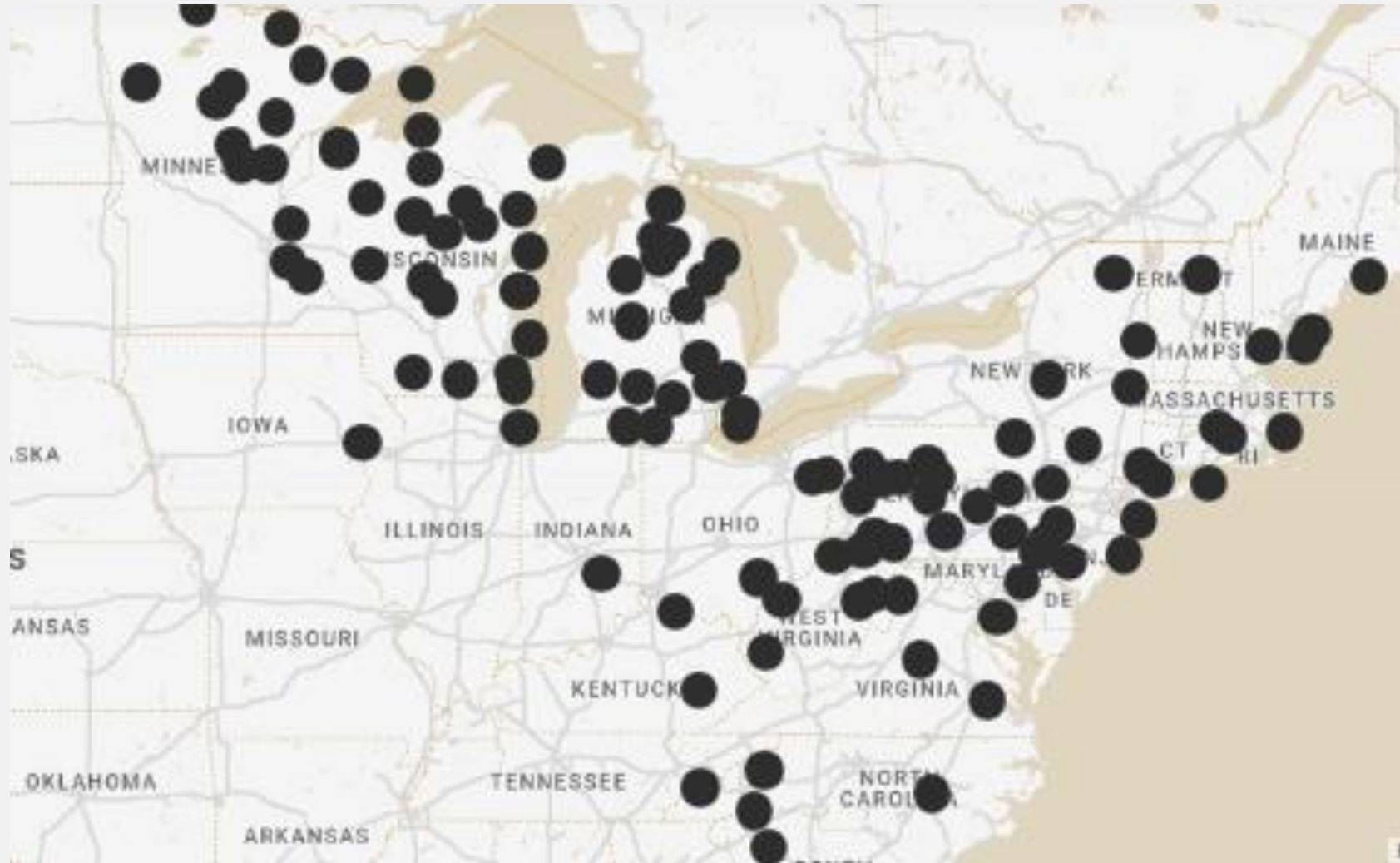
Ben Larson – Mid-Atlantic Forest Conservation Director

Nick Biemiller – Southern Appalachian Forest Conservation Director

Jon Steigerwaldt – Western and Eastern Great Lakes Forest Conservation Director

Todd Waldron – Northeast Forest Conservation Director

RGS Chapters



<https://ruffedgrousesociety.org/chapters/>

Description of Memorandum of Understanding (10/2021)

USACE will strive to:

- Make available to RGS/AWS...existing information on wildlife management on USACE civil works lands
- Look for opportunities, as appropriate, for partnership initiatives with RGS/AWS.
- Provide access for RGS/AWS to USACE civil works lands...
- Provide appropriate on-site recognition of RGS/AWS involvement in specific conservation, restoration, and/or management activities.
- As appropriate, enter into partnership agreements for endeavors to accomplish specific work or research projects.

RGS/AWS will strive to:

- Support USACE conservation and improvement of forest habitat for ruffed grouse, American woodcock, and other forest wildlife.
- Provide technical assistance on wildlife habitat management.
- Support ongoing and planned habitat management through the potential involvement of RGS/AWS chapters and members.
- Explore and support innovative forest management approaches and joint ventures.
- Explore and support reforestation activities.
- Notify our staff and chapter leaders as needed about this agreement.



Raystown Lake (PA)

Projects between 2012-2017

- Timber sales
- Noncommercial management
- Seedlings
- Food plots
- Herbicide




Wildlife Habitat in this area was provided through funds donated by:

Additional Contributions from:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
PA Game Commission

Managing young forest for woodcock

- providing dense growth for cover
- Clearing areas for singing and roosting
- Improving moist soil conditions



Tionesta Lake (PA)

- Volunteer-based alder management of alder along Tionesta Creek to create woodcock habitat
- Four RGS chapters (from NW PA and NE OH)
- Boy Scout Troop #82, Pheasants Forever, and Keystone Conservation Action



Joseph Sayers Lake and Bald Eagle State Park (PA)



BALD EAGLE STATE PARK NATIVE PLANT AND EARLY-SUCCESSIONAL STAGE HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT

COOPERATING AGENCIES:



1. Maintaining the mosaic of fields and fencerows that existed when the Park was established, including saving fencerows that mark old property boundaries and woodlots that were part of the historical setting.
2. Maintaining important views throughout the Park.
3. Maintaining the high quality recreational opportunities that exist at the Park, including wildlife-related viewing and hunting.
4. Controlling exotic plants and promoting native species.
5. Managing for old field and early-successional stage wildlife habitat.

Jennings Randolph Lake (MD)

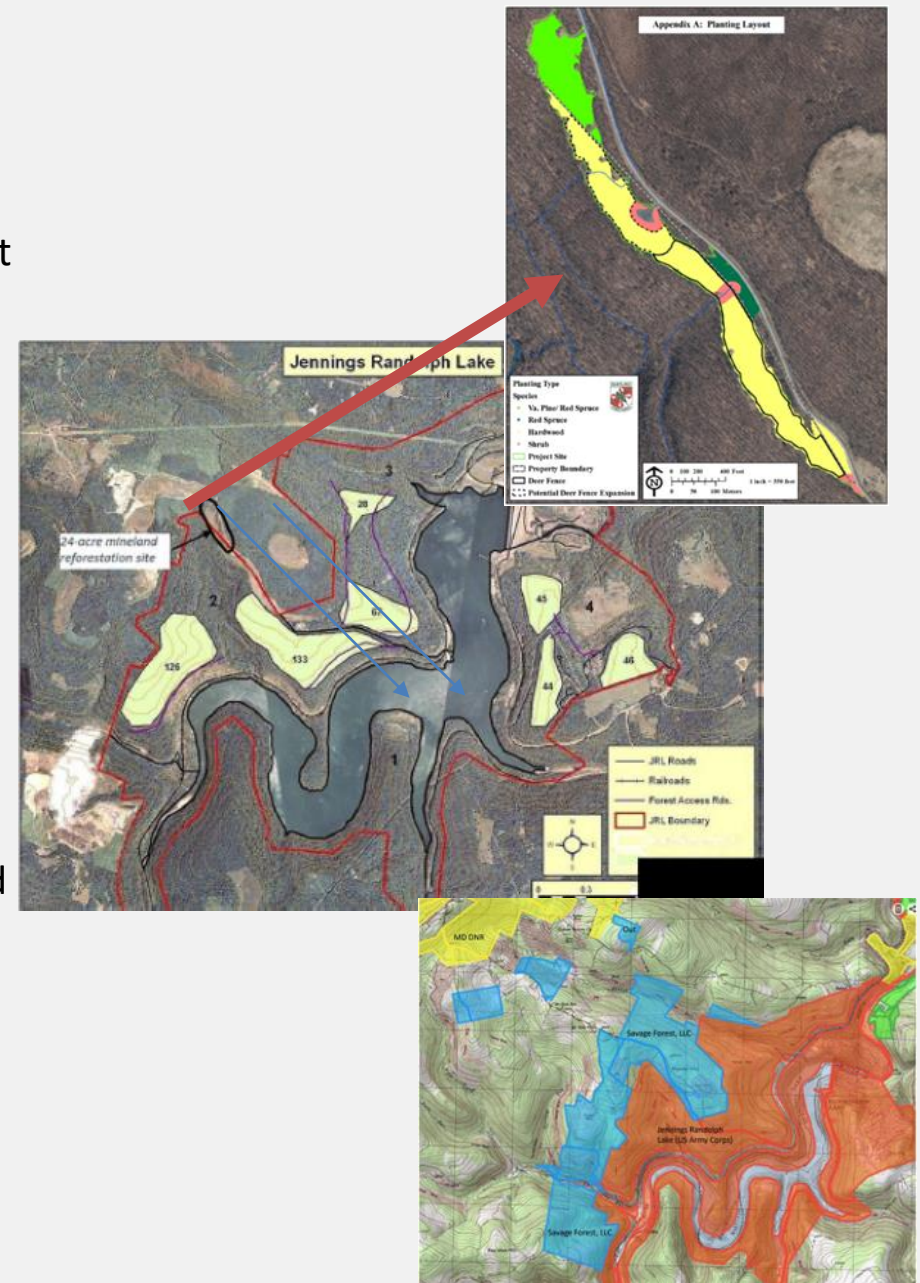
2013—RGS and JRL sign memorandum of understanding to collaboratively implement JRL's natural resource management goals

2013-2019

- RGS funds weed control, fertilizing, and planting 2-5 acres of trees on old quarry site (site 4 on map)
- RGS helps plan and implement 45-acre forest management and habitat improvement project on east or WV side of Jennings Randolph Lake.
- RGS, MD Forest Service, and Office of Surface Mining Reclamation, and Enforcement (OSMRE) plan and plant a 24-acre mineland reforestation project (map on left)
- RGS and US ACE forester Glenn Werner (US ACE Raystown Lake Forester) plan and implement 46-acre forest management and habitat improvement project on 67-acre stand on west or MD side of Jennings Randolph Lake.

Next Steps

- JRL and NRCS are collaborating on forest management
- RGS is working with neighboring private landowners to implement good forest management and/or mineland reforestation projects



Blackwater and Hopkinton-Everett (NH)

- The surrounding lands are managed in partnership with New Hampshire Department of Conservation and Natural Resources a long-term, which has a long-term agreement to do the forest management.
- RGS & AWS NE Forest Conservation Director (Todd Waldron) and RGS & AWS chapter habitat chair Jeremy Thompson meet annually with USACE and DCNR to ID goals and priorities
- Woodcock habitat restoration needs and opportunities that can be dovetailed into their work with DCNR egs., signing ground maintenance, rotational mowing, and coordinated harvest planning
- RGS & AWS Granite State chapter is helping USACE execute these recommendations.



Future collaboration priorities

- Most USACE facilities have riparian and other low-lying forests that provide woodcock habitat, but these stands need ongoing management to maintain a mosaic of habitats, including young stands
- Ecologically-appropriate regeneration harvests will create critical young forest habitat (integrating all water-quality BMPs and other conservation practices)
- Integrate active management of upland forests where possible
- Use active, upland forest management to the extent possible to help pay for 1) woodcock hunter walker trails and 2) non-commercial habitat work, esp. in lowland forests
- Hunter-walker trails are a prime opportunity to integrate recreation and habitat management, esp through lowland forests managed for woodcock and non-game wildlife
- Engage beginning and diverse hunters through hunter walker trails, collaborative signage, RGS chapter-led training events, etc.

RGS Regions and Forest Conservation Directors



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