



Ruffed Grouse Society News Letter Page

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SKYLANDS CHAPTER.

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RGS Invited to Commissioner Round Table by Mark Banker

On April 28th, RGS was invited to attend DEP commissioner Brad Campbell's natural resources discussion group in Trenton offering us a golden opportunity to voice our support for habitat management and to express any concerns directly to the commissioner. Included in the round table were Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited and groups representing scuba divers and the commercial saltwater fishing industry.

Regional Biologist Mark Banker attended on behalf of RGS. RGS has already been involved in a habitat group organized by fish and wildlife and has met with Director Marty Mchugh several times. At the commissioner's meeting there was widespread support for increased forest management (also known as cutting trees) to address habitat needs of a variety of species and to help allay the negative effects of deer browsing in the understory of the state's mature middle-aged forests. The commissioner encouraged pilot programs that include a timber harvest. We assured him such programs were under way at Flatbrook, Sparta Mountain, and Assunpink, N.J. Audubon and others expressed the same concern as RGS. We look forward to future opportunities to address the commissioner but must also work hard to put habitat on the ground to showcase the benefits of management. Our chapters are doing a great job so far.

Workday at Wallkill- Despite a low turnout the Skylands chapter completed a successful workday at the Wallkill refuge two weeks ago trees were cut and the railroad bed was cleared for woodcock surveys. An added bonus was the discovery of a female woodcock on a nest with 4 eggs. We quickly moved away from the area so she could nest undisturbed.

Next meeting will be Thursday June 9th at 7:00 PM at the Lafayette house in Lafayette Village.