

RGS SKYLANDS CHAPTER NEWSLETTER---njgrouse.com

For Chapter information. Call 973-702-8380 or email jjdesaye@yahoo.com

Many of you go to the banquets, and make donations in good faith while others become actively involved in habitat projects. This month I will let you know how your money is being spent

A few weeks ago I was approached by Robert McDowell, the retired Dir.of NJ Fish and Wildlife on behalf of a group of environmental organizations asking for help in the purchase of over 800 acres in Sussex County I said I would see what I could do but was not optimistic. The first step was to bring it up at a chapter meeting where the attending members voted 100% yes. I then contacted regional Biologist Mark Banker and pitched my case. Mark said he thought it was a unique opportunity but knew that as of now national was tight of funds. We discussed the merits of the project and although a small chapter like ours could only make a relatively small donation,. It would give us the chance to be part of something special, saving a large piece of land from development, An opportunity that does not come by often. Mark took our request to a meeting at national and the next day I received an email stating RGS was in, donating to the down payment on the land. Mark was also able to give valuable info. On where additional grant money may be available.Part of what you spent went directly to purchase property your children and grandchildren may hike, fish, hunt or just admire in the future.

Every year since we have started, RGS chapters have used money you spend to create wildlife habitat throughout the state. We have active projects in over a half dozen different sites creating young healthy forests by cutting and planting trees wherever and whenever possible. I have given up counting how many trees the skylands and Somerset Hills chapters have planted. But we will continue to do so with several new project sites opening up as early as this summer and continuing through this fall and winter. All trees we have planted all expenses that occur during these work days as well as a portion of Regional Biologist Mark Bankers salary comes from money raised in New Jersey.(A side note about Mark Banker. He is responsible for several states everyone much larger and more demanding than NJ. However he spends a very large amount of time here, and is always available when we need him whether for a meeting with state officials, or to finalize and participate in a project). We are working on large scale projects with the state. Large landscape changing projects that will make a difference in providing food and cover for numerous species including Grouse, Turkey, numerous threatened and endangered songbirds, and even bears. Once these projects are implemented we should see bird populations begin to rebound.

Our next meeting is Thursday July 21, at 700 pm at the Lafayette house please contact me if you wish to attend. All are welcome.

Thank You Jim Desaye