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Comments:
Grouse in the Nantahala & Pisgah National Forest Plans

Good morning,

I am writing to support provisions to help ruffed grouse in the management plans.

I am pleased to see mention on the importance of early successional habitat in all eco-zones.

I would like to see a priority on maintaining, and restoring/expanding wildlife habitat for ruffed grouse, whether through restoring fire frequency, forestry, or other means. Restoring/creating young forest benefits much more than just grouse, but I believe currently there is a large amount of old or older growth forest which has had a negative affect on the proliferation of ruffed grouse. Appropriate distribution of forest age class is a must as well as maintaining a diversity of open habitats.

Additionally, I think grouse hunting could be viewed as a distinct recreational opportunity, much like trout fishing. Done right, the Nantahala and Pisgah could become destinations for grouse hunters in both the southeast and middle states who cannot travel to upper Michigan, Wisconsin, or Minnesota. Additionally, with Pennsylvania's grouse population plunging due to West Nile Virus, it could be another destination opportunity for hunters in the mid-coast states.

Thank you for considering my comments. Should you have questions, or there are opportunities for further input, via e-mail, phone, or in-person I am happy to help.

Best,

Mike Neiduski
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