

October 7, 2025
Jay Martin, North Zone NEPA Planner
GW-Jefferson National Forest

Dear Joby Timm,

On behalf of the Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society (RGS/AWS) and our members, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) of the Forest-wide Open Lands Vegetation Management Project of the George Washington-Jefferson National Forest (GWNF).

Established in 1961, the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) is North America's foremost conservation organization dedicated to creating healthy forests, abundant wildlife and promoting a conservation ethic. Together with the American Woodcock Society (established in 2014), RGS & AWS work with landowners and government agencies to develop critical wildlife habitat utilizing scientific management practices. Our mission is to unite conservationists around wildlife habitat and forest conservation.

RGS supports the project and the US Forest Service's efforts to maintain forest openings, which are valuable for many species of wildlife. RGS particularly supports the planned maintenance of 14,000 acres of existing open lands established to increase habitat diversity.

The proposed management actions to maintain wildlife openings are prudent, based on existing and established management practices.

RGS/AWS believes that active management is an invaluable tool in achieving the multiple-use mandate of the USFS, to achieve desired conditions under time constraints for rapidly declining species in a changing world, and to maintain a diverse portfolio of conditions (including carbon sequestration and storage) and management approaches that sustain the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Larson

Ben Larson

Mid-Atlantic Forest Conservation Director and Director of Forest Markets Strategy
Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society