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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Early Successional Habitat Creation Project (ESHCP) on the GMNF. The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS), a not-for-profit 501(C)3 conservation organization of over 16,000 members, fully supports the ESHCP proposal. We recognize that the ESHCP, using even-age silvicultural regeneration treatments on appropriate forest stands, will create forest openings that will regenerate naturally into the seedling-sapling stage of forest growth needed or preferred by many species of neotropical migrant songbirds for nesting, and for foraging during nesting, fledging, post-fledging, and migration periods; this stage of forest successional also is important for many species of non-migratory wildlife such as black bear, white-tailed deer, snow shoe hare, and ruffed grouse.
RGS applauds GMNF in the scale of this project, which will move the Forest closer to attaining forest age-class diversity goals approved in the GMNF Forest Plan.
The use of timber harvesting (timber sales) to achieve habitat and forest age-class diversity goals also has the social benefits of aiding the region economically via timber products and direct and indirect employment associated with the timber harvests. The resulting forest regeneration, although ephemeral, also will benefit wildlife-dependent recreation such as nature observation, photography, and hunting, and commerce associated with these recreational opportunities.