



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Monongahela N.F.
Marlinton District
P.O. Box 210 Marlinton,
WV 24954 (304) 799-
4334

Monongahela N.F.
White Sulphur District
410 East Main Street
White Sulphur Springs, WV
(304) 536-2144

Date: September 16 2003

For Immediate Release

Contact: Robert Stovall
Phone Number: 304-799-4334

Agencies Partner to Enhance Area Wildlife Habitat

(Marlinton) –On September 10, officials from the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), West Virginia Division of Natural Resources and Monongahela National Forest visited two savannahs they created through a Challenge Cost Share Agreement. All parties agreed the project was a complete success and look forward to other opportunities for partnerships.



From left to right are: Dave Gibson Marlinton/WSS RD Biological Tech, Clyde Thompson Monongahela National Forest Supervisor, Rondi Fischer Marlinton/WSS RD District Ranger, Shawn Head WV DNR Wildlife Biologist, Bob Farkasovsky Senior Regional Director National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), Cully McCurdy WV DNR Rimel Area Wildlife Manager and Robert Stovall Marlinton/WSS RD South Zone Wildlife Biologist.

The savannahs, planned in the late 1990s as part of the Brandy Camp Timber Sale on Lockridge Mountain in Pocahontas County, total 29 acres. The Forest Service used the timber sale to open up the landscape by removing unneeded trees and hoped to use sale receipts to fund the rest of the project, including removal of smaller trees, stump and slash removal, seed bed preparation, fertilizing, liming and seeding. When the sale did not raise enough money, it looked like



completion of the project would not occur. Shawn Head, DNR Wildlife Biologist, suggested that his agency and the NWTF could help the Forest Service with the project. He was able to get a commitment of \$10,000 from the DNR and \$10,000 from the NWTF Superfund, while the Forest Service contributed the remaining \$17,000 needed to fund the project. The Forest Service pooled the funds and completed the contract last spring. Grass and forb establishment was very successful due, in part, to the generous rainfall received this spring and summer. The DNR and Forest Service will work together to maintain the savannahs over time.

Savannahs provide important habitat for wild turkey, grouse, deer, bear, and non-game wildlife. Non-game species such as rodents and snakes take advantage of the occasional woodpiles while raptors use the trees to hunt these prey species. The widely scattered residual oak and hickory trees provide abundant acorns and hickory nuts, while the grasses and forbs that grow beneath provide abundant insect life and cover for turkey and grouse brood rearing habitat. The standing snags provide denning, roosting, foraging, and nesting habitat for various bird and mammal species. Residual white pine provides additional roosting cover and nest sites for area wildlife. Biologists monitoring the savannahs have already observed an abundance of wildlife in the area including bears and turkeys.

On hand to review the project were Bob Farkasovsky, Senior Regional Director for the NWTF, WV DNR representatives Shawn Head and Cully McCurdy - Rimel Area Wildlife Manager, Monongahela National Forest representatives Clyde Thompson - Forest Supervisor, Rondi Fischer - District Ranger, Robert Stovall - Wildlife Biologist and David Gibson – Biological Technician, along with several folks from the Forest Service Region 9 Regional Office.

For more information, contact Robert Stovall, South Zone Wildlife Biologist, Marlinton/White Sulphur Ranger Districts at (304) 799-4334.