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For Immediate Release
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Groups work together to help Sharp-Tailed Grouse on National Forest

April 1, 2009 Park Falls, WI -On March 28th members of the Wisconsin Sharp tail grouse Society (WSGS), staff from the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) and the Wisconsin DNR, volunteers from the Student Chapters of the UW-Madison and UW-Stevens Point Wildlife Society, and students from Northland College, gathered for the first annual "brush out". The group joined forces using hand tools to improve habitat at the Riley Lake Wildlife Management area located on the CNNF's west side. This area harbors one of the last of 10 managed populations of the sharp-tailed grouse species in Wisconsin.

The crew sawed, snipped, and lopped down small trees and undesirable alder and willow brush at targeted areas in need of management within the current sharp-tailed grouse habitat management area. One of the goals was to restore a historic breeding site in hopes that birds will again use it in their annual breeding display. This display behavior finds male grouse buzzing around in various patterns stamping their feet rapidly attempting to attract a female for breeding. "Having all these groups come together to accomplish this amount of work was a tremendous help. We appreciate everyone's willingness to pitch in and we look forward to next year's project." said, Dan Eklund, Forest Biologist.

Reducing brush and small trees in this area is needed to maintain a mosaic of grass and brush lands for native bird species. Sharp-tailed grouse have lost upwards of 70% of its historic habitat across the state of WI in the last 50+ years due to development. Riley Lake is intensively managed by the CNNF to sustain the species into the future.

The CNNF plans to make this an annual event, and anyone interested in helping can contact the Forest Biologist, Dan Eklund at the Park Falls office at (715) 762-2461.

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