

Ruffed Grouse in KY



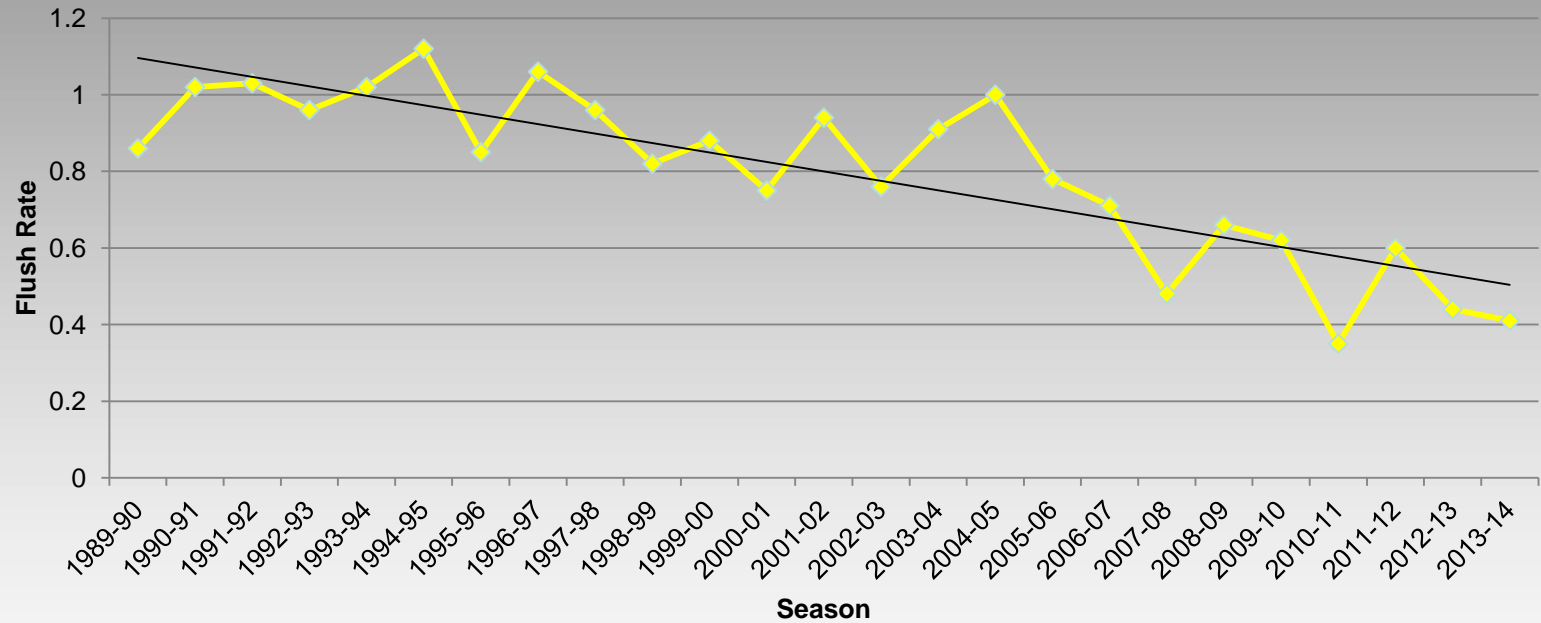
Overview

- **Population trends**
- **State of the forest**
- **Current work**
- **New opportunities**
- **Vision for the future**
- **Public input**



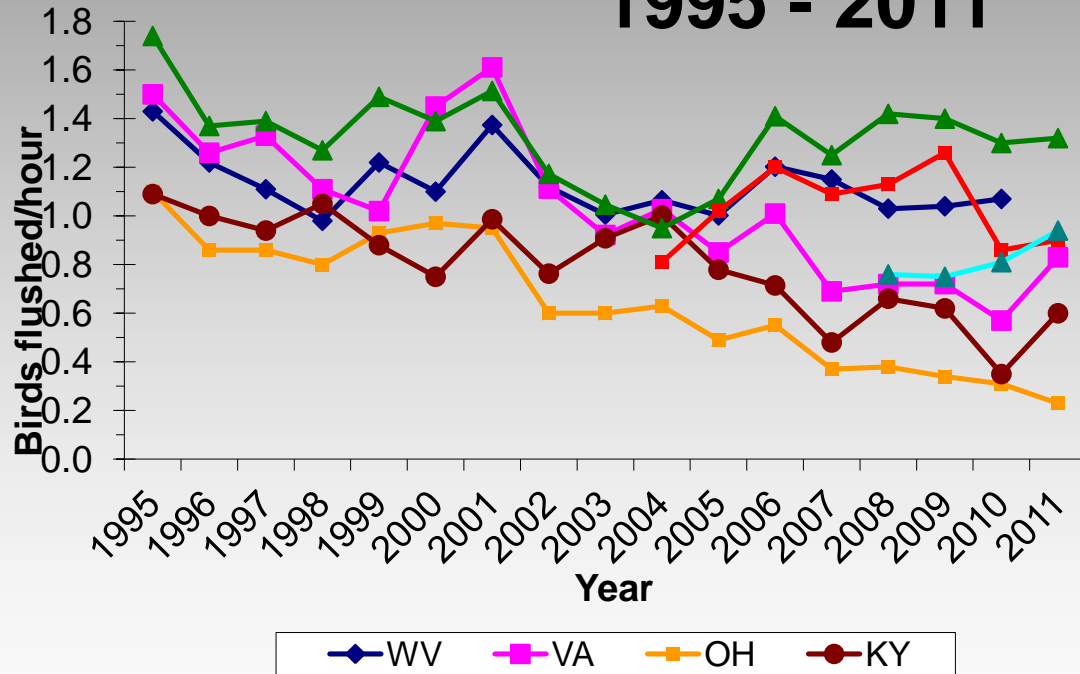
Population trends

Flush Rates from Grouse Hunter Logs in Kentucky;
1989-2014



Not just a KY issue

Ruffed Grouse Flush Rates, 1995 - 2011

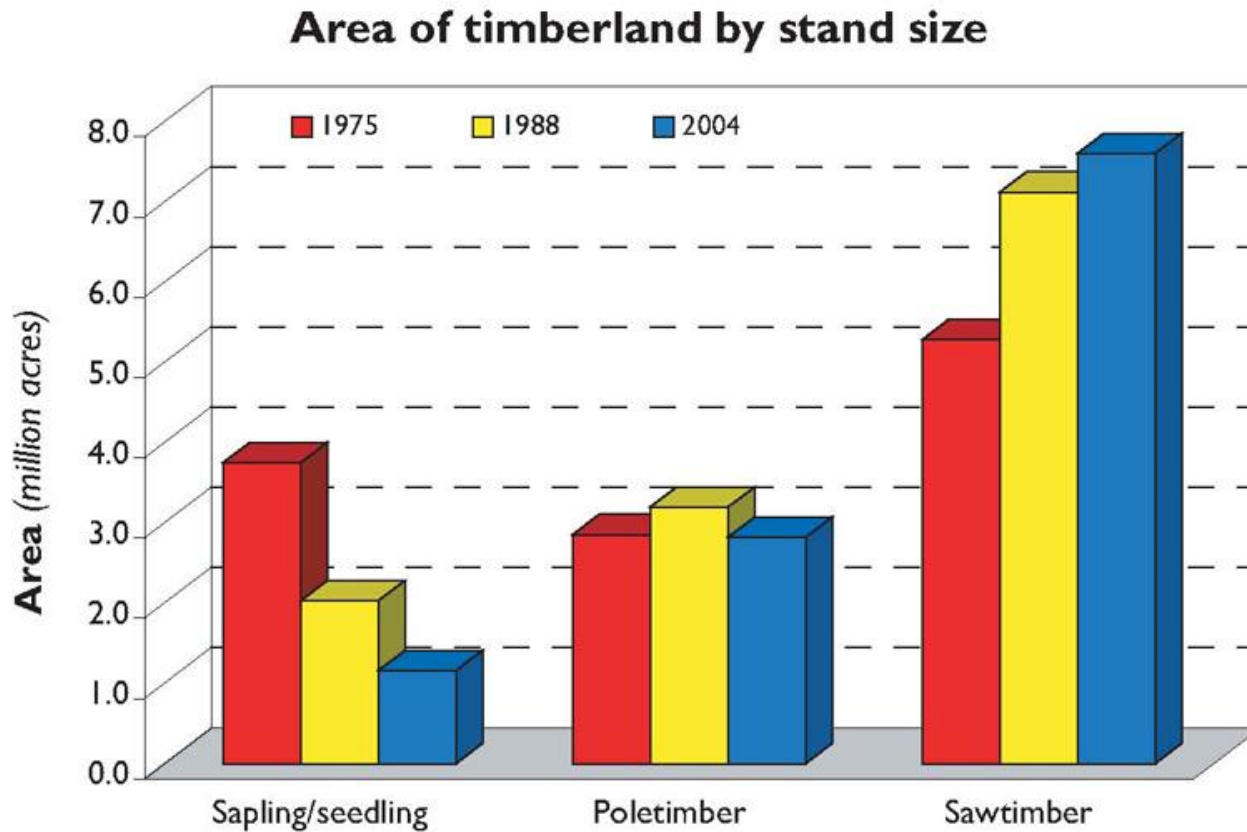


What's the Problem?

- **Statewide – Mature forest that lack adequate young forests**
- **Public lands – Same issue but more pronounced**

KY Forest Inventory

US Forest Service



KY Forest Realities

- **Mature forest ready for harvest**
- **Forests are controlled by private landowners**
- **Maples are a dominate component of the understory**



Key to Success

- **Commercial Harvest that is:**
 - **Well-located**
 - **Well-timed**
 - **Well-managed**
- **Shelterwood, group selection, and diameter limited**





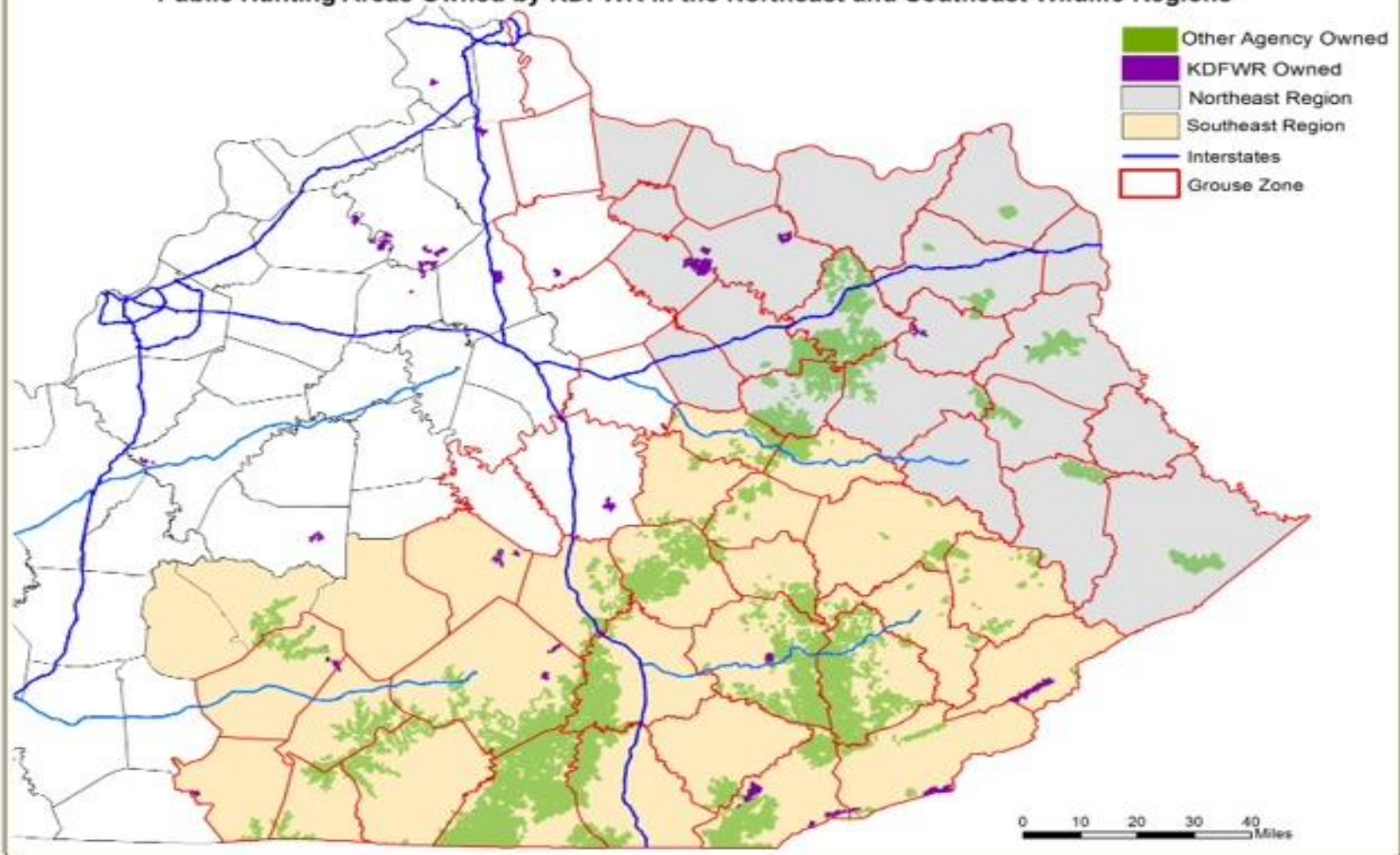
Northeast Region



Public Land in the Northeast and Southeast Regions

- **Approximately 74,268 acres of Wildlife Management Areas in Northeast**
- **Approximately 322,580 acres of WMA's or PHA in the Southeast**
- **Total- 395,909 acres**
- **651,811 of DBNF**
- **KDFWR owns 26,570 acres**

Public Hunting Areas Owned by KDFWR in the Northeast and Southeast Wildlife Regions



Habitat Management

- **KDFWR staff are working to create grouse habitat, implementing practices such as:**
 - **Commercial harvest**
 - **Patch clear cuts**
 - **Crop tree release**
 - **Edge Feathering for soft mast**
 - **Planting of Soft Mast shrubs**



Good for Grouse, Bad for People

- **There are habitat events that we can build on and learn from**
 - **Ice Storm Damage-**
 - 2003- Huge ice storm damage
 - 2008- Localized damage but had a noticeable impact
 - **Tornado damage**
 - 2012- ½ to 1 mile wide across multiple counties
 - **Timber products and demand outside of traditional markets**

Partnerships

- **The key is partnerships**
 - **DBNF**
 - **KDF**
 - **COE**
 - **NRCS**
 - **League of Kentucky Sportsmen**
 - **Local sportsmen clubs**



Partnership Success

- **The League of Kentucky Sportsmen donated 2 skid steers with forest management attachments.**
- **USFS obtained an excavator and masticator head, possibly a skid steer and masticator through the Triplett Creek Watershed project.**
- **These allow staff to be more efficient and effective on forest management practices.**

New Opportunities

- **Wisconsin Agreement**
 - Increased funding to support habitat
 - Creation of Forest Management Focus Areas
 - Trap/Transfer of WI grouse



Future Vision

- **Long-term Campaign (15-20 years)**
 - **Begin with Focus Areas: similar to Quail Restoration Initiative (~ 10,000 acres)**
 - **Engage with Forest Products Industry**
 - **Use Public Focal Areas as demo sites**

Partnership is critical!

