The 600-acre grouse management unit is on an 80-year timber harvest rotation. Each cutting block has eight to 10 mast-producing trees per acre set aside as “leave” (won’t be cut) trees to provide food and seed for regenerating each block. Between each clearcut block is a block of similar size that will receive a crop-tree release treatment. This involves designating the best quality trees in the block as crop trees and removing the small trees with sparse crowns which compete with them for food, water and minerals. Releasing the crown of the designated crop trees will increase their growth and mast production. Crop-tree release has been proven in some areas to double the amount of mast produced in a stand. The blocks that received the crop-tree treatment will also receive a prescribed fire to remove the leaf litter and encourage the growth of herbaceous vegetation on the forest floor, improving feeding areas for both grouse and woodcock. The spacing of these cut areas with the crop tree blocks will provide a patchwork of cover, brood range, nesting and feeding areas all within a short traveling distance.

Another part of the WHIP plan is to create 30 acres of permanent clearings on the area. WRS personnel created 10 acres in the summer of 2008. Previous logging roads and landings were used to develop the clearings. Trees were cut along logging roads to provide more sunlight for winter wheat and clover which were seeded. Logging was expanded into clearings ranging in size from one to five acres. All roads and clearings received winter wheat seed in the fall as a cover crop. Personnel applied a white clover by fall seeding in the winter of 2009. All clearings on the area will be maintained in various species of clovers to provide turkeys, grouse and woodcock with brood range and feeding areas. High-protein forage in these clearings will also attract white-tailed deer. WRS personnel plan to develop more clearings during the summer of 2009. Due to the ongoing habitat management and property acquisition, Beury Mountain WMA has greatly improved hunting and outdoor recreation opportunities. No camping is allowed on the area, but visitors can camp at nearby Babcock State Park. You can contact the WRS District Office in Beckley at 304-256-6947 for more information.

Todd Dowdy is the wildlife manager at Beury Mountain WMA.