

# Mid-Late Successional Forest Habitat Assessment Guide

Landowner Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** This assessment shall be used to identify the habitat limiting factors for wildlife species dependent on mid to late successional forest habitat. This habitat assessment guide should not be used for sites NOT associated with agricultural tracts (i.e., do not use when doing whole farm planning for agricultural lands). Each site must be assessed and scored individually. Weighted averages are not allowed.

If the evaluation determines that the current habitat quality is less than 0.5 (on a scale of 0 to 1), recommendations will be made to improve the existing habitat so the planned (future) condition will have a quality rating of 0.5 or more. **If wildlife is the client’s primary objective, the land unit must achieve a quality rating of 0.7 or better.** If the evaluation determines that the current condition is equal to or greater than 0.5 (or 0.7 if wildlife in the primary objective), recommendations will be made to maintain the existing habitat in its present condition.

For all the habitat components below, select the habitat description that most closely mirrors the site(s) being appraised and enter that value in the table. Both the existing and planned conditions must be evaluated.

**1. Overstory – Midstory Composition**

- >5 native tree species predominate, including mast producers and conifers, several size classes present or natural forest type that typically has fewer species = 10
- 3 to 5 native tree species predominate, including mast producers and conifers, several size classes present = 7
- 2 native tree species predominate and/or few size classes present = 3
- 1 tree species present and or single size class = 1

	Site No.				
<b>Existing Condition</b>					
<b>Planned Condition</b>					

**2. Shrub and Herbaceous Composition**

- >40% cover of native shrubs, vines and/or herbaceous plants (total of at least 3 different species) or natural forest type that typically has little understory vegetation = 10
- 20-40% cover of native shrubs, vines and/or herbaceous plants (total of at least 3 different species) = 7
- <20% cover of native shrubs, vines and/or herbaceous plants = 3
- Non-native invasive species constitute  $\geq 30\%$  of shrub, vine and/or herbaceous layer = 1

	Site No.				
<b>Existing Condition</b>					
<b>Planned Condition</b>					

**3. Forest Size Class Distribution**

- 5-10% regeneration, 35-45% sapling-pole, 35-55% in sawtimber = 10
- Regeneration, sapling-pole and sawtimber represented but not within the ranges described above = 7
- 2 size classes represented, neither comprising  $\geq 80\%$  of the stand = 3
- A single size class predominant (i.e., comprises  $\geq 80\%$  of stand) = 1

	Site No.				
<b>Existing Condition</b>					
<b>Planned Condition</b>					

**4. Snags and Cavity Trees**

- $\geq 7$  snags or cavity trees per acre and at least one snag per acre is larger than 20" DBH = 10
- 5 to 6 snags or cavity trees per acre = 8
- 4 snags or cavity trees per acre = 5
- 2 to 3 snags or cavity trees per acre = 3
- 0 to 1 snag or cavity tree per acre = 1

	Site No.				
<b>Existing Condition</b>					
<b>Planned Condition</b>					

### 5. Domestic Animal and/or Human Impacts

- No or minimal disturbance: ground cover and downed woody debris in excellent condition = 10
- Light to moderate disturbance: ground cover and downed woody debris is lightly disturbed = 5
- Frequent and/or heavy disturbance: no downed woody debris present, impacts to sensitive areas, etc. = 1

	Site No.				
<b>Existing Condition</b>					
<b>Planned Condition</b>					

### Scoring

For each site being evaluated, enter the before and after values for each habitat component. There is a total of 50 points possible. Divide the total for each site (both the existing and planned conditions) by 50. This will give you a value between 0 and 1, which represents the habitat value of the particular site for forest dependent wildlife species in the existing and in the planned condition.

	Overstory - Midstory	Shrub - herbs	Size Class	Snags & Cavity trees	Impacts	Total	Habitat Value (total/50)
<b>Site No.</b>							
Existing Condition							
Planned Condition							
<b>Site No.</b>							
Existing Condition							
Planned Condition							
<b>Site No.</b>							
Existing Condition							
Planned Condition							
<b>Site No.</b>							
Existing Condition							
Planned Condition							
<b>Site No.</b>							
Existing Condition							
Planned Condition							