Early Successional Habitat Development/Management

North Carolina Practice Job Sheet 647

Prepared for: _____

Prepared by: _____

Farm: _____ Tract: _____ Date: _____

A native grass planting provides early successional habitat.

DEFINITION

Managing early plant succession to benefit desired wildlife species or natural communities.

SPECIFICATIONS

This jobsheet has been prepared for your site using technical guidance published in the NRCS North Carolina Field Office Technical Guide. Follow the specifications for habitat establishment, management, operation and maintenance to improve habitat conditions for:

_____

_____

_____

This jobsheet is supported by a conservation plan map that shows where the habitat will be established and where rotational management needs to occur.

Habitat Establishment

☐ **Marker Posts**

Install 1-inch by 5-foot (or larger) pipes, driven at least 1-foot into the soil to identify habitat boundaries, and provide “aiming sticks” for equipment operators at locations indicated on plan map.

☐ **Natural Vegetation**

Establish and manage naturally occurring (volunteering) grass, forbs, or high quality mast or cover shrubs at locations indicated on plan map.

☐ **Grasses or Forbs from Seed**

Establish habitat forming grasses and forbs at locations indicated on plan map using the seeding specification indicated in the “Seeding Specifications” (following page).

☐ **Food Plots & Temporary Cover**

Establish food plots or habitat forming temporary cover at locations indicated on the plan map using the seeding specification indicated in the “Seeding Specifications” (following page).

Seeding Specifications

Seed	Planting Rate Indicate rate in terms of: PLS, Lbs./Ac., or Oz./Sq. Ft.	Planting Date	Planting Depth

A. Lime according to current soil tests. Fertilize only if soil test results indicate nutrients are deficient for the plants to be established.

B. Site Preparation:
- Use herbicide to control existing vegetation.
- Prepare planting site (including removal of rocks, stumps and other obstructions) to ensure close contact of seeds with the soil and to ensure safe and efficient operation of equipment.
- Firm conventional seedbeds enough to hardly reveal adult footprints before seed is planted.

C. Site Specific Needs for pest control, site preparation or planting:

_____

_____

☐ **Artificial Nest Structures**

Install artificial nest structures at the locations indicated on the plan map using the attached specification.

☐ **Brush or Rock Piles**

Install brush piles or rock piles to provide cover for desired wildlife at the locations indicated on the plan map using the following specification:
- Build a base at least 6-inches tall using cull logs, old fence posts, or piles of stumps or rocks. Arrange the base materials so 4-10" gaps remain between items in the base.
- Addition of sections of plastic pipe or clay drain tile in the base of the pile may enhance the pile's utility to burrowing animals
- Place tree tops, old Christmas trees, limbs, stumps, or rocks on top of the base to create a mound covering the base.
- Finished piles shall be at least 4-feet high and 8-feet in diameter.

Habitat Management

Implement <u>one</u> <u>or</u> <u>more</u> of the following management actions according to the plan's schedule to maintain desirable early succession habitat characteristics and amounts in the planning area.

☐ **Burn**

Use prescribed fire (according to the NRCS Prescribed Burning jobsheet included in your plan) to control advance of succession.

☐ **Disc**

Use a disc, drag, or equivalent implement to chop up plant residue and scarify the soil surface to a depth <u>less</u> than 5-inches during October through December to encourage reproduction of partridge pea and ragweed. Disking later than Thanksgiving may encourage growth of annual grasses and blackberry.

Make strips at least 30 feet wide. Attempt to leave at least 30% of ground covered by plant residue. Run the implement perpendicular to the land slope to the greatest extent possible.

Alternate strips of disked and un-disked land reduce soil erosion by breaking slope length and provide interspersion of different habitat resources.

Avoid disking slopes greater than 7% and locations where concentrated flow will cause gully formation.

☐ **Herbicide**

Apply an appropriate herbicide according to the product label's directions for controlling introduced grasses, invasive species or woody vegetation as soon as they are observed.

Protect the habitat from herbicide damage, especially from adjacent cropland. When herbicide is used to manage the habitat, use directed sprays and management strategies to control drift as specified in the Pest Management specification included in this plan.

Time the application to ensure the stage of plant growth maximizes control results.

Summer Treatment Needed for:
Bahiagrass, Bermudagrass, Dallisgrass, Johnsongrass, Multiflora rose and Sericea lespedeza
Fall Treatment Needed for:
Tall fescue and Orchardgrass

☐ **Graze**

Use prescribed grazing (according to the NRCS Prescribed Grazing jobsheet included in your plan) to control advance of succession, or development of undesirable vegetation. Use of forage must not compromise the habitat forming purpose of this practice.

☐ **Mow**

Utilize a mower to:

- control pest plants that cannot be controlled using other means
- release new habitat plantings from competition with unwanted vegetation
- maintain vigor and palatability of plants growing in food plots, such as white clover

Mowing must not compromise the habitat forming purpose of this practice.

Habitat Management Schedule

Note to Planners: You decide how to illustrate the mgt. rotation in this table. Use of Field #s, Acres, or ✓ is o.k.

Action	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year
Burn					
Disc					
Herbicide					
Graze					
Mow					
Fallow					
Herbicide					

Operation & Maintenance

After establishment, equipment travel and manipulation of habitat during the nesting season (April 15-September 15) shall be limited to actions needed to control woody or invasive vegetation.

In addition, the following actions must be carried out to ensure that this practice functions as intended:

- Inspect plantings for mortality during their first growing season. Re-plant areas where survival is less than 50% of the intended plant density.
- Control access to the habitat to ensure no damage to habitat structure, composition, soil, water or plants occurs in the habitat.
- Inspect the habitat and repair damage from pest infestations and erosion.
- Control state-listed noxious weeds and invasive plants in the habitat.

Prescribed Grazing Plan is attached:	☐ Yes	☐ Not Applicable
Pest Management Plan is attached:	☐ Yes	☐ Not Applicable
Prescribed Burning Plan is attached:	☐ Yes	☐ Not Applicable

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