NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

Forest Stand Improvement For Wildlife

Conservation Practice Job Sheet 666A

Participant Name
Tract #: Field #

INFORMATION ON THIS JOB SHEET IS CONSIDERED TO BE PART OF THE CONSERVATION PLAN AND/OR CONTRACT.

Purpose

Forest Stand Improvement which includes a wildlife focus is a forest management technique used to remove unwanted trees from an area in order to improve forest stand composition and structure. This process opens up the canopy so that more sunlight can reach the ground providing increased understory plant diversity and growth thereby enhancing wildlife habitat. Forest stand improvement techniques like crop tree release, result in crown expansion of dominant, and co-dominant hard and soft mast producing trees. This will increase mast/seed food sources for grouse, deer, turkey, and numerous songbirds while also encouraging the establishment of oak seedlings.

Conditions Where Practice Applies

This practice applies to forestland where stand composition and structure can be improved for wildlife as part of a Forest Stand Improvement practice.

Specifications

- Maintain maximum overstory and understory diversity. White oaks and red oaks shall be maintained in a good balance. Hickories and berry producing shrubs and trees shall also be maintained in good numbers.
- Thin woodlands to 60 percent stocking or less to encourage crown expansion, increased seed production and heavier herbaceous understory development.
- Leave or establish 2 to 4 cavity trees per acre, ranging in size from six to 20 inches Diameter Breast Height (DBH).

- Leave four to six native vines per acre. Favor vines in trees that will be left as den trees and in trees greater than 10 inches DBH.
- If tree felling will be used to remove unwanted trees, all felling must be completed between November 15th and March 31st to avoid adverse effects to the endangered Indiana Bat.
- **A Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF) Forest Stewardship Plan 2 (FSP2) which includes these specifications must be developed and followed for this practice.**
- Additional information on Forest Stand Improvement for Wildlife can also be found in the KDFWR Timber Stand Improvement Habitat How-To located at: http://fw.ky.gov/pdf/timberstand.pdf

Maintenance

- Monitor sites at least every 10 years to determine if it is necessary to retreat the area.
- Rotate thinning, when possible, through each stand to establish various stages of plant succession.

Additional Requirements and/or Recommendations from NRCS, KDF, KDFWR, or Qualified TSP: