

Early 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 early successional forest habitat. This habitat assessment guide should 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. Exotic Invasive Plant Species Coverage

- None = 10
- <20 percent coverage = 7
- <30 percent coverage = 4
- \geq 30 percent coverage = 1

	Site No.				
Existing Condition					
Planned Condition					

2. Interspersion – Estimate the proximity of the site to similar early successional forest patches.

- < 1/8 mile = 10
- < 1/4 mile = 6
- < 1/2 mile = 4
- > 1/2 mile = 0

	Site No.				
Existing Condition					
Planned Condition					

3. Patch Size. Estimate the patch size (it will generally be the same as the field size unless similar habitat managed for wildlife is within 500 feet).

- >20 acres = 10
- >10 to 20 acres = 8
- >5 to 10 acres = 6
- ≥3 to 5 acres = 3
- <3 acres = 1

	Site No.				
Existing Condition					
Planned Condition					

4. Vegetative Structure

- >75% of site is saplings having a DBH of less than 4 inches = 10
- >50% of site is saplings having a DBH of less than 4 inches = 7
- Majority of site dominated by trees having a DBH of 4-6 inches = 4
- Majority of site dominated by trees having a DBH >6 inches = 1

	Site No.				
Existing Condition					
Planned Condition					

5. Woody Species Diversity

- Multiple tree and shrub species present, including native, fleshy fruit bearing species = 10
- A couple tree and shrub species present, including native, fleshy fruit bearing species = 8
- Several tree and shrub species present, no native fleshy fruit bearing species = 5
- Single tree species present, no native, fleshy fruit bearing species = 1

	Site No.				
Existing Condition					
Planned Condition					

6. Herbaceous Cover

- Dense cover of herbaceous plants and vines = 10
- Moderate cover of herbaceous plants and vines = 7
- Sparse cover of herbaceous plants and vines = 4
- Little to no understory of herbaceous plants and vines = 1

	Site No.				
Existing Condition					
Planned Condition					

Scoring

For each site being evaluated, enter the before and after values for each habitat component. There is a total of 60 points possible. Divide the total for each site (both the existing and planned conditions) by 60. This will give you a value between 0 and 1, which represents the habitat value of the particular site for early successional forest dependent species in the existing condition and in the planned condition.

	Invasives	Intsp	Patch Size	Veg Structure	Woody Species Diversity	Herb Cover	Total	Habitat Value (total/60)
Site No.								
Existing Condition								
Planned Condition								
Site No.								
Existing Condition								
Planned Condition								
Site No.								
Existing Condition								
Planned Condition								
Site No.								
Existing Condition								
Planned Condition								