

# Old Field/Shrubland Habitat Assessment Guide

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

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

**Instructions:** This assessment shall be used to identify the habitat limiting factors for old field/shrubland dependent wildlife species. 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 field 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 field(s) being appraised and enter that value in the table. Both the existing and planned conditions must be evaluated.

**1. Patch Size.** Estimate the patch size (it will generally be the same as the field size unless similar habitat is directly adjacent).

- >10 acres = 10
- 5 to 10 acres = 7
- 3 to 10 acres = 5
- <3 acres = 1

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

**2. Interspersion** – Estimate the proximity of the field to similar habitat (e.g., shrubby powerline right-of-ways, shrub swamps, early successional forest, etc.).

- Site is directly adjacent to similar habitat = 10
- < ¼ mile = 7
- < ½ mile = 5
- ≥ ½ mile = 1

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

### 3. Vegetative Structure

- Approximately 50/50 mix of herbaceous vegetation and shrubs with somewhat patchy distribution = 10
- Approximately 30-50% shrub cover, remaining in herbaceous vegetation = 8
- Approximately 15-30% shrub cover, remaining in herbaceous vegetation = 5
- Site predominantly herbaceous species with little to no shrub cover = 1

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

### 4. Plant Species Diversity

- High species diversity, including several native, fleshy, fruit bearing shrub species (e.g., blueberry, dogwood, winterberry, viburnum, serviceberry, etc) = 10
- Moderate species diversity, including 1-2 native, fleshy, fruit bearing shrub species = 5
- Low species diversity and/or  $\geq 30\%$  exotic invasive plant species = 1

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

### 5. Average Height of Shrubs – Determine the percentage of the woody cover in each field having shrubs from 2 feet to 6 feet in height and stems less than 3 inches in diameter. If a field has no woody cover, the score will be 0.

- 86 – 100% of the woody cover meets the above description = 10
- 61-85% of the woody cover meets the above description = 8
- 46-60% of the woody cover meets the above description = 6
- 30-45% of the woody cover meets the above description = 4
- <30% of the woody cover meets the above description = 0

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

## 6. Management of Site

- No disturbance April 15 to August 1 and managed for diversity and perpetuation of varying vegetative heights and structure over time (e.g. cut on a 3-7 year rotation) = 10
- No disturbance April 15 to August 1, entire field mown every year or two to keep open = 7
- Occasional yearly disturbance between April 15 and August 1 = 3
- Frequent disturbance between April 15 and August 1 = 1

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

## Scoring

For each field 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 field (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 field for old field/shrubland dependent wildlife species in the existing condition and in the planned condition..

	Patch Size	Int.	Veg Structure	Plant Species Diversity	Shrub Height	Mgmt	Total Points	Habitat Value (total/60)
<b>Field No.</b>								
Existing Condition								
Planned Condition								
<b>Field No.</b>								
Existing Condition								
Planned Condition								
<b>Field No.</b>								
Existing Condition								
Planned Condition								
<b>Field No.</b>								
Existing Condition								
Planned Condition								
<b>Field No.</b>								
Existing Condition								
Planned Condition								