

## 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 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** (\*Midstory = plants 6'-30' tall; Overstory = plants >30' tall)  
DO NOT ASSESS ANYTHING SHORTER THAN 6'

- >5 native tree species predominate, including mast producers and conifers, both midstory and overstory heights well represented, or natural forest type that typically has fewer species = 10
- 3 to 5 native tree species predominate, including mast producers and conifers, both midstory and overstory heights well represented = 7
- 2 native tree species predominate and/or midstory or overstory layer dominant = 3
- 1 tree species present and/or only midstory or overstory layer present = 1

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

**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.				
<i>Existing Condition</i>					
<i>Planned Condition</i>					

**3. Forest Size Class Distribution** (Regeneration: <1–4” dbh, Pole: >4–11” dbh, Sawtimber: >11” dbh)

- 5-10% regeneration, 35-45% pole, 35-55% in sawtimber = 10
- Regeneration, 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.				
<i>Existing Condition</i>					
<i>Planned Condition</i>					

**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.				
<i>Existing Condition</i>					
<i>Planned Condition</i>					

**5. Quantity and Quality of Coarse Woody Debris** (Coarse woody debris = downed logs and branches >4 inches in diameter)

- Coarse woody debris in all stages of decay (i.e., from hard to almost completely decomposed) scattered across stand, in adequate amounts (i.e., 90+/- logs per acre), and many pieces >10 inches in diameter and >12 feet in length = 10
- Coarse woody debris in all stages of decay scattered across stand, in moderate amounts (i.e., 50+/- logs per acre, and pieces >10 inches in diameter and >12 feet in length = 7
- Coarse woody debris in moderate amounts (i.e., 50+/- logs per acre) across stand, but lacking all decay classes and/or large pieces (i.e., >10 inches in diameter and >12 feet in length) = 3
- None of the above = 1

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

**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 Composition	Shrub & Herbaceous Composition	Size Class Distribution	Snags & Cavity trees	Quantity / Quality of Coarse Woody Debris	<b>Total</b>	<b>Habitat Value (total/50)</b>
<b>Site No.</b>							
<i>Existing Condition</i>							
<i>Planned Condition</i>							
<b>Site No.</b>							
<i>Existing Condition</i>							
<i>Planned Condition</i>							
<b>Site No.</b>							
<i>Existing Condition</i>							
<i>Planned Condition</i>							
<b>Site No.</b>							
<i>Existing Condition</i>							
<i>Planned Condition</i>							
<b>Site No.</b>							
<i>Existing Condition</i>							
<i>Planned Condition</i>							