United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NE-ANM15 2010 Ranking Period 2

Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM15 – Forest stand improvement for wildlife habitat and soil quality

State Criteria
Forestland consists of areas not routinely grazed by livestock and managed for forest products with a minimum of 25% canopy cover of tree species.

General Elements (required for all forest stand improvement plans):

1. Create and maintain snags (standing dead trees) that are > 6 feet tall and 6 inches DBH to provide habitat for cavity-nesting species. At least 3 snags per acre are needed (on average) with at least one snag > 10 inches DBH.
2. Manage downed wood to create/maintain brush piles or scattered slash as described below.
   - Provide one brush pile or more per acre on 25% to 75% of the total forest area. Each brush pile should be a minimum of 15 feet in diameter and 5 feet tall.
   - Scatter additional slash material in loose patches throughout the stand on 25% to 75% of the total forest area. These loose patches can also be positioned to protect desired seedlings and saplings from damage caused by deer browsing and livestock trampling.
3. Allow a select number (approximately 1-2 per acre, on average) of older cull trees to remain as wildlife den trees or roost trees. These trees often provide either hollow trunks or open limb structure.

Optional Elements (may be selected for use by the cooperator and NRCS planner):

1. Create an edge or border between the forest and open field that is irregular, rather than straight. A 50 feet strip could be left untreated on the edge of the stand or edge feathering could be accomplished within this zone. Edge feathering involves cutting and leaving a portion of the larger trees on the forest edge to increase sunlight penetration and stimulate growth of understory plant cover.
2. Develop small forest openings within the forest stand varying in size from 0.5 acre to 5 acres and comprising 10% to 25% of the total area. Consider the needs of any area-sensitive forest wildlife species in relation to the total size of the stand prior to implementing this type of management.
3. Plant native vegetation (by Vegetative Zone) within the stand to increase diversity of species composition and/or structure. A priority should be placed on mast-producing trees, shrubs, and vines as well as forbs within the herbaceous understory community.

Considerations:

1. Remove trees, shrubs, and vines considered invasive, or that provide low wildlife value, in favor of beneficial woody species. This removal may facilitate establishing snags, brush piles, edge feathering, or forest openings as described below.
2. Leave beneficial trees, shrubs, and vines throughout the stand when they are not interfering with the growth of trees with commercial value. Understory structure is important to many wildlife species to serve as escape/hiding cover, nesting/fawning cover, and other uses.
3. Utilize management strategies that result in multiple age classes comprised of multiple species of woody vegetation to provide a diversity of structure and species composition to benefit a wider array of wildlife species.

<u>The following activities are allowed for operation/maintenance and management:</u> (continued on next page)

No haying or grazing is allowed within any zone planted to trees and shrubs.

<u>Haying</u> is permitted on herbaceous areas (“openings” within the forest) up to once per three year period (following establishment) provided it is conducted after July 15th and prior to September 1st.

Grazing is permitted on larger herbaceous areas up to once per three year period (following establishment) provided it is conducted after July 15th and does not exceed a 30 day period during the growing season OR a 60 day period during the dormant season.

- Specific management practices approved by NRCS and intended to improve plant diversity and vigor are allowed on larger herbaceous areas but are not required during the CSP contract period. These activities include prescribed burning, tillage and interseeding, and site-specific herbicide treatments to accommodate interseeding desired grasses, forbs, or legumes.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Complete the Table below:

To be completed by NRCS and Producer during planning			To be completed by Producer during certification			
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Tract	Field	Planned Acres	Applied Acres	Approximate Number of Snags per Acre	Approximate Percent of Acres with Downed Wood or Brush Piles	Approximate Number of Den Trees per Acre
EX. 100	*F4*	*6.0 acres*	*6.0 acres*	*4*	*33% - Downed Wood 33% - 2 Brush Piles*	*1 – Relatively young stand of trees is the limitation*

EX= EXAMPLE, COLUMNS 1-3 NRCS COMPLETES, COLUMNS 4-7 PRODUCER COMPLETES

I certify that the improved forest stand meets these specifications including the following documentation as applicable:

1. Documentation of the amount of snags, downed wood, and den trees per acre – (see table above).
2. Map with forest stand improvement area clearly identified (highlighted, outlined, etc.).
3. Digital photographs that are representative of one snag, one brush pile/scattered slash, and one den/roost tree present on the area.
4. Written description of any optional improvements or management activities implemented in conjunction with this enhancement (edge feathering, native plantings, haying, or grazing).

Certified by: _____ Date:_____