

Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM55 – Creation and retention of snags, den trees and coarse woody debris for wildlife habitat



Enhancement Description

This enhancement is to create and/or retain snags, den trees and coarse woody debris on the forest floor to reverse the leading cause of upland wildlife population decline – habitat loss.

Land Use Applicability

Forestland

Benefits

The natural abundance and distribution of snags (standing dead trees), den trees (trees with holes or cavities) and coarse woody debris are natural shelters for many species of birds, amphibians, reptiles, insects and animals. Creating these structures can be used to enhance habitat for many species, including cavity-nesting birds, bats, bees, raptors, reptiles, amphibians, mammals and waterfowl.

Conditions Where Enhancement Applies

This enhancement applies to all forest land use acres.

Criteria

Implement the following:

1. Consult with NRCS, consulting forester or a wildlife biologist to assess what structural habitat components are deficient in their forest and what can be done to create better habitat components.
2. Develop a wildlife habitat management plan for the suite of species targeted.
3. Create woody debris to provide cover and shelter.
 - a. Snags
 - i. General recommendations for maintaining a snag in most timber stands to benefit wildlife include:
 1. One snag/acre larger than 20-inch diameter at breast height (dbh) for use by larger woodpeckers and owls.
 2. Two - Four snags/acre between 10- and 20-inch dbh for small mammals such as flying squirrels and smaller raptors such as American kestrels
 3. Two snags/acre between 6- and 10-inch dbh for smaller birds such as chickadees and nuthatches
 - ii. Snags and den trees for nesting will be managed in accordance with the details in the publication “Managing Forests for Fish and Wildlife” (NRCS Biology Tech Note 18)



- iii. Manipulate natural cover, such as girdling trees or single stem injection to encourage snag development by deadening undesirable trees leaving it standing as a snag.
- b. Root Wads & Logs
 - i. Each structure will provide habitat for up to 40 acres. Leave a large root wad or cut down undesirable trees to create a log with limbs attached to provide habitat for mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds as escape and resting cover. If the root wad or log extends into wetlands or ponds they will provide basking areas and underwater cover for reptile and amphibian species.
 - ii. Structures for amphibians and reptiles will be built and installed in accordance with the details in the publication “Farm Pond Ecosystems” (NRCS Biology Tech. Note 29).
4. Operation and Maintenance:
 - a. Structures will be maintained and monitored as described in relevant publications above. Operator will complete yearly status review of the practice to track the use of the structures. A game camera set up may be used to capture images of animals using one of these wildlife structures. A map will be developed to depict actual locations of structures.

Adoption Requirements

The enhancement is considered adopted when the above criteria has been applied on the land use acre.

Documentation Requirements

1. Copy of the wildlife habitat management plan
2. Written documentation detailing the pre-treatment habitat conditions and post- treatment habitat conditions.
3. Representative digital images/photos of the structures.
4. Map of area indicating location and type of each structure installed.

References

Ober, H.K. and P. J. Minogue. 2013. Dead Wood: Key to enhancing wildlife diversity in forests. Dept of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, FL Cooperative Extension Service, IFAS, WEC 238. University of Florida, Gainesville, FL.

Santiago, M.J. and A.D. Rodewald. 2004. Dead trees as resources for forest wildlife. Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet. W-18-0., Columbus, OH. <http://ohioline.osu.edu/w-fact/0018.html>