Plant Enhancement Activity – PLT05 - Multi-story cropping, sustainable management of nontimber forest plants

Enhancement Description
This activity involves the manipulation of forest species composition, structure, and canopy cover to achieve or maintain a desired native plant community to facilitate the sustainable management of native non-timber forest plant(s) (e.g., goldenseal, ramps, mushrooms, ginseng, ferns, "sugarbush", etc.).

Land Use Applicability
Cropland and forestland.

Benefits
Implementation of this enhancement activity can result in increased plant health and vigor, decreased intensity of pest outbreaks, decreased spread of diseases, decreased use of pesticides and improved water quality.

Criteria
Multi-Story Cropping can cover a wide variety and types of plants and products. Multi-Story Cropping requires the development and implementation of a plan for the manipulation of forest growth through management of the competition for light, nutrients, moisture and control of allelopathic (toxic) effects to promote the production of a nontimber forest plant complex while maintaining a healthy forest ecosystem. The plan will include the following components as a minimum:

1. The objectives of the multi-story cropping enhancement.
2. Maps, images and/or descriptions of the proposed multi-story area.
3. An inventory appropriate to the targeted species of the area to identify trees and understory species necessary to achieve the desired purposes.
4. Listing of management activities that will be used to complete the multi-story cropping such as, but are not limited to, pruning, selective thinning and the introduction of new species to achieve plant diversity or to re-establish native plants.
5. Identification of specific canopy and plant densities in the overstory and understory to achieve the intended purpose(s)
6. The plant community will be diverse to avoid species-specific pests and to enhance wildlife food and habitat.

Documentation Requirements

1. Brief written description of the actions taken to enhance the multi-story cropping.
2. Delineations on a map or aerial photo of the areas being treated with multi-story cropping
3. Representative digital pictures of the overstory and understory plant community following multi-story cropping management activities.

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The following plants species are eligible native non-timber forest products for this enhancement: American hazelnut, huckleberries, currants, elderberries, fern fiddleheads, mushrooms, raspberries, blackberries, serviceberry species, wild leeks, ginseng, goldenseal, Labrador tea, partridge berry, Solomon's seal, wintergreen, witch hazel.

Other species may be eligible with prior approval from the WI NRCS State Forester.

Only species native to the state are eligible.