Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM20 – Silvopasture for wildlife habitat

Enhancement Description

Silvopasture integrates trees, livestock, and forage into a single system on one site resulting in annual forage production for grazing and long-term products from trees. Although silvopastures can provide quality habitat for some species of wildlife, not all silvopastures are designed or managed to benefit wildlife. Manipulation of both the understory and overstory plant composition can enhance wildlife values while still providing livestock and forestry benefits.

Land Use Applicability

Pastureland and forestland.

Benefits

Integrating trees, forage and livestock creates a land management system to produce marketable products while maintaining long-term productivity. Economic risk is reduced because the system produces multiple products, most of which have an established market. When a landowner is also interested in providing habitat for wildlife, silvopasture designs and management can be modified to create structure and plant diversity which is attractive to many wildlife species including quail, wild turkey, nongame birds and other terrestrial wildlife.

Criteria

1. Identify wildlife species to be benefited by the silvopasture.
2. Inventory the habitat condition of the silvopasture, the farm, and adjoining farms to determine habitat needs for the targeted wildlife.
3. Develop a plan to enhance the silvopasture to provide habitat for the targeted species.
4. Use one or more of the following methods to improve habitat for the targeted species.
    a. Establish additional understory vegetation (e.g., native grass, forbs and shrubs) that will improve habitat conditions for the targeted species. Establish clusters of other tree species if needed as a food source (e.g., oaks for mast).
    b. Defer or manage grazing periods to enhance wildlife habitat during critical life cycle periods.
    c. Manage tree canopy to achieve the desired understory plant community.
    d. Leave some dead or dying trees as snags if cavity nesting wildlife is targeted.
    e. Remove trees or invasive plants that do not provide the desired habitat.
    f. Replace removed trees by planting new trees or shrubs that will provide the desired habitat.
    g. Thin less desirable trees to encourage the growth of trees that will provide the desired wildlife habitat.

Documentation Requirements

1. Brief written description of the tasks completed with dates and any receipts for planting stock, herbicides, etc.
2. Delineations on a map or aerial photo of silvopasture.

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Written documentation shall include a summary of the soil moisture regime of the site, plant species established and method of establishment. Provide an annual summary of site management and weed control activities implemented.