Managing Your Woods for Oaks and Wildlife

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Oak Management

• Complicated!
• Not a one-step process
• Long-term
• Frequent reassessment needed
Management Practices for Oaks

- Invasive plant control
- Forest stand improvement
- Prescribed fire
- Tree planting
- Timber harvesting
Woody Invasive Plant Control

- Removal of invasive trees and shrubs in a woodland
- Increases native diversity and encourages growth of native trees
- Reduces competition
- Improves overall wildlife habitat quality
Herbaceous Invasive Plant Control

• Controlling invasive herbaceous plants
• Reduces competition (even with trees)
• Increases biodiversity and seedling success
• Improves wildlife habitat and food sources
Forest Stand Improvement

- Crop tree release
- Cull tree management
- Mid-story management
Crop Tree Release

• Conducted in young stands
• Favors “crop trees” and helps reduce competition to increase their chances of making it
• Removal or deadening of trees that directly compete to give the crop tree room to grow
• Oaks can be selected as crop trees and released to promote growth and survival
Cull Tree Management

- Removal or deadening of cull trees – those that have little value for meeting landowner objectives to increase growth on better quality or species of trees
- Reduces competition for remaining trees in the stand
- Can be used to increase acorn production on oaks
Mid-Story Management

• Removal or deadening of saplings/understory trees to increase sunlight reaching the forest floor

• In a woodland with canopy oaks and lower levels of shade-producing species (red maple, American beech, ironwood, etc.) with little to no oak reproduction
Prescribed Fire

- Can be used with other practices to reduce competition and increase sunlight to encourage oak reproduction and success
- Requires specific woodland conditions to be effective
- A burn plan written by a Certified Prescribed Burn Manager is required, along with legal permits
Tree Planting

• Primarily works when reforesting an open area
• May require site preparation prior to planting to ensure early survival and protection after planting
• Long-term investment
• Oak species need to be chosen based on site conditions
Timber Harvesting

• If considering a timber harvest, check out resources through Call Before You Cut – 
  http://callb4ucut.com
• Not all timber harvesting techniques will result in a new oak-dominated woodland – even if that is what you have now!
• Always use a professional forester to mark and oversee harvest
• Working with a Master Logger is recommended
Timber Harvesting

• Mid-levels of light are required to regenerate oaks

• Single-tree or select cuts do not allow enough sunlight to reach the forest floor

• Clearcuts or deferment cuts allow too much sun to reach the forest floor

• A shelterwood harvest or carefully planned and marked group opening harvest may be used alone or with other management practices to regenerate oak
Funding Sources

• Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
• Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
Environmental Quality Incentives Program - EQIP

• Incentive program for specific management practices in woodlands (and other land uses)
• Reimbursement program
• Assists financially with non-commercial woodland management
Available Practices

- Brush Management
- Herbaceous Weed Treatment
- Prescribed Burning
- Critical Area Planting
- Multi-story Cropping
- Woody Residue Treatment
- Firebreak
- Wildlife Habitat Planting

- Mulching
- Tree/Shrub Site Prep
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Upland Wildlife Habitat
- Early Successional Habitat
- Structures for Wildlife
- Forest Trails & Landings
- Forest Stand Improvement
Conservation Stewardship Program - CSP

• Longer contract length than EQIP

• Whole property is assessed and included, not just woodlands

• Annual payment for maintaining good conservation already occurring

• Enhancements and practices available – designed to enhance existing management
Landowner Eligibility

- Must control or own non-industrial private forestland
- Comply with Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitations
- Comply with highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements
- Have a written forest management plan
- Complete all required paperwork and sign a contract prior to starting work
Benefits of NRCS Incentives Programs

• Reimbursement program for non-commercial woodland improvement work

• Provides a means to hire someone to complete difficult and time-consuming projects

• Increases the health and sustainability of your woods and helps to meet your landowner objectives!
EQIP and CSP Information

• Deadline to apply for 2022 is January 14th
• For more information, contact your state service forester
• To apply, you must:
  • Establish farm record with county Farm Service Agency
  • Complete application for program with county Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Resources

• **Service Forester Directory:**

• **Farm Service Agency Directory:**
  https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=oh&agency=fsa

• **NRCS Directory:**
  https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/oh/contact/local/
Thank You!

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