

# Early Successional Habitat Management - Bobwhite Quail

Georgia Practice Job Sheet-647

(Modified by GADNR Wildlife Biologists- Bobwhite Quail Initiative)

Prepared for: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm: \_\_\_\_\_ Tract: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## DEFINITION

Manage early plant succession to benefit desired wildlife or natural communities.

## PURPOSE

Increase plant community diversity to provide habitat for bobwhite quail and other early successional grassland species.

## CONDITON WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On all lands that are suitable for the kinds of desired wildlife and plant species. Some lands may not be suitable for specific methods.

## CRITERIA

Management will be designed to achieve the desired plant community in density, vertical and horizontal structure and plant species diversity. Generally planting is not required to establish these early successional species. Most often the removal of invasives and undesirables coupled with the proper timing and frequency of disturbance will stimulate germination and establishment of desirable species from the residual seed bank. However, in rare cases where planting is required, regionally adapted plant materials will be used whenever possible. Measures must be provided to control noxious weeds and other invasive species. Extra precautions should be taken to effectively remove any introduced pasture grasses such as Bermuda and Bahia grass prior to planting desired species. To benefit insect food sources for bobwhite quail and other grassland nesting birds, spraying or other control of noxious weeds will be done on a "spot" basis to protect grasses, forbs and legumes that benefit native pollinators and other wildlife. All Federal and State invasive plant species in the habitat will be controlled.

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Evaluate the habitat conditions on a regular basis in order to adapt the conservation plan and schedule of implementation. Burn or lightly disk on a rotational basis in order to promote a diverse native plant community. Clean equipment prior to use on site in order to prevent the transfer of exotic invasive plants. Many exotic invasive plants will compromise intended wildlife habitat improvements and are difficult to control once established.

After establishment, equipment travel and manipulation of habitat during the nesting season (April 1-August 31) shall be limited to actions needed to control invasive woody or herbaceous vegetation. In addition, the following actions must be carried out to ensure that this practice functions as intended: If planting is required, inspect plantings for mortality during their first growing season. Re-plant areas where survival is less than 50% of the intended plant density.

Control access to the habitat to ensure no damage to habitat structure, composition, soil, water or plants occurs in the habitat.

Inspect the habitat and repair damage from pest infestations and erosion.

## Certification Job Sheet:

*This job sheet is supported by a conservation plan map that shows where the habitat will be established and where rotational management needs to occur. Check all that applies....,*

### **Habitat Elements to be improved:**

- Cover
- Native vegetation Spring/summer
- Nesting habitat fall /winter food sources
- Year round food sources
- Control of Invasive Species

Target Species of plants for regeneration: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Habitat Establishment (check planned methods)**

#### **Natural Vegetation**

Establish and manage naturally occurring (volunteering) grass, forbs, or high quality mast or cover shrubs at locations indicated on plan map (inspect locations to be sure plants species have wildlife value and are not harmful invasive exotic species).

- Target Species of plants for regeneration: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Habitat Management (check planned methods)**

Implement one or more of the following management actions according to the plan's schedule to maintain desirable early succession habitat characteristics and amounts in the planning area. Use prescribed fire (according to the NRCS Prescribed Burning job sheet included in your plan) to control undesirable vegetation or to enhance or maintain existing desirable vegetation:

#### **Prescribed Burning Type**

- Growing Season (leaf-on to leaf-off) burn Needed for: \_\_\_\_\_
- Dormant Season (leaf-off to leaf-on) burn needed for: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Disc (Rotational Basis)**

- In previously disturbed areas, use a disc, drag, or equivalent implement to chop up plant residue and scarify the soil surface to encourage the reproduction of partridge pea and ragweed. The allowable range for disking is November through February to encourage these species. However, January-February is strongly recommended in order to retain cover for bobwhite quail during peak raptor migration time as well as maximizing ragweed and partridge pea response.
- Disk no deeper than 5 inches deep to expose 30 to 70% bare soil.
- Run the implement perpendicular to the land slope to the greatest extent possible and avoid disking slopes greater than 7% or in locations where concentrated flow may cause gully formation.
- Areas of undisturbed vegetation (i.e. forest riparian buffer, grass sod, filter strip, etc.) must be left adjacent to water bodies to maintain water quality. The width of this area should be a minimum of 35 feet to the closest point of the strip from the top of the streambank.

*In natural areas like longleaf pine woodlands where soils have not been disturbed, do not use disking as a management tool. Disking will be detrimental to the native seed bank and to the natural habitat. Burning is a more appropriate practice in undisturbed natural areas.*

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Installation:

I certify that this practice has been installed in accordance with NRCS standards and specifications.

Certification by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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