



PRAIRIE STRIP MANAGEMENT

Tools for Wildlife and Conservation Success!





WORKSHOP AGENDA

- Plant community succession and why mgmt. is important
- Mgmt. tools/activities
- CRP contract mgmt.
- Why, when, and how

THE BEST MANAGEMENT IS A GOOD DESIGN



- Layout the Strips to work with your equipment
- GPS and Auto-steer are great inventions
- Site selected Seed Mix
- Example has 15' Strips every 120'
 - - Fits his sprayer (60' booms each side), Planter, and Combine
 - -3ac out of 50ac field

THE SECOND BEST IS GOOD SITE PREPARATION



- 50% or greater of Bare Soil
- Kill off any invasive plants now
 - - Cool season grasses & woody vegetation are Prairie Killers
- Seed like Nature does
 - - Winter Broad-cast Seeding will set the seeds, break seed coats, and fill niches.

CRP CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

- FSA and NRCS
- Mid-Contract Mgmt.
- Dates
- Cost-share
- Maintenance



CRP MID CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

- Min. requirement: 100% of acres in years 3-6*
- Optional: any amount of acres in years 6-7
(small bits of work over time)
- Optional: any amount of acres in years 1-3
(re-enrolled contract or failed establishment)
- Disking, Burning, Spraying, Inter-seeding
- Manage Aug. 1st-Apr. 15th
- Cost share from FSA available



CHECK YOUR CONSERVATION PLAN OF OPERATIONS (CPO) TO KNOW WHEN MANAGEMENT IS TO BE CONDUCTED

Conservation Plan of Operations (CPO) for Agricultural Land

Section 1: General Information

Landowner Name	Property Address	Conservation Plan Number	Plan Date
John Doe	1234 Main St, Anytown, IL 60000	CP-2024-001	01/15/2024

Section 2: Land Use and Management

The following table lists the land use and management activities for the property. The table is organized by land use type and management activity.

Land Use Type	Management Activity	Frequency	Season	Notes
Agriculture	Planting	Once per year	Spring	Use of Roundup is prohibited.
	Harvesting	Once per year	Fall	Use of Roundup is prohibited.
	Soil Conservation	Once per year	Spring	Use of Roundup is prohibited.
	Water Management	Once per year	Spring	Use of Roundup is prohibited.
Wildlife Habitat	Planting	Once per year	Spring	Use of Roundup is prohibited.
	Harvesting	Once per year	Fall	Use of Roundup is prohibited.
	Soil Conservation	Once per year	Spring	Use of Roundup is prohibited.
	Water Management	Once per year	Spring	Use of Roundup is prohibited.



Nesting
Season

No disturbance from
April 15th- August 1st
(October 1st for Pollinators)

WHAT DOES MANAGEMENT DO?



- Removes Unwanted Species
 - - Cool season grasses, Invasive plants, “weeds”
- Promotes Desired Species
 - - Fire and Grazing will stimulate Native plant growth
- Sets Back Natural Succession
 - - Keeps the ecosystem in the state you desire

PLANT COMMUNITY SUCCESSION

- Long after disturbance, communities transform to a different state (that may mean brush and trees we don't want!)
- Early successional habitat is state best for wild game habitat and for beneficial insects!

PLANT COMMUNITY SUCCESSION

Habitat Chart

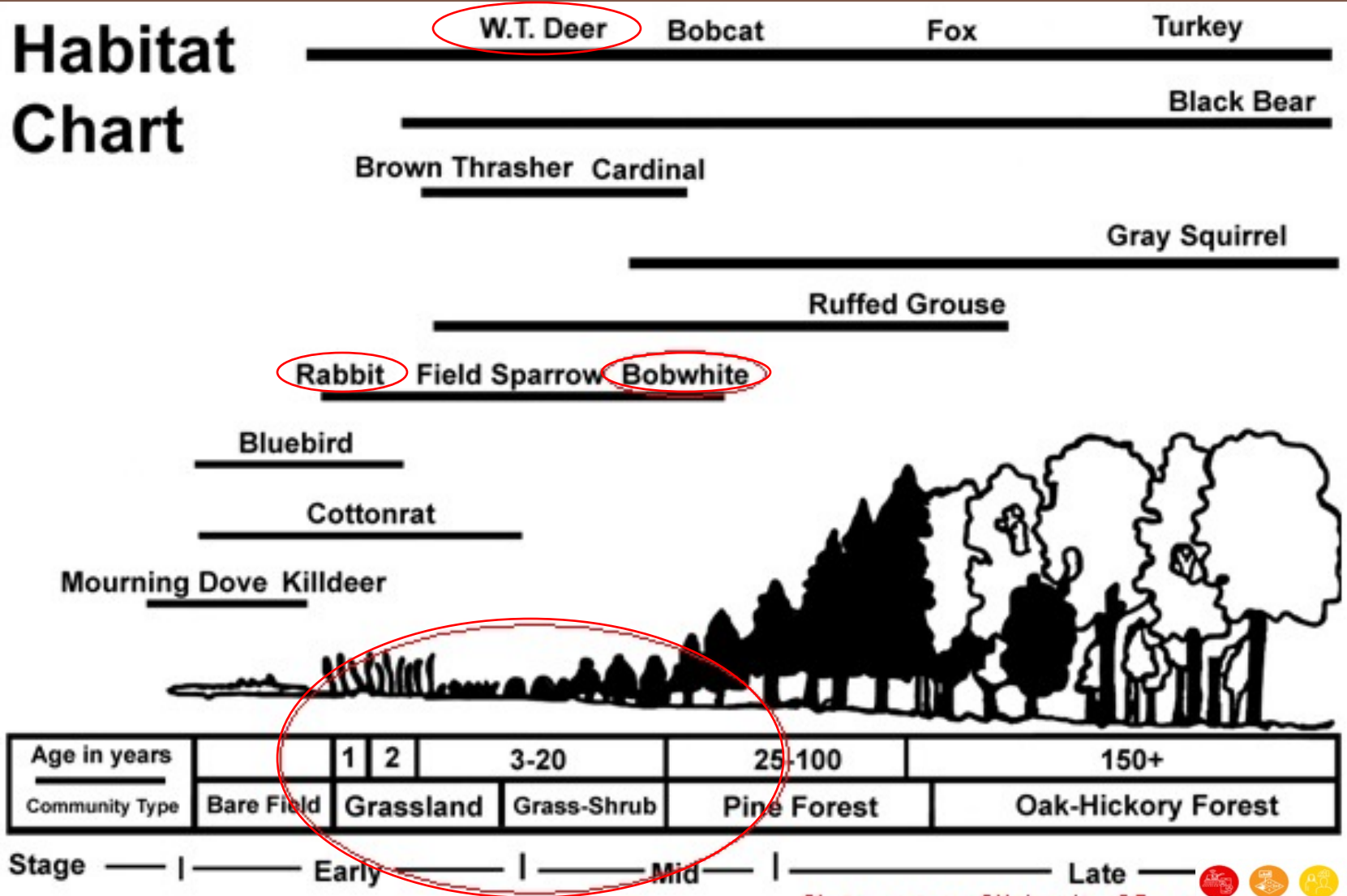


Photo courtesy of University of Georgia
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

**Thick Native Grasses
are chocking out
Wildflowers and
Forbs**





Copyright Chris Helzer/The Nature



WHEN?

Stimulate
Flowers

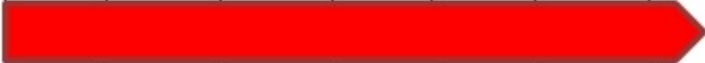
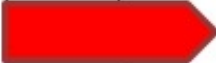


Stimulate
Grasses



Kill Sprouts
and
Stimulate
Flowers



	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Calendar Days</i>
<i>Burn Cool-Season</i>													3/15-4/15
<i>Burn Warm-Season</i>													8/1-4/15

Food for thought– Try August burns!

MANAGEMENT BY THE MOON??

18th – 20th

Seeds planted now tend to rot in ground.

21st – 22nd

Excellent for sowing seedbeds and flower gardens. Best planting days for aboveground crops, especially peas, beans, cucumbers, and squash where climate permits.

23rd – 27th

A most barren period, best for killing plant pests or doing chores around the farm

28th – 29th

Fine for sowing grains, hay, and forage crops. Plant flowers. Favorable days for planting root crops.

30th – 31st

Start seedbeds. Good days for transplanting. Excellent time for planting root crops can be planted now. Also good for leafy vegetables.



MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND TOOLS

“AX, COW, MATCH, AND PLOW...”

MANAGEMENT TOOLS NAMED BY ALDO LEOPOLD

- Prescribed burning (will discuss in great detail later)
 - Disking
 - Herbicide application
 - Grazing
 - Mowing/haying
-
- EVERY SITE IS DIFFERENT! THERE IS NO SILVER BULLET IN MANAGEMENT!

disking

Setback rank or sod-bound grass cover to enhance plant diversity and vigorous growth.

DISKING



- Reduced residue, increases wildflowers, increases bare ground
- 4" deep or less, creating 50-75% bare soil
- Disk in strips or blocks (1/3 of acreage a year best)
- Disk in the Fall or early Winter
- Do not disk on top of Thistle or Reed Canary Grass
- Try inter-seeding forbs for greater diversity
- Also used to Reduce Terracing



chemical control

Suppress warm or cool season
grasses to reduce competition
for forbs and legumes.

HERBICIDE APPLICATION

- For tree sprouts, invasive weeds
 - Apply in blocks, paint stumps, or basal bark where needed
 - Metsulfuron methyl
 - Common names –Cimarron, Escort, Oust, Patriot, Purestand
 - Triclopyr
 - Common names – Crossbow, Garlon, Pasturegard, Remedy
 - Dicamba
 - Inexpensive option; may not provide adequate control and can harm surrounding forbs

HERBICIDE APPLICATION

- To set back grasses
 - Apply herbicides at reduced rate (suppression rate)
 - Cool-season grasses: Spring and Fall
 - Warm-season grasses: Late summer
- Apply in strips or blocks
- Inter-seed wildlife friendly legumes after herbicide application if needed wait 2 weeks post application before inter-seeding



Grazing

Available for 1 ≤ 90-day period for 10-year contracts, twice for 15-year contract

GRAZING, MOWING, AND HAYING

- Grazing
 - Cattle target grasses, Swine target forbs, Goats target shrubs
 - Great wildlife structure if properly managed
 - Bare ground for chicks
 - Recycle nutrients for soil health
- Mowing and haying
 - Mowing should be done in right way- 10" or higher
 - Need approval from County Committee if in CRP
 - Mowing with disking or spraying or haying better
 - Haying removes litter
 - Good for Site Preparation



Inter-seeding

Enhance wildlife benefits by
adding more plant diversity
and structure to grass stands.



prescribed fire

A cost-effective and efficient way to control woody encroachment and improve grasslands.

WHY?

NATIVE, EXCELLENT, INEXPENSIVE TOOL THAT STIMULATES DESIRED PLANTS



KILLS TREES TOO!



WHEN?

Stimulate
Flowers

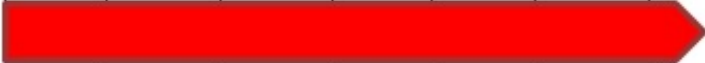
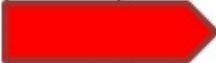


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Food for thought– Try August burns!

EARLY AUGUST BURN: CROPS ARE GREEN WHILE PRAIRIE FUELS CAN STILL CARRY!



AUGUST BURN

THE FOLLOWING SUMMER:
MORE FLOWERS AND NO TREE SPROUTS



AND ADJACENT CROPS OR
WOODS ARE LUSH AND
GREEN DURING AN AUGUST
BURN!

HOW

- Burn plan and burn permit for CRP
- Considerations (weather, location, help, etc.)
- Ignition sequence
- Emergencies

CONSIDERATIONS

- Weather:
 - Sunny
 - Winds 5-15 mph (avoid east wind)
 - Humidity 40%-60%
- Location
 - Burn unit
 - Adjacent fuels
 - Neighbors
 - Roads
 - Hazards
- Help: Number of and physical state of helpers

DISKED FIRE BREAKS: HIGHLY RECOMMENDED



IGNITION SEQUENCE

- Backing fire (burning against wind entire time):
 - Safest
 - Reduces smoke
 - Kills trees better
- Ring-fire (shorter back fire before circling field)
 - Safer
 - Recommended
- Head-fire (NOT RECOMMENDED!)



MIX AND MATCH TECHNIQUES

- Have Cost Share on Spraying and conduct a Burn to expose woodies.
- Use a burn or disking to expose soil, then inter-seed

BE CAUTIOUS OF OVER OR RECREATIONAL MANAGEMENT



- Excessive management will keep the site in a state of early succession
 - - decrease in diversity and increase in agronomic weeds
- Improper identification can destroy beneficial plants
 - - Golden Alexander (left) looks a lot like Wild Parsnip (right)
- Management should be staggered and conducted as needed.
 - No more, No Less.

IN CONCLUSION

- Know How, Why and When
- Contact your local USDA office or Biologist
- Mgmt. isn't as hard as many think
- Consider different timed mgmt.
- Find help at:
- www.pheasantsforever.org/findabiologist

Questions?



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