

Discussion comments generated during the wildlife habitat/vegetation discussions during the May 2013 public sessions.

What does early successional habitat (ESH) look like to you?	How large should the opening(s) be?	Is there a specific species or community you are focusing on?	Is there a specific place on the landscape the opening(s) should be?	How should young forests be represented on the landscape?	How much young forest should there be?	How should the gap be created (and maintained)?
high stem density, height of young stand is not very tall, cover, food component, very young stand	used to cut 100 ac clearcuts, those did fine	ruffed grouse, but deer, turkey, bear, all kinds of songbirds	grouse like higher elevation but occur in other places too, 4000' 3500' and up	need mosaic, wooded areas in between		logging and timber cutting, prescribed burning
		look at species listed in NCWAP			none of the goals set on forest plan have been met , 1% is not enough, maybe like 10 to 12%, some times more and sometimes less depending on place in landscape	
					I think we need more ESH early on and then maybe we can decrease making more as ESH becomes more present on landscape	
open savannah type of ESH is pretty rare and supports unique species, butterflies, woodcock			white pine plantations might be a good place to start, and poplar stands too			more fire
diversity of ESH types, really have a true patchy mosaic of all kinds of ESH			as we lobby for more ESH, we should look at middle age classes	mosiac	I am not sure goals in old plan are what we need now but we clearly need more ESH	Fire will help maintain mosiac
briars and grown up areas around wildlife openings	40 to 100 acres	grouse	need misoac, grouse are also dependent on other parts of forest			less aggressive mowing program on gated roads, mow in strips and patches
					5% is clearly not enough, maybe more like 10 to 20%, with part in bottomland and portion in 10-15-20 year old trees	
					how can you maintain quality of ESH in place? Are there are places where this can happen?	
	Why don't we have more wildlife openings in the pisgah national forest? What have we done to bring back 15-20 acre farms?	grouse, quail				

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young forest growth, not balds, regeneration of forest up to 20 years	20-50 acres	grouse	places a different elevations and interspersed so there is connectivity with other forest ages	mosiac, patchwork	10-15%	timber harvest, fires, herbicides, all techniques are needed
what effect has reduced ESH had on existing wildlife?						
wildlife opening; edge habitats breaking it up with patches of woods	as they are now, opportunity to view wildlife not necessarily for game; 20-50 acres seems large					trying to approved timber sales is ok, probably not creating sales just for wildlife, no chemicals
				managed to not create poplar stands, instead manage for oaks, hickories, beech, cherry		we need to manage clearcutting if it is going to be done but not to create poplar stands
What species are being affected negatively as we manage?						
what has happened to the wildlife habitat? Not as many deer?		deer		nothing is going to live where there is nothing to eat. There should be different habitats for different species, they are all related. Nothing in the forest but poplar		where is management today? You can't just let it go and expect it to take care of itself. We have to be smart enough to manage habitat for wildlife
						manage for habitat
			the forest is large enough to increase ESH without impacting other uses; by putting it in right place in forest it can still function without affecting other uses, it's a multi user forest			
					at what point in history was ESH at it's highest point?	
what consideratoin is being given to total landscape? public lands may be only place we can go to get things back						
						unless there is demand for timber it probably won't be cut

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ESH and young forests are two separate things, openings need to be separated from 1-10						
perspective can frame how questions are answered, by narrowing what we are managing for will help define						
2-age harvest						
			should be in forest types where disturbance has historically been a part of the forest			
	size of opening only part of it, where it is on landscape is also important					
not just confined to openings, ESH can have overstory component, a really wide range of small and large areas	depends on community type, aspect,		within all community types, but maybe at much smaller scale	across all ecozones but maybe in different amounts, vary in size with scale of disturbance	a little bit of each thing scattered about	
				connectivity between ESH is critical not just for game species but also other forest birds, migratory species		silviculture
						some forest types and locations are less prone to natural disturbance
using other data might help capture ESH across the landscape better than using mgmt data						
uneven aged stands in hardwood are not optimal	small openings are not economical, small patches need to be balanced with other areas		quality areas are important			even aged management is more economical, creates edge and wildlife habitat
						even age and uneven aged management are both important to wildlife and regenerating oak, timber harvest can mimic natural disturbance

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						multiple tools should be used, don't just base on economic viability
			need to consider disturbance as vector for NNIS			
specifically in Graham County, there seems to be a lot more mature forest and very little open early succession		it seems like variety of species is less, rare wildlife except for birds			most of Graham County is heavily wooded	
diverse healthy kind of like open pasture fill of rabbits quail songbirds						
	acre and a half in size					
	up to 20-100 acres					
	10 acres in higher, shrubs or grass, 20-100 is better for grassland species	songbirds				
	variety of sizes and heights			ESH should be represented with other forest types, gives more scenic value to trails		
whole range of natural and human disturbances	at all scales, but up to thousands of acres	natural history includes a lot of disturbance that isn't happening	places where natural disturbance has higher probability, ridges,	in a manner consistent with natural history of ecosystem	consistent with natural history	windstorms, fire, human activity
			look at natural range of variation, look at ESH and old growth together			
				how does the percent fit within the landscape, landscape context is important	2-15%	
			no ESH on mid and lower areas in Graham County			
					aim for 10%, keep aiming for that amount	timber management, prescribed fire, grazing
open canopy woodlands provide benefits to many species						
					very little ESH and a lot of mature forest	

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			tremendous amount of forest in middle age, not in best of condition in terms of species and structure, may be a good place to start, restore species and structure to those areas			
		seed bank species				
old fields and meadows, edge areas and openings	varying, 2 acres to 200 acres		could be appropriate across the landscape		there should be more young forests, there is a very low percentage right now, effort should be made to increase that to 5-8%	veg mgmt, fire, natural disturbances
						managed by science not by specific agendas, there should be a reason for it,
high stem density, 3000+, manage regeneration for what's there and then work on species composition	5-100 acres	grouse, assorted songbirds	across the landscape	mosiac across landscape	minimum of 10% across landscape	timber harvest
high stem density, open fields and meadows for a lot of different wildlife; diversity, not as much poplar or maple, more oak, chestnut, pine	5-100 acres	grouse deer turkey songbirds	across the landscape	mosiac across landscape	25% at least	timber harvest, fire, natural occurrences, whatever it takes to maintain it
	2-5 acres plots scattered through woods, but not bigger than that		across the landscape		happy with the amount there is now, where they are they are appropriate	managed in scientifically appropriate manner; wherever possible by natural occurrence or fire, clearcutting is not appropriate method
						science in management is critical, often selective cuts are most exploitable
meadows with shrubs and younger trees	1 acre, seems some are smaller	wildflowers, particularly threatened and endangers herbaceous species	across the landscape; balds are considered ESH	mosiac		burning, mowing, grazing, hand clearing
what we want it to look like is what it did 500 years ago. We can't mess with God's creation, pre-columbus time		elk deer			we can find an equal balance in all of it	prescribed fire, good stewardship

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						create clearcuts by doing low-grade harvest; including invasive species like gum and poplar, follow with burns to help keep invasives out, also mark poor genetics in oaks
						if we manage to create new gaps it should be done in
what are you going to do with dying hemlocks						
						harvest timber to create habitat then use fire to maintain
						control rhododendron and ivy, chokes out too many native species
opportunity to see elk and other wildlife, suitable habitat		elk	somewhere where there is a new species on the forest: elk			timber harvest, specifically in 12 mile strip on APP where it borders GSMNP
grazing		grass and forage	bottomland		15%	forest management, burning, logging
forest that is now back to stage one, a lot of fallen logs, greenery between fallen logs, plants that germinate in sunlight, grasses, wildflowers	how much and what size were they before man?	over 60 years old because of large trees, closed canopy, spring ephemeral wildflowers, sense that it's a forest, aesthetic reasons				look over the long term, designated areas to protect special beautiful areas, a lot of old forest, not for old forest to dwindle
different stages of early succession	depend on terrain, narrow valleys can't be as large as other areas		bottomland, openings on ridge tops have more erosion and die out	diversity for wildlife	10-20%	logging, but not everything, old growth creates fire hazards, logging provides fire breaks, creates diversity in landscape, logging helps economics
bare ground to grasses to shrubs brushy areas, saplings, occasional large trees like in savannahs	look at things from geological perspective, large areas are rarer, smaller openings like from tree fall more common, take into consideration this type of question	ESH can be in a lot of the forest types and communities	don't focus just on bottomlands because some of these can be closed canopies; site specific decision	don't let existing openings grow back up, if there needs to be more, focus on areas where there has been disturbance in the past		prescribed burning is important method, it should simulate historic areas that are fire dependent, logging is needed in some places like pine plantations and overstocked forests, natural disasters

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forest that has just been cut, 0-10 years, 0-15 years	for interior birds, the larger the opening the better	great percentage of wildlife species use ESH at some point; grouse, interior birds, nongame species	space them so they cover a large areas, not a lot of cuts in one area so more species of wildlife can utilize them	across the landscape	8-12% minimum at any given time; like it was in the 50s, 60s, and 70s	shouldn't be maintained, let trees grow up, preferably a clearcut because it lets trees grow in right way, as it ages it will be ideally suited for good lumber and for wildlife
grass or under 10 years old	under 5 acres		scattered around		less than 5%	science should come into play, higher residual basal areas do better than clearcuts for maintaining habitat for birds, some logging in smaller areas that benefits local economy

Written comments submitted in response to the young forest and old forest questions posed during the wildlife habitat/vegetation discussions.

What does young forest habitat look like to you?	Why do we need this?	Where do we need this?	How much do we need?	What does old growth habitat look like to you?	Why do we need this?	Where do we need this?	How much do we need?
Fairly open with saplings to pole timber, bush/brush as well interspersed.	To provide habitat conducive to many species such as ruffed grouse, certain songbirds, etc. To me species diversity demands a diverse forest ranging from successional/new forest to older forest. The current NF is heavily weighted to old mature forest.	Not qualified to comment on places & elevations. Forest type should include most producing species & those species that provides buds & twigs needed as food sources for ruffed grouse.	This was left blank.	Towering trees forming essentially a canopy with very little underbrush.	Scenery, carbon sink, habitat for certain species.	This was left blank.	75% of total forest. That remaining after areas of cutting/burning etc. with areas of early successional forest in sizes of several to 50 acres.
1-5 yr. old clear cut or 1-5 yr. old burn area.	Rejuvenate growth, small plants for wildlife habitat, future timber harvest & economy.	Scattered throughout forest areas.	10-200 acre & scattered.	30 year old + forest.	Timber harvest & economy	Scattered throughout.	>100 acre minimum tracts.
Manage timber/plant White Oak, American Chestnuts, etc. More burns, more food plots	For all wildlife even endangered	All over, trees are dying	100 acre tracts	A dead forest	Logging will help economy & help all wildlife	All over	20%
It can be anything from a grassy meadow to 30 yr. old hardwood regeneration	For forest regeneration and wildlife habitat	Across the forest at all elevations	At least 15-20% of the total area of the forest. Size can be anything from a single fallen tree to a 75 acre clear cut. Distribution should be in a mosaic of irregular shaped cuts	A tall forest of closed canopy. Understory vegetation is sparse and young regeneration is missing	We need very little of this (no more than 30% of the total forest area). Some species of wildlife use old growth forest so we do need some. However, a diverse forest age structure is much more beneficial	North coves, higher elevation, sensitive areas	Very little. No more than 30% of the total of the forest
Open enough to provide habitat for E-S plants & animals	Decline in birds, ungulates & plants dependent on these conditions. Don't view creating it as a justification for cutting timber, but merge these activities where it makes sense	A range of all of these- esp. lower elevation where pine stands can be replaced w/native hardwoods	The million \$ question! Determine by available \$, rare species needs-no magic answer. Smaller, more scattered areas better than fewer large ones	Old trees-may or may not be big. Definable understory based on specific species (by forest type)	Some species depended on it, cool to hug big trees	A range of all of these	Also hard to know-determine by species needs-larger, fewer areas better than many small ones for OG.

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High density stems	Wildlife diversity	Across the forest-all elevation & aspects	20% scattered across it	Mature forest	Diversity	Across the forest	20% across the landscape
15 yrs. or younger, meadows & wildlife openings	Important for many types of wildlife	Should be spread throughout the forest	10-15% of the forest	It depends on the forest type or species but in general 100 yrs.	This is important to some species of wildlife	Wilderness areas and some road less areas	10-15% of the forest
Has species diversity. In transition	Species diversity (flora/fauna), wildlife viewing	Game birds (Grouse, Bobwhite, Wood ducks, turkey. Mosaic approach across the land	Min. 10-15%-mosaic across the land. An amount that can be sustainably & scientifically managed, including w/private partners	Established	This was left blank	This was left blank	This was left blank
1,000-3,000 stem count. Very few poplars & maples. Meadows & openings. Elk habitat	Wildlife & adequate coverage	This was left blank	20-100 acres	3	Scenery	Creek sides	25%
Grass/Forbe to shrub/scrub to young forest with a high stem count	Extensive group of early successional species and habitats that are reduced, threatened, endangered	Across entire landscape	From 1 acre up distributed across landscape	Mature, closed canopy with little to no understory	Certain species need this habitat	Across landscape	Equal amounts to early successional
Fields, meadows, young trees & shrubs (< 15 yr), lush herbaceous understory	Increase wildlife diversity in general. Help w/ecosystem restoration-replant desired species. Wildlife that require ESH (e.g. many songbirds)	<u>Not</u> in sensitive areas or rare communities like high elevation spruce-fir. <u>Not</u> at headwaters of streams. Otherwise, across landscape	Mosaic of 5-25 acre openings. Go for a balanced representation of younger age classes	Mature forest, fairly open understory. Thick organic soil layer & leaf litter	Wildlife species that are old-growth habitat specialists. Watershed protection, aesthetics, carbon sequestration	High elevation, spruce-fir, rich coves, at headwaters of streams, all over landscape in balanced representation	Mosaic of > 100 acre patches. Want balanced representation of older age classes
Shrubs, herbaceous, invader species	For biodiversity	Not on steep sites	Enough to sustain the species you're meaning for	Big trees; little understory, clean water	For biodiversity, clean water, healthy ecosystem	As much as possible	
Young white oak trees. To have plenty of young growth!	So the animals can have good food to eat!	Everywhere we can get this. What we need is a varying growth size!	Don't know . P.S. Selective logging is very beneficial	Falling over and has a lot of dead limbs, or widowmakers!	For shade, for shelter, for food!	Everywhere we can get this!	As much as we can get!
Clear cut	Forest diversity	All ecozones	15-100 acres				

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A regenerating forest	It will benefit all wildlife species	Throughout the entire forest	50%	A waste of money	If we need it at all it should be on a small scale	Let them grow where they can't be logged	Very little
Fallen trees-greenery that germinates in sun coming up	Determine various values	Not in beautiful areas like Courthouse Creek watershed that would be destroyed-not in the 42 Mountain Treasures	5% or less	Tall big tree-spring ephemerals, maybe some rhododendron & dog hobble along creek, mossy	It's beautiful, it's a common natural cover, it absorbs water & protects slopes, there are rare plants & animals that need it	Where it is now-don't drop down existing	Max. possible-from about 40 years old
Sunny (not shaded at ground level)	Habitat diversity	Rotate managed areas (some maintained by fire, some rotated by logging)	10%	100+ yr. old trees	Habitat diversity	Manage some stands on long rotation, some for ancient forest	10%
Young-0 to 20 yr.	Wildlife & plant habitat	Throughout all ecozones	5-150 acres				
Naturally formed gaps, small, sunlight, fallen gaps, grassy bald	Part of ecosystem. Restore natural conditions	Distributed as it would occur naturally (If active management (timber/prescribed burns) focus on degraded areas from prior/past timber management with restoration potential)	Approximating natural conditions, considering all lands	Mature forest, snags	Rare, species habitat, forest resiliency	Across all forest types & elevations, forest interior	Sufficient size to protect old-growth characteristics, and to protect forest resiliency, especially considering rarity of old-growth in region (including non-FS lands)
Not all young forest is generated from disturbance. There are naturally occurring /naturally maintained early successional habitats. These include bogs, beaver impoundments, balds (including heath bald), rocky summits, granite domes & rocky glades. These are the ESH that I'm interested	Areas where dictated by natural topography & landscape features: shallow depth to bedrock, high water table, etc.	Again, where naturally occurring areas are supported by landscape/topo. These areas can be promoted through mgmnt., i.e. fire & some clearing	We need to account for natural ESH when assessing landscape!				

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Many different types-grass/herb, shrubby, young trees or more of these	Important to a suite of species, many of which are declining	Areas that avoid conflicts w/needs of other species & old growth. Focus on areas w/past disturbance and/or need restoration	Interested in a mosaic of habitat types. Prefer smaller opening that mimic natural disturbance; not clear cut. Not sure how much, but more than how & in the right places <5%?	Old growth features- lots of structural diversity; snags; downed wood debris; canopy gaps; open mid story & herbaceous understory * Can get early successional habitat in old-growth forests (eg., gaps)	Important for many species including lots of neotropical migrant songbirds, bats, salamanders, etc. Many of these species are declining	All forest types & elevations	Not sure, but need more forest structure, less even-aged stands, we need more old growth than currently have
Grasslands, shrub scrub, hi stem density. A mixture of these in some cases (e.g. golden winged warbler)	It is in short supply- important species are declining. How-increase forest practices, i.e. timber harvest. Burning- but make sure min. stands	All across the forest, all elevations & forest types. Definitely, over 2,500'. Focus also on high-graded areas. Need these to be clear cut and allow nature to select best stems	10-15% of forest. 10-50 acre patches. This has become a serious issue for wildlife. The Wildlife Action Plan has identified ESH as a priority habitat. The USFS need to provide these habitats	All age-big disturbed patches of young mixed in larger context			We already have too much of this habitat when you consider all the designated areas
Young, new growth, with some growth of berries, nuts and green graze grasses. Young browse growth & young forest trees to form older growth later. We need much more ESH than we have (at <u>least</u> 10% at a minimum- <u>Regeneration</u>)	For the benefit of all wildlife-including birds of all varieties (quail, grouse) bear, deer, all small game-it provides food, shelter & protection	Needs to be at all elevations and forest types	Various-small 3-5 acres to as large as 50 acres. But a total of 10% <u>minimum</u> acres to other area	Older trees with little to none of younger browse and seed producers	For seed trees, for habitat for certain species & for visual	All areas	25%

General Comment:

In terms of maintenance & ESH creation, I'd like to know the realities of the FS budget and how that affects ESH