

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/7/2022 6:32:20 PM

First name: William

Last name: Worrell

Organization: Virginia Cooperative Extension

Title:

Comments: Public Comments concerning the Currin Glade Vegetation Project treatment areas located in the Mt. Rogers NRA, of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forest in Virginia.

I fully support the proposed management actions to increase the amount of early successional habitat. The wildlife in the region are in real need of young forest habitat and the proposed regeneration harvests will provide much needed early successional habitat. This will improve the health of the forest by allowing new young forests to establish in this larger management zone of the NRA. This habitat enhancement and creation will benefit several wildlife species for many years to come. The proposed actions will also improve forest health and provide much needed regeneration of oak species for the future of this forest community and the needed diversity in forest structure in this management area of the Mount Rogers NRA. The regeneration harvesting will be critical in improving the wildlife habitat and structural diversity of this management area. I recommend that you look at increasing the early successional habitat in this project to ten percent of the management area in this region. This will help wildlife populations with much needed habitat including nesting habitat and improved food opportunities especially in years of poor acorn production. You should also consider it will take several years to plan the proposed projects, mark them on the ground, and put out for bid. Then the purchasers have time to complete the work. In reality it will take a few more years before any new young forest habitat will be created by vegetation management in this project area. The wildlife will benefit more from a larger area of new young forest and early successional habitat creation. The current level of mature forest is way beyond the current goals and recommendations of the forest plan. It would be wise to create as much early successional habitat as possible in the Currin Glade project area in an effort to get the NRA more towards the ideal percentage of habitat in the various stages of structural diversity and age classes of the forest. You have way too much mature forest. Create lots of new young forest in this project area so the forest has more balance and the wildlife will have much needed habitat improvements. If you do this, you will move more towards meeting the congressional mandate of managing the Mount Rogers NRA and the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests for equal amounts of structural diversity within the forest that is owned by the citizens of the United States.

Prescribed burning will enhance wildlife habitat while helping with oak regeneration, creation of small openings, and helping encourage vegetation growth for browse. Continued prescribed burning in this management area in the future will help the oak regeneration better compete with the other tree species and allow for a higher percentage of oak species in this forest for the future.

The work to reduce the non-native invasive species is desperately needed to help keep the population of these invasive species from displacing and preventing regeneration of our native vegetation. Many of these invasive species also have negative impacts on the wildlife habitat.

Please keep me updated on the planned actions in the Currin Glade Vegetation project.