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Comments: By default, with the current management, all of our public forests are all becoming "old growth".

This is really simple; to maintain diversity across our public lands, different forest age stands must be managed to represent the ecological needs represented by Early Successional Habitats (ESH). ESH are becoming completely devoid on our National Forests. For example, Ruffed Grouse populations have declined 71% in the last 30 years, representing the impact of ESH loss.

8% ESH habitat maintenance on the Crossover Project is a good beginning. I'd love to see at least 20%.

My grouse hunting days are now spent in Maine, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. North Carolina is failing for it's ESH dependent wildlife on National Forests.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jim Phillips