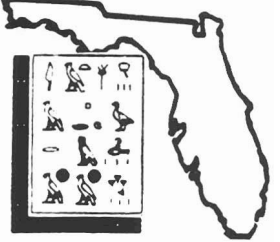


FLORIDA CHAPTER THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY



Wildlife and Range Sciences
118 Newins-Ziegler Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611
July 17, 1986

Mr. Barry W. Gay
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
3125 Conner Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Dear Barry:

The Forestry Review Committee of the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society has reviewed the draft guidelines for wildlife management practices for bottomland hardwoods. We commend this effort to include wildlife considerations in recommendations for silvicultural activities.

The review committee was, for the most part, favorably disposed toward the guidelines presented. As these guidelines are recommendations, and not mandatory, we would like to see some specifications made more restrictive to assist landowners who want to minimize adverse impacts on wildlife resulting from clearcutting. We specifically recommend: 1) Generally, the smaller the clearcut the better. Maximum recommended clearcut size should be 20-30 acres with a maximum width of 100-200 yards. 2) As many snags and mast trees should be left in clearcuts as possible. A good target is 4 snags and mast trees per acre. 3) Maintain a no-cut zone within 75 feet of the banks of perennial streams greater than 10 feet in width and lakes greater than 10 acres in size. 4) Maintain a selective-cut zone within 35 feet of the banks of streams less than 10 feet wide and lakes smaller than 10 acres. 5) No cutting should be done immediately adjacent to, or in the channel of, intermittent streams. 6) Mechanical site preparation, log landings, and application of herbicides or pesticides should be excluded from streamside and lakeside management zones.

These more restrictive specifications would provide necessary information to landowners who want to consider wildlife in their silvicultural applications. We would not, however, want to see all wildlife considerations ignored because of added costs associated with these recommendations. Specifications included in the current draft could be incorporated as acceptable, but less beneficial, alternatives.

Additional comments include: 1) Closing of unnecessary roads to public access should be recommended to minimize disturbance and poaching. 2) Elimination of fire is not necessarily of benefit to wildlife. Cavities, coppice growth, and understory changes resulting from fire can benefit some species. 3) Leaving isolated wetlands intact is a valuable goal. Additional benefits could be obtained by leaving vegetated corridors connecting these wetlands with other forests and wetlands.

Several of the guidelines in the current draft emphasize the value of edge effect and age and height diversity. Many wildlife species, however, are adversely impacted by fragmentation of large stands and removal of mature timber. A section should be included in the recommendations to make the landowner cognizant of these impacts on forest interior species so that he can make informed management decisions.

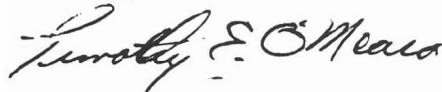
The title is misleading. These are not necessarily wildlife management practices. A more accurate title might be "Considerations for Wildlife Habitat in Silviculture Applications."

Your suggestion that landowners contact a professional wildlife biologist is commendable. You could further emphasize in the introduction that no specific management practices can benefit "wildlife" in general as any habitat alteration will benefit some species and negatively impact others. Consulting a wildlife biologist would aid the landowner in selecting management goals and silvicultural practices that are tailored to his needs.

Our comments are regrettably limited and general in nature. Time constraints and the briefness of the guidelines precluded a more detailed review. We do, however, believe you have made a worthwhile effort in providing these guidelines to landowners.

We appreciate the opportunity to make this review and would be pleased to review the final draft.

Sincerely,



Timothy E. O'Meara
Chairman-Forestry Review Committee

TEO/bf

cc: Wayne R. Marion
Larry D. Harris
Perry Oldenburg
Joe Reinman