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Woodlot Wanderings

Greetings everyone! Now that it seems ole' man winter has finally made his presence known, and appears to be hanging around for a bit, those of us who enjoy winter recreation activities are finally able to do so. It has been a late start, so we'll see if things go later at the other end.

I have been on several site visits, either woodlots that are to be managed or those actively involved in current harvest operations. One common denominator through all these visits has been the desire to manage for wildlife. This also prompts the discussion about cost-sharing opportunities that may help achieve the goals for management. So, I thought I would talk a little bit about cost-sharing opportunities that may be available.

I mentioned, albeit briefly, in the December issue of this newsletter, that there are programs through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to cost-share a variety of management practices. There are also programs through New Hampshire Fish & Game that may lend additional assistance.

In managing for wildlife, in many cases that means making some level of openings in the forest. The size and number of these openings varies with different tree species, shrub layers, and overall condition of the woodlot. These decisions will be made in the field through consultation with wildlife biologists and foresters.



Small opening or group selection area.

Large opening for a more diverse habitat.

Other treatments may be Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) work. This is typically opening some space around more desirable individual trees to allow them to grow unencumbered by competing trees. The trees to be released are selected based on landowner goals and desires, tree species and condition, and position on the landscape. These decisions are also made with the guidance of a professional forester.



Opening areas around some Yellow Birch to foster growth.

Often one of the most limiting factors to managing your woodlot is access. This access may be just to physically get to the lot, or it may be access for larger logging equipment to conduct a timber harvest operation.

Before beginning any or all of these practices, a forest management plan should be prepared. This plan will describe the current conditions on the ground, and then recommend treatments/practices to be completed throughout the management period to achieve landowner goals for the property. These recommendations will include location, treatment, and timing for each.

All the above-mentioned practices may have cost-sharing programs available through both NHF&G and NRCS. These programs will aid in funding the project, while achieving the best possible outcome for managing the property. There are even some projects that are made possible at all through cost-sharing programs and appropriate applications.

For more information and in-person discussions about these programs, please join us for our Natural Resources Management Moments, scheduled for March 7, 2023, from 1:00-2:30 pm, at the North Country Resource Center, 629 Main Street, Lancaster, NH. There is no fee for this workshop and [REGISTRATION](#) is requested but not required.