

Ray Berthiaume
Natural Resources Field Specialist | Coös County Forester
629A Main Street
Lancaster, NH 03584
603-788-4961 x206

Trees Tell Their Stories

As I mentioned in “Woodlot Wanderings”, one of the favorite goals for owning and managing forest land is to maintain and enhance wildlife habitat. Forest management and wildlife management go very well together, and in some cases, can be difficult to separate. Managing your woodland, at pretty much any scale, may influence existing and future wildlife habitat and the species that will use it.

I also mentioned that managing for wildlife habitat typically means creating or enhancing some level of openings in the forest. The size of the opening will vary with existing forest conditions, the desired result of making the opening, as well as the species of wildlife most desired to manage for. Some openings may be as small as 1/10 acre, for example 65–70-foot square, while others may be 5 acres or more.



This is a small opening, approximately 60 feet in diameter, designed to allow for some Sugar Maple to regenerate while limiting the amount of herbaceous/shrub vegetation that desires more sunlight.



This is a much larger opening designed to allow Aspen, Birch, and Cherry to regenerate, as well as some herbaceous plants like Raspberry, all for early successional conditions as game bird habitat and browse for Deer. This particular opening is also structured to minimize the existence of Glossy Buckthorn, which is an invasive plant species.

The specific treatment at any given location may very well be dictated by the species present in relationship to the desired outcome.



For example, this area told us that the young aspen and birch could be removed to allow for new regeneration, while leaving the adjacent softwood thicket for cover and future timber value.



While this area has told us that the softwood areas need to be maintained for wildlife cover and future timber value, while the nearby shrub layer would be important browse and feed for many species throughout the seasons.

Things to look for throughout the seasons that tell us how we should be managing our forests and wildlife often are potential food sources. With the help of our Regional Wildlife Biologist Jake DeBow, and Wildlife Biologist with the Wildlife Management Institute Will Staats, we discovered wonderful wildlife feeding sources on the county forest in Stewartstown. Things like Wild Cranberries (fig. 1), Wild Raisins (fig. 2), and Holly Berry (fig. 3), all in an area of Alders and Mountain Ash, tell us to maintain these conditions as a food source heading into the winter season.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Ultimately our forest management will in some way influence wildlife habitat and the species of wildlife that frequent our woodlands. As your County Forester I am here to offer thoughts and suggestions and connect you with other appropriate professionals so that our team may assist with achieving your management goals and objectives. Anything from American Woodcock habitat in Carroll;



American Woodcock nest with eggs in Carroll

to White-tailed Deer habitat in Pittsburg;



forest and wildlife management go hand-in-hand.

Please feel free to reach out to me and along with our team, we will do our best to assist with whatever your management goals may be. Be Safe and Happy Winter!