MANAGING VEGETATION FOR WILD TURKEY, PERSPECTIVES FROM THE NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION. Loran Brinkmeier, Biologist, National Wild Turkey Federation, Wyoming, IL 61491

The National Wild Turkey Federation has been a leader in the restoration and relocation of wild turkeys in North America for over a quarter century. With trapping and transferring of wild turkeys coming to a close, the NWTF has refocused its mission to conserve the wild turkey and the hunting heritage. To conserve wild turkeys, you must conserve the wild turkey's habitat. One NWTF program that was created to increase and improve wild turkey habitat is the Energy for Wildlife Program. The Energy for Wildlife program is a membership based wildlife management and certification program for energy companies. The primary goal of the program is to enhance wildlife habitat on right of ways and other company properties for the benefit of all wildlife. The program assists member companies in achieving their vegetation management goals for the benefit of native plants and both game and non-game wildlife. The program also assists companies with permitting and regulatory processes, public relations, and serves as a liaison with federal and state agencies.

The Energy for Wildlife promotes Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) on right of ways and other properties. IVM is the controlling of vegetation by using a process that balances the use of cultural, biological, and chemical treatments to establish and maintain a vegetative cover type that is compatible with the environment, economically feasible, and socially acceptable.

The wild turkey in North America is thriving and direct funding to support wild turkey habitat projects is limited. Therefore, wildlife habitat projects for wild turkeys must be tailored to other wildlife species that have direct funding. Wild turkeys are generalists and almost any habitat enhancement from wetlands to grasslands will benefit the wild turkey. 21st century wild turkey habitat projects include wetland restoration, grassland restoration and enhancement, timber stand improvement and timber harvesting, timber edge feathering, and both annual and perennial food plots. All of these practices use mechanical, cultural, and chemical treatments to achieve desired results. These projects can only exist with partnerships between non-profit conservation organizations, corporations, and local, state, and federal agencies.

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