Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership

2017 Annual Report

WYFP Partners

U.S. Forest Service

Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Wisconsin County Forests Association

American Bird Conservancy

Ruffed Grouse Society / American Woodcock Society

Wildlife Management Institute

The Forestland Group, LLC

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

Wisconsin Society of American Foresters

National Wild Turkey Federation

Louisiana-Pacific Corporation

Pheasants Forever

Table of Contents

Background

2007 — the Upper Great Lakes Young Forest Initiative created young forest goals.

Over 965,000 acres of new young forest is needed in Wisconsin to reach the population recovery goals in the American Woodcock Conservation Plan.

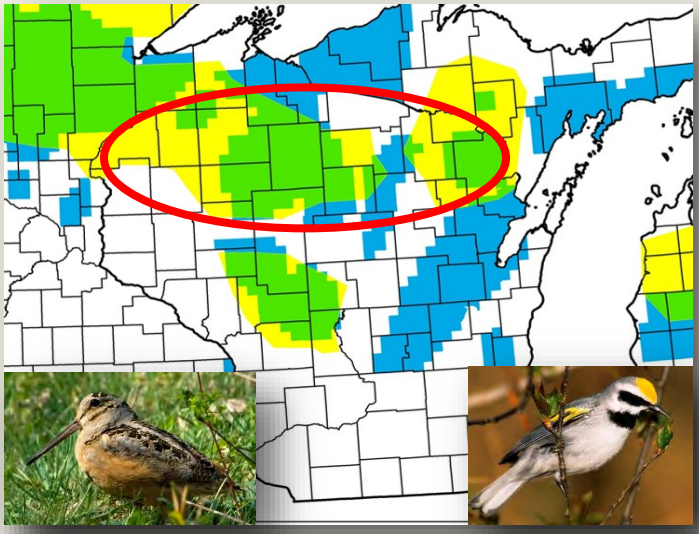
2011 — WI DNR saw a need for an outreach program to educate private landowners about young forest management and benefits to wildlife.

December 2013 — WYFP was created to reach unengaged private landowners.

The Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership (WYFP) was organized in December 2013 to more broadly promote young forest habitat conservation and enhance this resource across Wisconsin. By pooling agency and partner resources and conducting this effort in a more structured way, landscape-scale habitat effects can improve habitat at a larger wildlife population level while making positive contributions at the local level via timber and related management and improved outdoor recreation opportunities to view and pursue wildlife.

Before this partnership, young forest was created by chance, which left islands of habitat with reduced value and sustainability. The aim of the WYFP is to attempt, via a partnership approach, to address the need for the continued availability of young forest habitat for a diverse range of species while attempting to improve habitat at a landscape level for American woodcock (AMWO) and golden-winged warblers (GWWA).

Focal areas were created for AMWO and GWWA by wildlife managers and the GWWA Working Group. Habitat work in these focal areas will provide benefits for these two species of conservation concern, provide a means of measuring population response, and foster the creation of habitat important to a wide array of other wildlife species.



Goal

Our goal is to establish a landscape-scale conservation approach that can deliver young forest habitat on suitable lands across Wisconsin, regardless of ownership.

Framework

These activities are being promoted within a framework of supporting *diverse forest landscapes* and creation of young forest *in appropriate locations* as defined by conservation focal areas and best management practices for focal wildlife species. This means that we are not targeting old growth/climax vegetation areas or locations that are poorly suited for early successional habitat management, but encouraging responsible management for habitat best suited to specific forest types.

Opening Remarks

To our Partner:

Partnerships come together for a host of reasons but all share a desire or concern to address an interest, an issue, or a concern that often cannot be addressed solely by an individual entity. Like any partnership, there are differences of thought, approaches, or deliverables that drive the Partnership and measure its progress or success.

When Wildlife Management Institute came calling to Wisconsin with the initiative to improve young forest habitat, those of us asked to consider contributing to this effort wondered how this could work and who would want to help. Upon testing some ideas and sharing some thoughts, to our surprise existed a large collective of the willing (you) that stood ready to help.

So what have we accomplished in the last 4+ years of the Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership? Here are some high point to reflect upon. To date, we have:

- Had contact with over **8,000 landowners** that could be interested in managing their lands to contribute to our habitat effort.
- Conducted over **300 site visits** to evaluate their potential.
- Collectively enhanced over **300 properties** in our conservation efforts.
- Directly improved habitat on over **3,500 acres** with more in the hopper.
- Restored over **65,000 acres** of habitat through public lands management efforts, as part of our County, State and Federal management actions.
- Developed educational materials, published papers, given talks and maintained an updated web site to share with interested publics that can help them become part of the Partnership's conservation vision.
- Implemented Best Management Practices to ensure our conservation can maximize its potential return.
- Created a monitoring approach that engages landowners in a way that allows them to discover their land in a unique way using citizen science.
- Fostered and supported small business to deliver these practices.
- Successfully maximized funding opportunities to support this work from a host of sources.
- Fostered collaboration amongst an array of partners that may not normally share the same visions to accomplish these efforts.

I am sure I am missing something, but in reflection of where the Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership currently stands, I would offer that our collaboration has had tremendous success to date. Not bad for a "collection of the willing" bringing time, talent, and/or treasure to the table to attempt a greater good. I applaud our Partnership and its success to date, because this could not have occurred without you and your efforts. I urge you to think about how we increase this success and look forward to our future endeavors.

— Daniel Eklund, Executive Committee WYFP, USFS-CNNF

WYFP Process

There are countless programs available and even more resources out there for landowners, so it is no wonder why they may get lost in the vast expanse of information. WYFP uses its available resources to guide landowners to a potential program that fits the landowner's goals for their property. This process benefits WYFP, its partners, and other programs that work towards similar goals of engaging landowners to manage their property for better wildlife habitat.

*Acronyms are listed on page 21

103 referrals in 2017

Young forest

16 to NRCS/ABC RCPP

6 to Partners for Fish and Wildlife

3 to cooperating foresters *(that have contracts with WYFP)*

Non-young forest

32 to NRCS

22 to DMAP

2 to MFL

11 to WFLGP

7 to DNR Wildlife Biologist

4 to DNR Forestry

228 referrals from 2014 - 2017

Mailings

Mailings are a fundamental step in the WYFP process and allows WYFP to reach out to landowners to make them aware of potential opportunities. WYFP sends out a letter to landowners who haven't had previous contact before, also known as cold contact mailings. Landowners in those key counties—where the focal areas for woodcock and golden-winged warbler overlap—with 70 acres or more will receive a letter. Any landowner that is interested can contact WYFP and begin the process.

Below is a breakdown of the mailing from each year since WYFP was officially formed in 2014.

Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership

"Creating wildlife habitat together"

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT FUNDS AVAILABLE- ACT NOW

Dear Woodland Landowner:

Have you ever wondered what you can do on your land to make it better for recreation and attract more wildlife? The Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership (WYFP) is contacting you about an exciting opportunity to improve wildlife habitat on your land at little or no cost to you! Managing your land for young forest will create excellent habitat for deer, ruffed grouse, woodcock, golden-winged warblers, and benefit a host of other wildlife and plant species. *This is a great opportunity to leave a legacy for the next generation.*

Significant cost-share funds are available for landowners interested in creating and/or maintaining young forest habitat on their land. If you have shrub thickets or mature woods, we want to hear from you!

What we will do:

- Evaluate your property's young forest potential through a survey (link below) and speaking with you
- Provide information and assistance with management plans

If you have young forest potential:

- Visit your property for free to identify ways to improve your land for you and wildlife
- Identify possible programs that suit your goals
- Potentially get you cost-share funds and assistance with management efforts

Cost-share funds are available from WI DNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Applying to a program will not open your land to public use. We just want to equip you with the knowledge and financial aid to allow you to manage your land for years to come!

To get more information: visit our webpage at www.youngforest.org/wi.

To take the next step:

- Either go to www.surveymonkey.com/r/WYFP-survey to take our survey and tell us about your property. Answering these questions will allow us to assist you better.
- Or call 715-369-1180 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. during the weekdays to take the survey over the phone with customer service. Please mention the *Young Forest Partnership* when you call.

Rarely are these agencies able to come together to offer free aid and low-cost habitat work at this scale. If you are interested in participating, please contact us right away so we can work with you this summer!

I look forward to hearing from you.

Randee Wlodek

Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership Coordinator

WYFP is made possible by the cooperating agencies and organizations represented by the logos below.

Year	Activity	Counties	Letters Sent	Responses/ Response Rate
2014	Cold contact	Price, Rusk, Taylor, Oneida	5,679	550 / 9.52%
2015	Cold contact	Lincoln, Langlade	785	76 / 9.68%
2016	Work with previous landowners	All previous counties	0	--
2017	Recontact letter to previous landowners	Any previous counties	393	85 / 23.16%
	Cold contact (3 rounds total, next round letter sent to non-respondents)	*Lincoln, Langlade, Sawyer, Marathon*	*1,333*	*55 / 4.33%*
			1,207	*13 / 1.09%*
			1,189	*10 / 0.84%*
		2017 Cold Contact Total	*3,729*	*78 / 2.14%*

Habitat Impact

Thank you to all the hard working and dedicated biologists, foresters, field staff, and other specialists who contributed to these wonderful numbers below. They are the reason why so many great management activities are taking place on private and public lands for young forest habitat! The numbers below show the success from 2017 compared to the total impact starting when WYFP was officially created in 2014.

2017	Historical Total 2014 - 2017

1,739 | **8,350**

Landowners contacted that may be interested in contributing to WYFP habitat effort

81 | **308**

Site visits to evaluate young forest potential

91 | **322**

Properties enhanced for young forest habitat

924 | **3,662**

Acres of directly improved young forest habitat

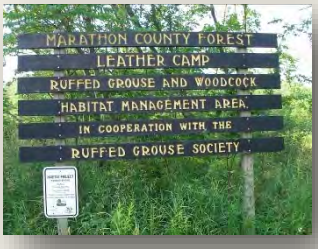
49 | **612**

New management plans in the hands of landowners that either lacked a sufficient plan or did not have one at all

4,182 | **52,274**

Acres of potentially improved habitat on private lands due to written management plans

In 2017 alone, there were **86** properties contributing to **28,813** acres that reached out to WYFP and reported not having any sort of management plan. There is tremendous potential for habitat improvement and writing management plans is an important step to get there!



Public land management efforts

65,189

Acres of young forest habitat regenerated as part of our County, State and Federal management actions

Contractor Workshop

On February 1st, 2017, nearly 60 natural resources professionals, foresters, shearing contractors, and students gathered to learn about habitat requirements for young forest species. The field day began with “classroom” lectures at the Antigo DNR office with a welcome from American Bird Conservancy’s (ABC) Nora Kennedy and presentations from Randee Smith on the Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership (WYFP), Scott Walter representing RGS on habitat needs for grouse and woodcock, Tom Krapf from WI Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) regarding who the NRCS is and what the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is, Callie Bertsch (ABC) about Golden-winged Warbler habitat BMP’s, and Janet Brehm from WI DNR regarding USFWS Partner’s Program and habitat work that has been accomplished at Ackley Wildlife Area in Langlade County.

The afternoon culminated with the group braving the cold temperatures to see the contractors in action at Ackley Wildlife Area. Tom Carlson and Eric Borchert with the Wisconsin DNR out of Merrill and Antigo helped set up upland young aspen areas as well as tag alder areas for contractors to work on with their machines. Seeing the machines in action was a great “hands-on” experience of learning for all involved. This also gave the partnership the opportunity to increase the interest of contractors who may work with landowners. To date, there are 23 contractors across Northern Wisconsin on the list. In turn, the contractors were able to get a better feel of what they should be doing while working on a landowner’s property including habitat requirements and how their NRCS or Partner’s contract works.

Contractor Workshop

Overall, the field day, originally planned to be a “Contractor’s Workshop”, turned out to be a wildly successful example of the WYFP working together to put young forest habitat on the ground. Partners in attendance included the WDNR, WMI, USFWS, ABC, NRCS, and RGS. There continues to be a partnership between WYFP and the Class ACT Charter School from Park Falls. Students attended the workshop to learn more about what they can do on their school forest, since they are responsible for the management of their school forest for young forest species with the help of foresters Matt Schultz from Pine Curve Consulting Forestry, LLC (now with Ashland County) and Pete Anderson from Sound Forest Management.

Lastly, the contractors were able to be paid for their time and work, lunch was provided, and transportation costs covered for the students and others through ABC’s National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant, “Creating Early Successional Forest that Maximizes Forest Productivity for Wildlife” and a small grant that ABC had with the James E. Dutton Foundation. – Callie Bertsch

Research

Evaluating Young Forest Management and Landowner Participation to Aid Declining Bird Species

Prepared by: Anna Buckardt, University of Maine

My name is Anna, I'm a masters student at the University of Maine, pursuing my degree in Wildlife Ecology. For the past two years, I've been conducting research in collaboration with the Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership (WYFP). My research has three main objectives:

1. Create a citizen science program for WYFP's landowners to monitor woodcock on their managed properties, by understanding their preferences and abilities for monitoring.

2. Quantify and compare the bird communities using mature alder and aspen habitats versus recently managed young forest and shrubland areas on private properties, with a particular focus on American Woodcock (AMWO) and Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA).

3. Use light-level geolocator technology to track the full annual movement, including migration and winter, of male Golden-winged Warblers breeding in Oneida County, WI.

By the Numbers

My technicians and I collected data from April to August of 2016 and 2017. Here is just some of what we accomplished.

6976 tree diameters measured

4109 individual birds counted during breeding bird surveys

234 breeding bird surveys completed

187 AMWO detected and counted during surveys

185 evening AMWO surveys conducted

99 species of birds detected during breeding bird surveys

98 habitat surveys completed

77 GWWA detected during breeding bird surveys

39 geolocators deployed on male GWWA

18 interviews completed with landowners

13 landowners participated in woodcock surveys in 2017

1 car stuck in the mud, then successfully removed

Anna checking the age and fat score of a male Golden-winged Warbler. Photo taken by Phil Hauck.

What We've Learned

Objective 1: Landowner Citizen Science

Citizen science is a collaborative effort between scientists and people from the general public to collect and analyze data in order to answer a common research question or meet a common goal. Through interviews with landowners, we learned about the barriers, motivations, and preferences for participating in citizen science**.** We learned that Wisconsin landowners are enthusiastic about participating in woodcock monitoring on their properties.

Research

Things that limit landowners' interest and ability to participate in citizen science are the time they have available, and the specific commitments and demands of a given project. Landowners are most motivated to participate by their appreciation of science and their sense of land stewardship. Additionally, landowners mentioned that they were unaware of the different citizen science opportunities and that if they knew these sorts of projects existed they would be more likely to participate.

Objective 2:

Mature vs. Recently Managed

We conducted bird breeding bird surveys across four different treatments to look at the impact of young forest management efforts on bird communities. We compared mature alder shrublands to sheared young alder shrublands and mature aspen forest to harvested young aspen forest. Analysis is still underway, but we are finding differences in the number and variety of species using each treatment type (figure 1).

Young forest habitat management is aimed at creating habitat for a variety of wildlife species. American Woodcock and Golden-winged Warbler are two bird species that need young forest habitat for breeding and rearing young. These two species were the focus of much of our research and we used targeted survey efforts to detect them. When we compared Woodcock and Golden-wing use of the four habitat treatments, both species were detected more frequently in managed young forest sites than comparable mature sites (figure 2). Young harvest aspen sites had the highest average detection rate for both species.

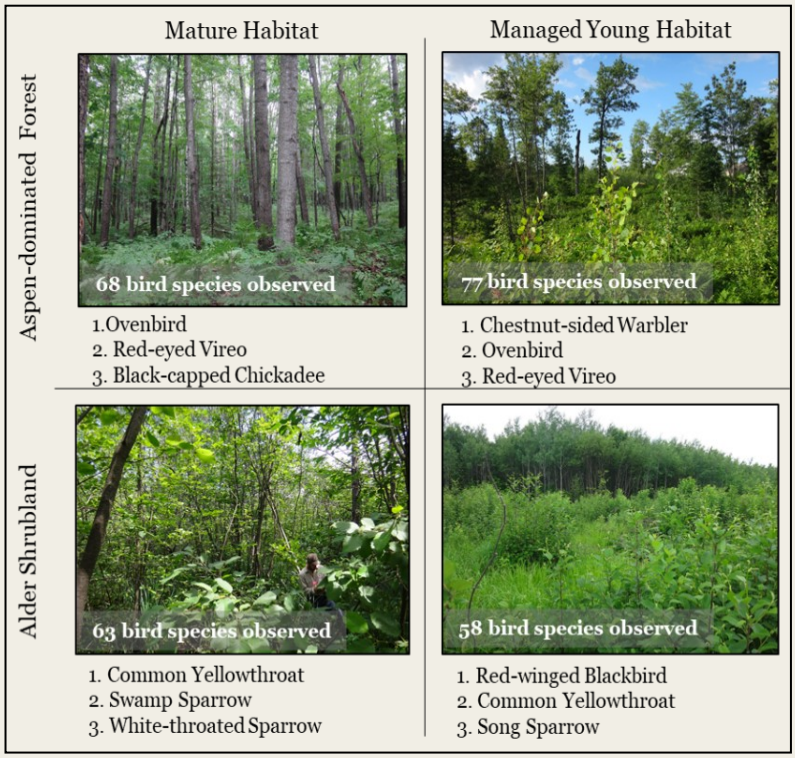


Figure 1. This figure shows the four habitat treatments in our study. We have included a list of the top three most commonly detected bird species and the total number of bird species detected in each treatment type. Photos taken by Anna Buckardt.

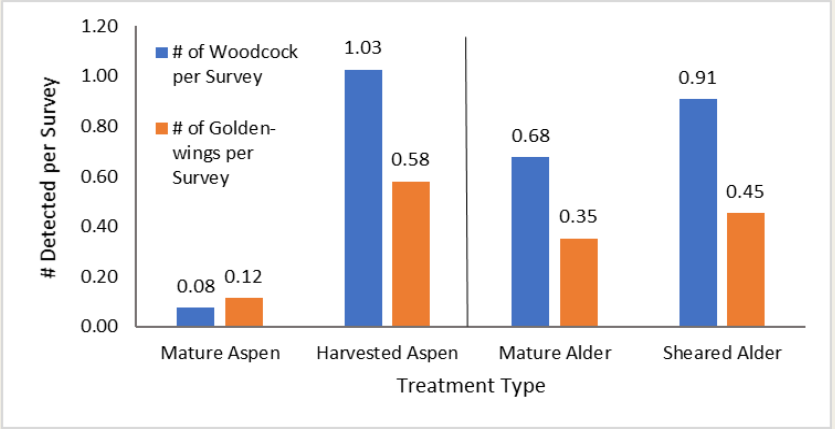


Figure 2. This figure shows the average number of American Woodcock and Golden-winged Warblers detected per survey in the four habitat treatments in our study. Both species were detected more often in young, managed sites than mature sites. Young harvested aspen habitat had the highest average detection rate per survey for both species.

Research

Objective 3: GWWA Geolocators

Figure 3. A male Golden-winged Warbler sporting a geolocator. Photo taken by Phil Hauck.

The final piece of my research focuses on understanding the migration and winter periods of the annual cycle of male Golden-winged Warblers. This information will help to inform international conservation efforts for Golden-winged Warblers, which are experiencing steep population declines. We are using light-level geolocator technology to track one year of movement of individual birds breeding in Oneida County, WI.

We capture the birds using mist-nets and then attach a geolocator using a leg-loop harness (figure 3). The bird is then released and goes about its life for a year, including traveling over 2,000 miles to its winter habitat in Central or South America. The geolocator does not have real-time tracking capabilities and the bird must be manually relocated and recaptured the year following initial capture in order to recover the geolocator and its data. The geolocator has an internal timer, a light-level sensor, and a memory chip. When the device is on the bird it takes and records measures of light intensity every two minutes. From this stored light-level data we are able to determine the time of sunrise and sunset and the length of each day. This allows us to estimate a daily longitude and latitude for the bird, within a region of likelihood.

We deployed 28 geolocators on male Golden-winged Warblers during the 2016 breeding season and recover 7 of them in 2017. We deployed an additional 11 geolocators in 2017 and will be returning in the 2018 breeding season in search of these 11 birds. Analysis is still underway but we hope to share results soon!

Monitoring Response of Early-successional Birds to Habitat Creation and Management in Northern Wisconsin

2015-17 Preliminary Research Results

Prepared by: Darin J. McNeil, Jr., Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology; Kirsten E. Johnson, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Cameron J. Fiss, Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Amanda D. Rodewald, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology; and Dr. Jeffery L. Larkin, Indiana University of Pennsylvania & American Bird Conservancy

The primary goal of our biological survey effort was to initiate an inventory and monitoring program for Golden-winged Warbler, American Woodcock, and associated bird species across private and public lands of northern Wisconsin. Herein we present only results from private and public lands managed with shrub management and timber harvest. Although the aforementioned management efforts are *targeted* at Golden-winged Warbler habitat and subsequent conservation, it seems likely that other early-successional specialist bird species (*e.g.*, American Woodcock *Scalopax minor*, other songbirds) may benefit from management. As such, we report results from all-species point counts which evaluate the extent to which non-target bird species may benefit from the management. Standardized monitoring protocols are used across all point surveys included in this project such that basic demographic data (*e.g.*, singing male densities) and relevant habitat features (*e.g.*, residual trees, shrub/sapling cover, and herbaceous cover) can be consistently collected and compared across a suite of managed sites across northern Wisconsin, Minnesota, and other states as future opportunities arise.

Research

Objectives

1. Quantify Golden-winged Warbler naïve occupancy and abundance in recently-managed areas across private- and public lands across northern Wisconsin.

2. Describe the community of non-target (*i.e.*, non-Golden-winged Warbler) species occurring within habitats managed for Golden-winged Warblers within northern Wisconsin.

3. Quantify American Woodcock naïve occupancy on recently-managed areas across northern Wisconsin.

4. Quantify structural vegetation conditions relevant to Golden-winged Warblers on recently-managed areas across northern Wisconsin.

Methods

Survey location placement

To generate point locations for vegetation sampling and associated avian monitoring, we used the '*create random points*' function in the geographic information system, ArcGIS. Whenever possible, we placed survey locations at least 80 m from an un-managed forest edge. Our final sample size of survey locations was n=40 locations across private and public lands in Wisconsin (figure 4).

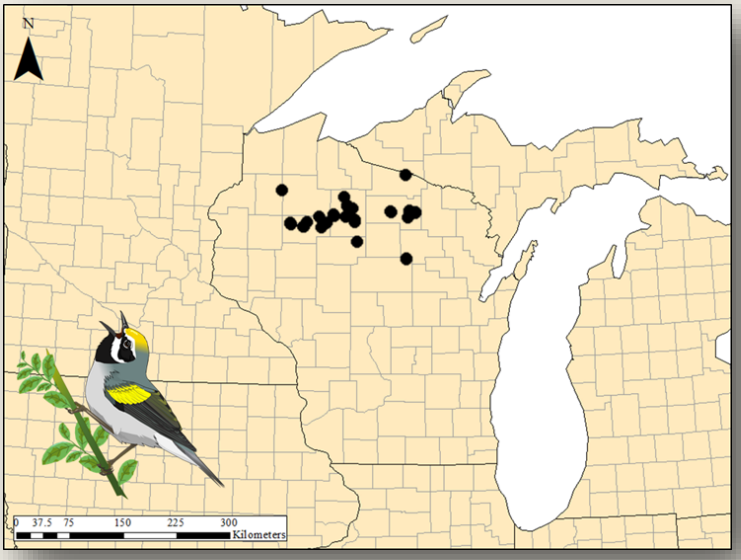


Figure 4. A map of Wisconsin depicting approximate locations of Golden-winged Warbler survey locations across the state.

Vegetation sampling

In order to quantify the microhabitat variables among sites managed using conservation practices targeted toward Golden-winged Warblers, we conducted a vegetation survey at each point location. We surveyed vegetation from 15 June – 15 July, 2015-17. All vegetation data were collected along three radial transects, each 100 m in length and oriented at 0°, 120°, and 240° from the point count location. Along each transect plant strata measurements were taken at 10 "stops" (10 m apart; n=30/point count location). Vegetation strata recorded at each stop consisted of the presence/absence of sapling, shrub, *Rubus*, fern, forb, sedge, leaf litter, and bare ground. Trees were quantified using a basal area prism at the 0m, 50m, and 100m locations along each transect (n=7 total/point). Plant strata values were analyzed as percentages (*i.e.*, % cover) as some sites had outer portions of transects truncated due to irregularly-shaped management boundaries.

Research

Diurnal songbird surveys

To quantify Golden-winged Warbler (and associated songbird) use of sites managed using timber harvest within northern Wisconsin, we conducted passerine point counts from 25 May through June 2015-17. Point counts locations were surveyed twice, annually, for songbirds. Points were each conducted by a single observer during fair weather and took place from 0.5 hour pre-sunrise and continued for 4.5 hours daily. Each point count survey consisted of a 10-minute passive period, followed by a 2-minute Golden-winged Warbler playback, and a final 1-minute passive period.

Woodcock surveys

We conducted American Woodcock singing ground surveys at 12 sites that had been recently managed to create habitat for Golden-winged Warblers across northern Wisconsin. Surveys were conducted within the dates and time period permitted under the USFWS American Woodcock Singing Ground Survey protocol: 25 April - 15 May within the northern Great Lakes. The survey period each evening is only 38 minutes in duration. As such, sites were only surveyed once, annually, for American Woodcock in order to maximize the number of sites surveyed across the study area.

Results

Vegetation structure

We measured vegetation characteristics at 40 locations within northern Wisconsin (20 shrub management on public lands and 20 timber harvests on private lands). Figure 5 provides a summary for the vegetation characteristics results in each management type in Northern Wisconsin for Golden-winged Warbler nesting habitat. Among sites managed for Golden-winged Warblers, basal area was lower than recommended. Among these locations, 100% hosted woody regenerating stems. Woody regeneration was irregularly dense at the microhabitat scale though fairly even across stands (*i.e.*, few portions of the stand with sparse/no regenerating stems).

Although these vegetation characteristics were not entirely within the recommended values prescribed by the Golden-winged Warbler Status Review and Conservation Plan, sites were relatively young and (0-3 years old) and will continue to change as ecological succession continues.

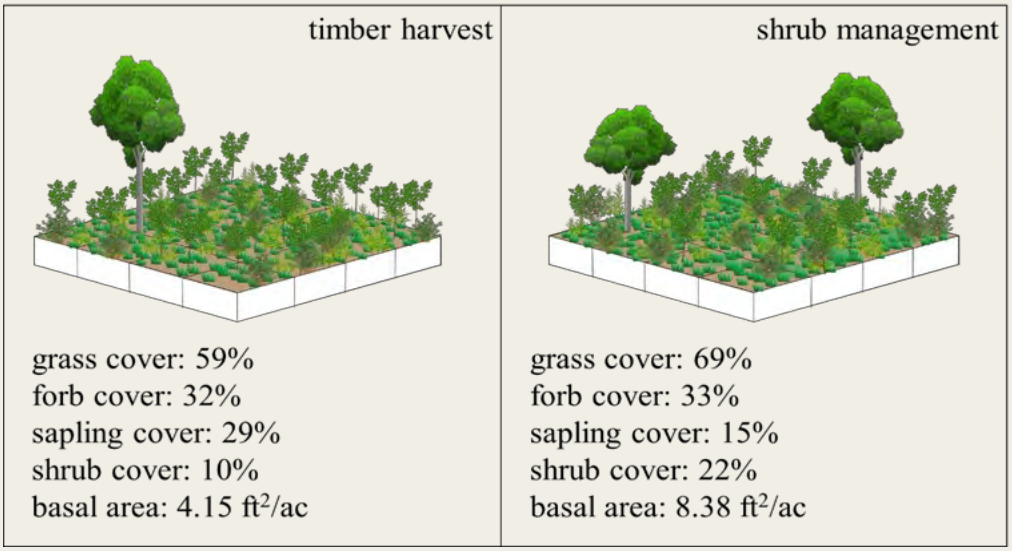


Figure 5. Left depicts a timber harvest with the average levels of vegetation measured in our study. Likewise, the right panel depicts a typical shrub management site.

Research

Avian response

Woodcock surveys revealed a naïve occupancy of 67% among managed sites in Wisconsin. Average woodcock surveys had an average of 1.25 singing males/point and those with confirmed occupancy (≥ 1 male detected) hosted an average of 1.87 males/point. Ongoing modeling efforts are underway to evaluate the drivers behind patterns of occupancy of sites by woodcock to describe the extent to which occupancy could be increased through strategic management implementation. Golden-winged Warblers were more common yet: naïve occupancy for the species was 70%. Detection adjusted estimates of occupancy typically increase naïve counts +5-10%.

In addition to the target species (Golden-winged Warbler and American Woodcock), we observed 68 additional bird species during our surveys. These included common generalist bird species like Blue Jay, and Song Sparrow, mature forest nesting birds like Ovenbird, and early-successional nesting birds such as Chestnut-sided Warbler. Many of the birds detected within the managed habitat of northern Wisconsin were species in population decline as described by the North American Breeding Bird Survey (*e.g.*, Common Yellowthroat, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Indigo Bunting). This suggests that the management efforts yield habitat for a variety of species that are understood to be limited chiefly by the availability of breeding habitat.

2017 Highlights

RGS Dedication at Woodboro Lakes Wildlife Area

Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) – WI River Chapter, based out of the Minocqua/Tomahawk/Rhinelander areas, adopted the 3,000 acre Woodboro Lakes Wildlife Area (WLWA) though the Wisconsin DNR 'Adopt a Wildlife Area' program on November 2nd, 2017. They will assist the WDNR with property management projects, such as tree/shrub planting, create/maintain wildlife openings, property maintenance, and young forest management.

DNR staff, including Jeremy Holtz (current WLWA manager), Ron Eckstein (retired - former WLWA manager), Eric Lobner (director of the Wildlife Management Program), James Yach (Northern Region Secretary's Director), Eric Kroening (Wildlife Technician for WLWA), and others that have worked on the area in the past or use it recreationally attended the dedication to show their appreciation towards RGS's new commitment. Scott Walter (former regional biologist for RGS) was also in attendance to show appreciation to the WI River Chapter. After a few short discussions and speeches by Jeremy Holtz, Eric Lobner, Scott Walter, and the executive committee of the WI River Chapter (Jon Long – president, Matt Johnson – vice president), brats, chips, and an assortment of sides were provided and prepared by DNR and RGS staff to celebrate the dedication. – Ryan Jacques

Grouse Hunting Management Maps in Wisconsin County Forests

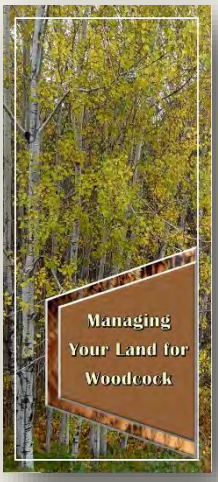
Since 1985, many of Wisconsin's County Forests have established cooperative ruffed grouse and woodcock habitat management areas with the support of RGS. Grouse Management Areas (GMA) focus on optimum habitat for ruffed grouse and American woodcock based on aspen forest regeneration and different age classes that provide all the food and habitat cover these birds need to flourish. The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) used grant funding in 2017 to launch an interactive mapping program on their website that provides information on 12 GMA, covering over 44,000 acres. A second grant in 2018 will add more GMA to the mapping program.

This mapping system was designed to help hunters easily locate prime upland game bird hunting locations in Wisconsin. Look for the sign (pictured right) at the main parking area to signal a GMA. Most of these management areas have hunter walking trails that are maintained to attract more wildlife. Information provided for each management area includes driving instructions, GPS coordinates for trailheads/parking areas, acreage of units, length of hunter walking trails, nearest towns with food, gas or lodging and local contacts for information about the county forest, chamber of commerce and closest veterinary services. If you feel more comfortable with a map in hand, downloadable maps of the individual grouse management areas are provided for each site. These maps identify the management area boundaries, parking lots, and hunter walking trail systems with many including breakdowns of forest types and aspen age classes that should prove very useful to perspective hunters. – WCFA website

Check out the interactive map at www.wisconsincountyforests.com/grouse/

2017 Highlights

Created *Managing Your Land for Woodcock* Brochure



WYFP received a grant from the SFI Implementation Committee through RGS for updating the *Managing Your Land for Woodcock* brochure. The original brochure focused on the life cycle of woodcock and gave MN resources. The updated brochure takes in information from the original brochure, the woodcock BMPs for the Upper Great Lakes, the conservation progress report from WMI, Timberdoodle.org, and many others. The new brochure focuses on BMPs for aspen, alder, and each of the habitat components for woodcock. Stacks of brochures have been distributed to our partners and they now reside across the state to provide landowners and resource professionals a detailed summary on ways to improve habitat for woodcock. – Randee Smith

NFWF Great Lakes 2017-2018

American Bird Conservancy was awarded a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant, "Creating, Restoring, and Managing Early Successional Habitat in the Great lakes for the Golden-winged Warbler Phase II" in 2017. This grant will end December 31st, 2018 and has funding to be used toward monitoring, travel, materials and supplies (such as office supplies and postage), forest management plans ($5,000 similar to the first NFWF where ABC paid cooperating foresters to write plans to fast-track them on the NRCS process), and money to pay contractors to do habitat work in line with GWWA BMP's. There is also funding for outreach materials and workshops/outreach meetings. The intent is to host a few more workshops like the contractor workshop held in February of 2017. All of these funds are shared across Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. – Callie Bertsch

Woodcock Symposium

The American Woodcock Symposia are the preeminent North American conference for presenting and discussing research findings and management issues pertaining to the conservation of the American woodcock. Timberdoodle enthusiasts have completed considerable work since the last symposium in 2006. The 11th American Woodcock Symposium was held October 25-27th, 2017 and focused on conservation strategies, habitat management and population dynamics. Jeremy Holtz attended and gave a presentation entitled "Woodcock is NOT a dirty word! Using interest in wildlife to engage private forest landowners" under the broader topic of communication strategies. Anna Buckhardt, MS student at University of Maine, also presented and highlighted her work with private forest landowners and the feasibility of using landowner interest and citizen science in a species monitoring program. Attendance at this symposium included students, professionals, researchers, and policy makers from the eastern U.S., Canada, and parts of Europe. The symposium taught attendees about the latest bird study science and technology, habitat management strategies, challenges in operating surveys, and the value of outreach efforts to private landowners and formation of collaborative partnerships such as our own Wisconsin Young Forest Partnerships. – Jeremy Holtz

2017 Highlights

National SAF Meeting

Jeremy Holtz was approached by Dr. Tricia Knoot of WDNR Forestry with a request to participate in a breakout session on outreach to private forest landowners as a part of the 2017 National Society of American Foresters Conference in Madison, WI. Jeremy went there representing the Wisconsin DNR and the Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership. It was a great opportunity to give a presentation about how WYFP as a Partnership have custom crafted a message to tailor to the needs and interests of foresters across the country. The need for marketing information to employ effective outreach to private forest landowners was a common theme across the presentations, and our program stood apart showing a low cost alternative that so far has yielded satisfactory results. Jeremy was able to interact with current partners at the meeting, such as Wisconsin SAF, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, USFS, DNR Forestry and Ponsse. – Jeremy Holtz

The Wildlife Society Professional Magazine Article

Henry Ford is credited with saying “coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” I (Jeremy Holtz) thought this quote was especially applicable to the Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership, so when I was invited to submit an article about WYFP to the Wildlife Professional, a publication of The Wildlife Society, this quote sprang to mind as a foundation for the article. It took about two years from start to finish, during which time we saw significant changes to staffing, to our operational structure, and to some of the partners that belong to our group, but that only served to enhance the article. The final publication of the WYFP article appeared in the January/February 2018 issue of The Wildlife Professional. Thanks to everyone who helped supply information, provided review and comments, and encouraged me to complete the arduous peer review process so that our story could be told. – Jeremy Holtz

TWS members can view the article any time in the archives on the TWS member website; any other interested individuals can access a copy of the article by clicking on “success comes from working together…” in the sidebar on the WYFP website at www.youngforest.org/wi.

Looking into 2018

2017 was a productive year for WYFP and our partners and 2018 is looking even better! With young forest becoming an increasing priority, new staff are being added and outreach is continuing to educate private landowners on the importance of management. Below are some of the items you can look forward to in 2018.

Outreach

In April 2018, another cold contact mailing was sent out in Price county and parts of Oneida county to reach 2,000 landowners. Landowners who respond to the mailing will go through the WYFP flowchart to obtain assistance. This will correspond to more habitat work on the ground for young forest, as well as referrals to our various partners and different programs available.

New Citizen Science Project

WYFP is creating a new project called “Wisconsin’s Young Forests” through iNaturalist to encourage citizen science on young forest. Introducing this project will help WYFP understand the impacts that management actions are having on the plants and animals on private property, plus allow WYFP to fine-tune and improve future management approaches. In order to provide more information for landowners, WYFP will update their website and add new content.

Landowner workshops

With a new project under way, WYFP plans to host a workshop to introduce landowners—who’ve already created young forest habitat—to iNaturalist and how they can get involved. This workshop will be June 16th, 2018 at the Kemp Natural Resources Station and made possible by ABC and University of Maine graduate student, Anna Buckardt.

New Hires: Forest Wildlife Specialists through RGS/NRCS/WDNR

Dan Hoff (stationed in the Lena NRCS field office; covering Northeast Wisconsin) and Jared Elm (stationed in the Ladysmith NRCS field office; covering Northwest Wisconsin) have already begun working in these forest wildlife specialist positions. Hoff and Elm will work with forest landowners to identify and implement sound forest management practices on their lands, emphasizing those that enhance or expand the young forest habitat base. From initial consultation to practice implementation, landowners will receive all the technical assistance needed to achieve their forest wildlife habitat objectives, and financial assistance via the application of Federal Farm Bill conservation funding.

Dan Hoff can be reached at DanH@RuffedGrouseSociety.org, or (920) 829-5406 ext. 126.

Jared Elm can be reached at JaredE@RuffedGrouseSociety.org, or (715) 532-3786 ext. 111.

Learn more at: http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/New-WI-Forest-Wildlife-Specialists

Appendix: Acronyms

Programs and Staff Abbreviations

- **WYFP**—Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership
- **USFS**—U.S. Forest Service
    - ◊ **CNNF**—Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest
- **ABC**—American Bird Conservancy
- **NRCS**—Natural Resources Conservation Service
    - ◊ **RCPP**—Regional Conservation Partnership Program
    - ◊ **EQIP**—Environmental Quality Incentives Program
    - ◊ **DC**—District Conservationist
- **WFLGP**—Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program
- **CF**—Cooperating Foresters
- **DMAP**—Deer Management Assistance Program
- **MFL**—Managed Forest Law
- **WDNR**—Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- **Partners for FW**—Partners for Fish and Wildlife program through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- **RGS**—Ruffed Grouse Society

Bird Banding Codes

- **AMWO**—American Woodcock
- **GWWA**—Golden-winged Warbler

For more information, please contact:

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