

## Methods to Meet Your Management Goals & A Breakdown of TRLT's Sportsman Access Program



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## Who We Are....

Primary mission:  
Local land conservation




## Land Management

**Sportsman Access Program**

- managed lands for sportsman access

**Habitat Enhancement Lands Program**

- technical service for landowners



## Habitat Enhancement Lands Program

- H.E.L.P. – What is it?
  - for-fee consultation
  - we saw a need
  - one-stop-shop to provide assistance
  - every landowner is different



## Habitat Enhancement Lands Program

**Importance**

- privately owned – 90%
- can't leave solely in the hands of agencies

Private lands are left holding majority of species

- may contain sensitive species
  - loss without management (e.g., plants, salamanders, bats)




## Creating Connectivity

**Southern Region**  
Housing Density 1970

**Region**  
Housing Density 2000

**Private Lands are Critically Important!**



- cannot expect animals to make long distance movements to isolated patches
  - increased travel distances = higher likelihood of mortality
- home range size requirement
- genetic isolation

## What are we going to do about it??

Develop a plan!

*"If you have no idea where you are going, how do you know when you get there?"*



## Defining those objectives

Build a good foundation

*"I want to manage for wildlife."*

Specific

- determine best course of action

Measurable

- track the management activities
- determine if meeting objectives



## Let's keep it in perspective...

Objectives can be many

- cattle, timber, wildlife, agriculture, recreation, income, invasive management, pollinators
- prioritize
- finding overlap & integrating management
- sweet spot → making management pay for itself by correctly utilizing areas

Realizing feasibility

- e.g., quail, QDM



## Resource Inventory

Determining what you have and the quality of it.

Components of wildlife habitat:

- food
- water
- cover
- space
- arrangement



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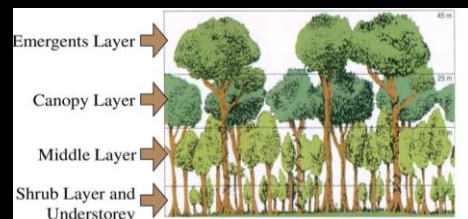
**Most feasible to manipulate for HQ improvement**



## Resource Inventory

Improve food and cover by manipulating:

- **vegetation composition** – “what’s growing”
  - promote plants that produce food for desired wildlife
- **vegetation structure** – “how tall & dense it’s growing”
  - Alter density and height to provide cover





## Implementation

Requires time or money

- should ensure we are being efficient

Save time + Save money + Being efficient  
with resources = increase impact

Increase impact

- avoiding pitfalls that suck time and \$
- maximizing value of things that work well



## Pitfall #1: not looking ahead..

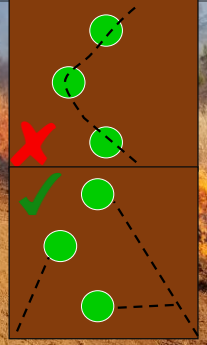
### Roping management activities together

Well established road system

- less time and money on maintenance
  - prevent erosion & preserve top soil
  - faster access
  - less wear & tear on equipment
- multipurpose → timber mgmt, firebreaks, access
  - reduce time blowing firebreaks
- reduce hunting pressure

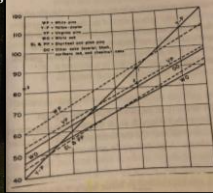
• Time sensitive

- site preparation/planting
- herbicide applications



## Pitfall #2: Sites Matter!!

- Every area has a suite of plant species adapted to grow there
  - yellow poplar vs shortleaf
  - maintaining fertile bottomland in early succession
- Northern Aspects – cooler and wetter probably not the best place for woodland restoration → tougher to implement fire



## Pitfall #3: Income driven forests

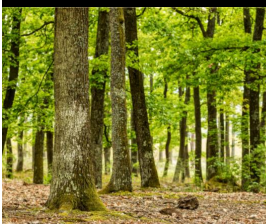
- Waiting too long to plant after harvest
  - losing income (time value of money)
  - more expensive to reforest
- Setting them, and forgetting them!
  - income driven → should be thinning!
  - eventually will stagnate and succumb to disease and pest issues
- Consulting foresters
  - landowner's agent
  - more money



## Pitfall #4: Loving our hardwoods a little too much

Perception: unmanaged oak stands = premier wildlife habitat

Reality: little forage, little cover



50-100 lbs of forage/ac

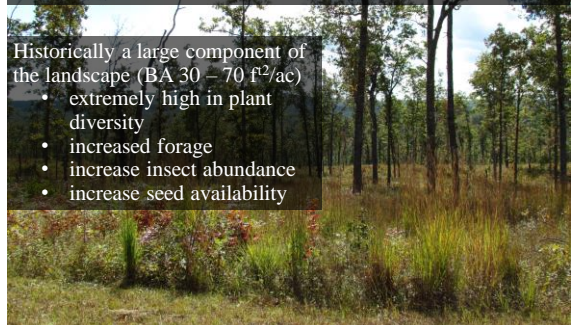


1000+ lbs of forage/ac

## Creating Woodlands = Turning Forest Litter into Glitter

Historically a large component of the landscape (BA 30 – 70 t<sup>2</sup>/ac)

- extremely high in plant diversity
- increased forage
- increase insect abundance
- increase seed availability





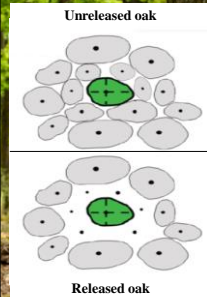
## Pitfall #5: Acorns as the Holy Grail

Periodic bonus instead of main food source

- good mast year every 2-3 out of 5
- temporary food source – especially white

All oak trees aren't created equal

- 40% of the trees produce 70% of the overall acorn production
- small % of trees responsible for producing majority of the acorns
- acorn production hindered by competition
- releasing good mast producers = **65% increase in acorn production**



## Pitfall for Forest Stand Improvement

- Not removing dominant and codominant trees
  - sunlight needed for herbaceous response
  - removing midstory only = removing next generation of forest

## Additional benefits of FSI?

- Resprouting = additional food and cover
- Making an unattainable food source attainable



## Pitfall #6: Burning to burn

- Prescribed fire should have defined objectives

### Pitfall

- Fire under closed canopy
  - may only remove leaf litter
  - little impact in terms of promoting food and cover
  - need >20% sunlight to allow herbaceous response

## Pitfall #6: Burning to burn

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### Pitfall

- Sticking to strict regimes or seasonality
  - should be evaluating plant response
  - difference between surviving versus thriving
    - cater burn regime to meet those habitat requirement needs
    - timing, intensity, and frequency

## Pitfall #6: Burning to burn

### Intensity

- High → kill trees (woodpeckers/bats)
- Low → remove litter only, patchy (herpetofauna)

### Seasonality

#### Dormant-season

- maintains composition, stimulates woody sprouting
- can be more intense

#### Growing-season

- reduces woody composition
- stimulates herbaceous cover
- late growing-season – less woody composition



## Pitfall #6: Burning to burn

### Frequency

Frequent: 1-2 yr

- increase grasses/legumes
- increase seed production
- reduces woody composition
- can reduce soft mast production

Infrequent fire (3 – 5 years)

- promotes woody understory
- promotes “thicket” cover
- increase soft mast

Infrequent fire (5 – 10 years)

- woody vegetation dominates
- loss of herbaceous component



## Pitfall #7: Not recognizing life cycle requirements

Spatial arrangement of habitat requirement

daily – e.g., mallard feeding and roosting

seasonally – e.g., amphibian migrations to breeding areas

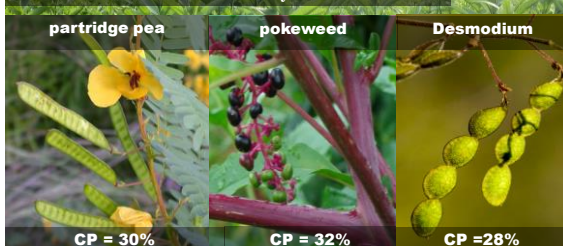
annual – e.g., quail nesting, brooding, winter



## Pitfall #8: Not all weeds are bad!

Naturally occurring forbs can provide:

- better structure than food plots
- great nutritional value
- no lime or fertilizer necessary



## Pitfall #9: Recreational mowing

- removes structure and forage
- many species are nesting or raising young during peak mowing season (April - September)



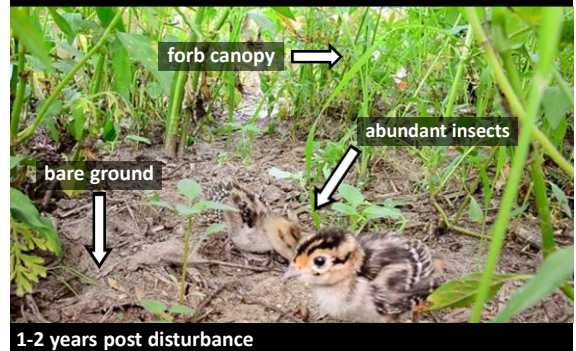
## Pitfall #10: Monoculture of NWSG

Better than their cool-season cousins, but still

- too densely stocked
- lack diversity
- little forage value



## Matrix of forbs and NWSG!



## Pitfall #11: Ignoring those invasives

- Many non-natives have little wildlife value and can quickly take over
- Easier to eradicate while isolated
- Protect investment
- Follow up is needed
- Can severely hinder management efforts

## Pitfall #12: Too much reliance on food plots

- Shouldn't be only management practice if you're truly wanting to improve wildlife populations
- Icing on the cake
- Same amount of \$ can yield greater overall nutritionally and structurally better results
- Large food plots
  - not a lot left for proper amendments
  - may be better to concentrate on fewer well-managed plots



## Pitfall 14: Getting a plan and sticking to it

- Management plan on a shelf
  - continually updating
  - evaluate plant response
  - evaluate wildlife response
  - should be constantly reviewing and updating
    - after harvest junk trees are left
    - invasive
    - changing timber markets
    - disease (e.g., green ash)
- Being flexible
  - Can't always predict (e.g., hurricane, ice)



## Pitfall 15: Trying to do it all on your own

- Cost share
  - can save you substantial amounts of \$
  - burning, thinning, planting, release, site preparation
- Seek multiple opinions & input
  - isn't one right answer
- Leaning on your neighbors → Co-ops
  - feasibility of practices for smaller acreages or increased revenue
  - bigger impact
  - it all starts with a conversation



## Sportsman Access Program

- [Commercial](#)
- [Testimony](#)



## Sportsman Access Program

- allows access
- provides opportunity
- draw system
  - no guarantees
- select specific dates
- week blocks
- any legal species
- 350 members
- dues used for conservation funding





## Sportsman Access Program

- Three draws per year
  - Fall draw: August (for September-October dates)
- Winter draw: October (for November-March dates)
- Spring draw: March (for April-August dates)

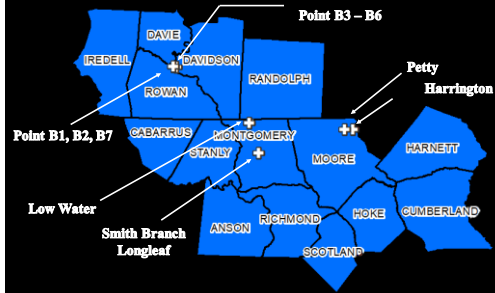


## Sportsman Access Program

- \$100 – initial memberships
  - 4 picks – potential for 4 weeks/4 blocks
- \$25 – additional picks
- 100-300 acre blocks
- Group hunts – 3
- All NC regulations apply
- RecAccess

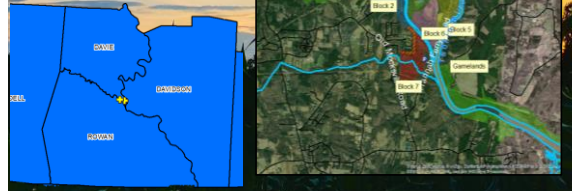


## 5 SAP Properties



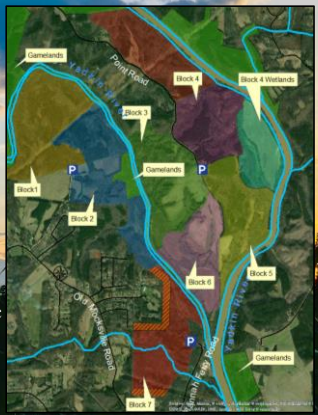
## Point Property

- Rowan/Davie county
- Surrounded by game lands
- Point location
- 1700 acres



## Point Property

- Great access
  - boat
  - vehicle
  - firebreaks
- Most popular
- Avg. Block Size = 170 ac



## Point Property

- **Agricultural fields**
- Thinned pines
- Large, open upland hardwoods
- Bottomland hardwoods
- Impoundment
- Natural swamps, ponds & sloughs
- Early succession
- Food plots





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120 ac

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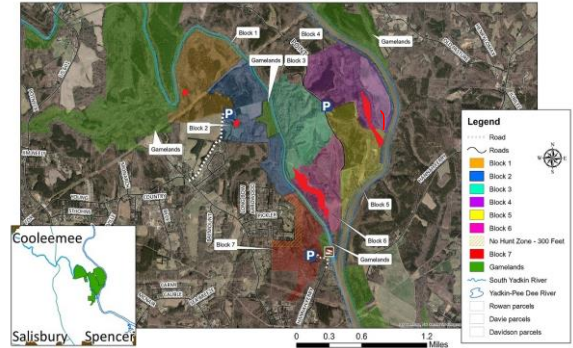


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## Two Rivers Properties - The Point



## Point Property

- Agricultural fields
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- Large, open upland hardwoods
- Bottomland hardwoods
- Impoundment
- Natural swamps, ponds & sloughs
- **Early succession**
- Food plots



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- Impoundment
- Natural swamps, ponds & sloughs
- Early succession
- **Food plots**



## Point Property - Harvests

Since 2017 (5 yrs)

- Hogs - 219
- White-tailed deer - 59
  - Avg: 12/year
  - Does: 28
  - Bucks: 31
- Turkey - 22
  - Avg: 3.5/year



"Thanks for the opportunity to hunt the Point Property. Took a 22lb Tom with 1-1/4" spurs and 11" beard on my hunt. Turkey hunting was as awesome as anywhere I've been blessed to chase them." -Lloyd Rigdon, B4

## Point Property 21/22 Harvest



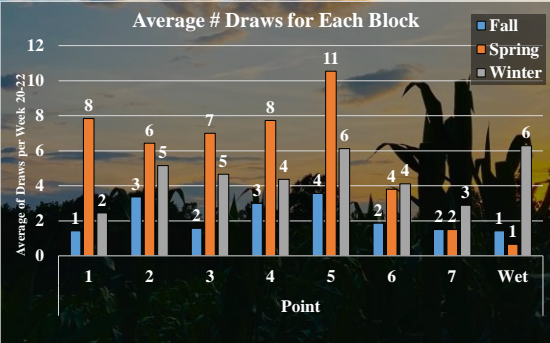
Block 3

Block 1

Block 6

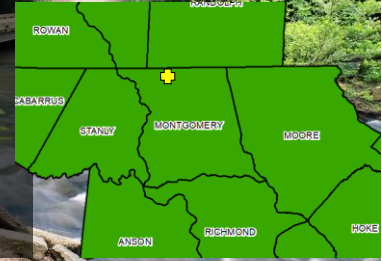


## Point Property - Draws



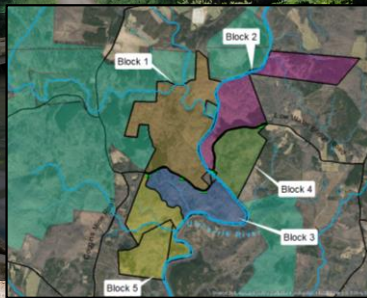
## Low Water Bridge

- Montgomery Co.
- 5 hunting blocks
- 1,500 acres
- Bisected by the Uwharrie River
- Adjacent to USFS
- Avg. block size = 281 ac



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## Low Water Bridge

- Antler restrictions
  - 8 points
  - spread that is outside the ears



## Low Water Bridge

- **Large, open hardwoods**
- Stream and river corridors
- Clearcuts
- Mountainous
- Food plots



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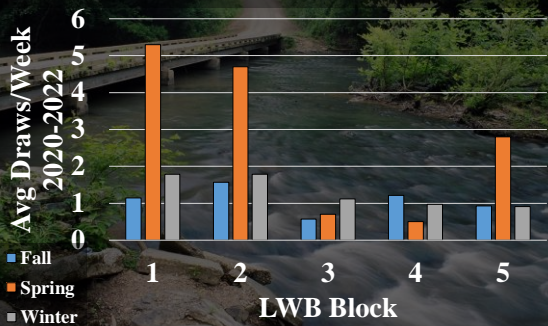
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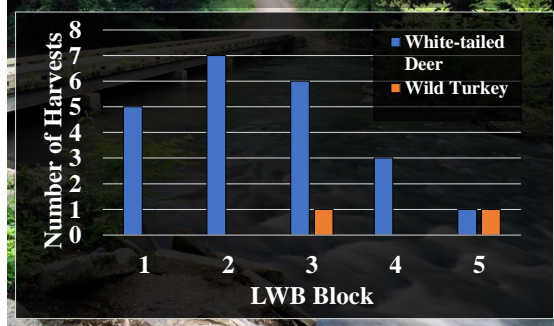
## Low Water Bridge

- Access
- trails
  - road frontage to every block

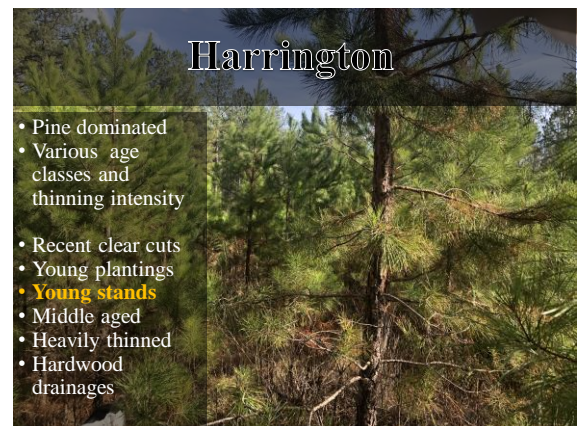
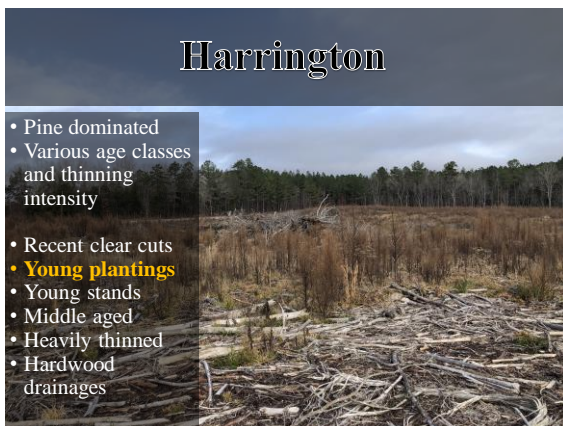
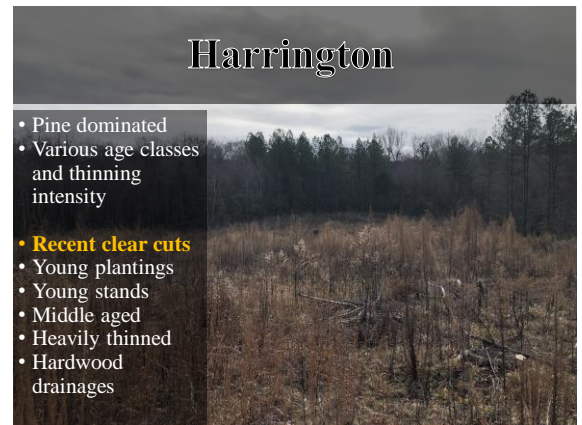
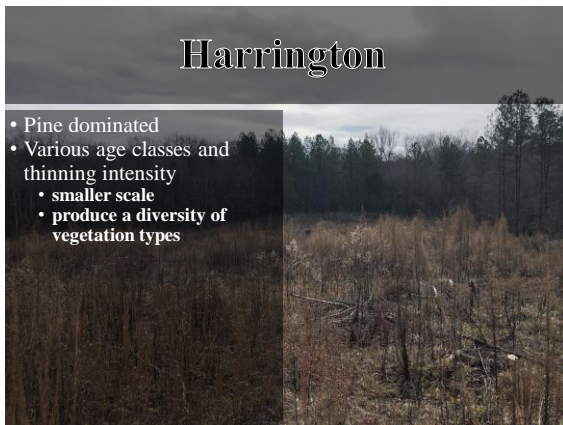
## Low Water Bridge Draws



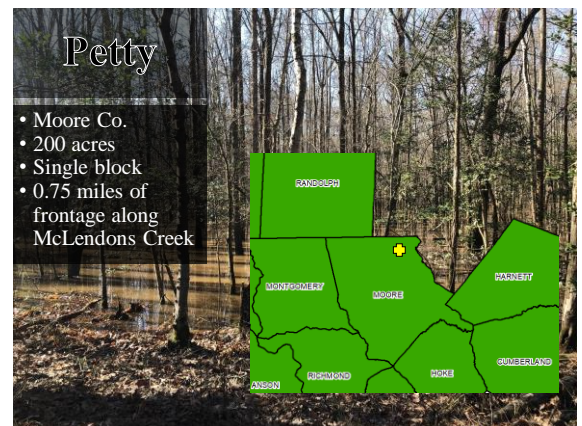
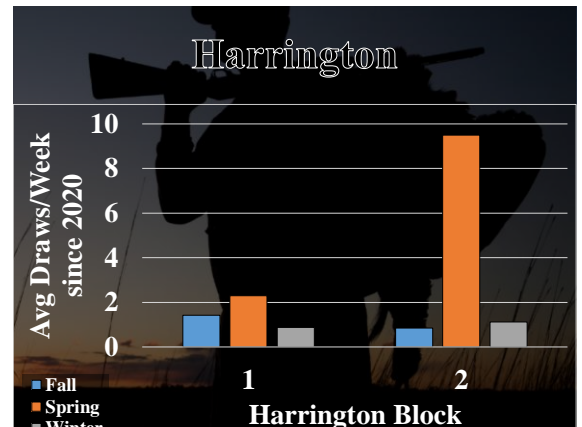
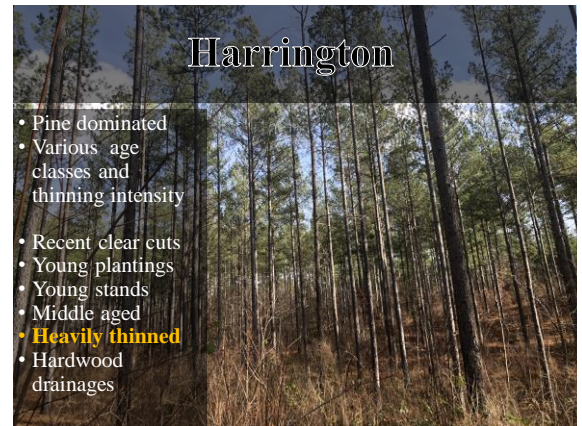
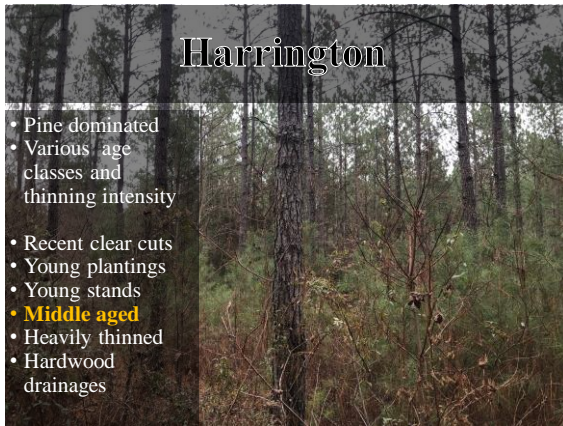
## Low Water Bridge Harvests



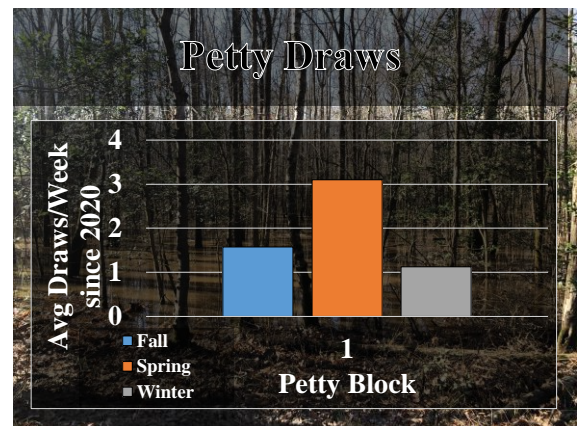
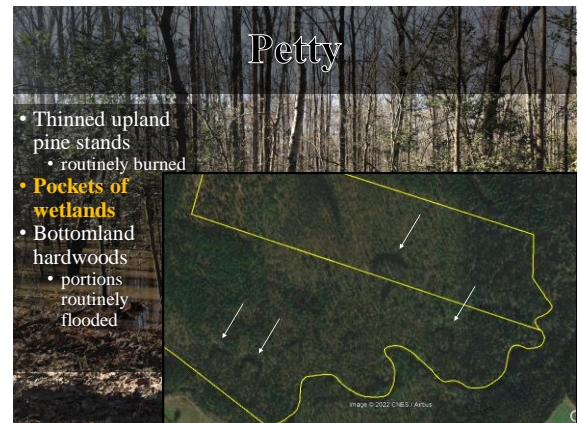














## Petty Harvests

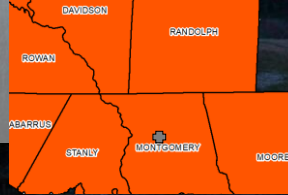
Harvests since  
2020

- Deer = 4
- Turkey = 0



## Smith Branch Longleaf

- Montgomery Co.
- Surrounded on 3 sides by USFS
- 101 acres
- 1 hunting block



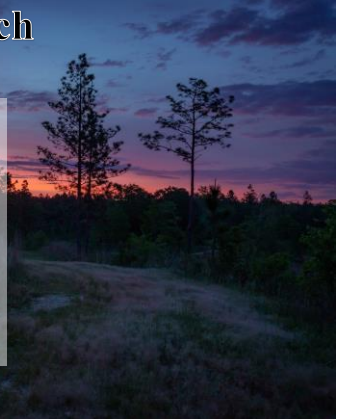
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## Smith Branch Longleaf

- All longleaf of various age classes
- Bisected by Smith Branch
- Routinely burned on 1-3 year interval



## Smith Branch Longleaf

- Young longleaf
- Middle-aged longleaf

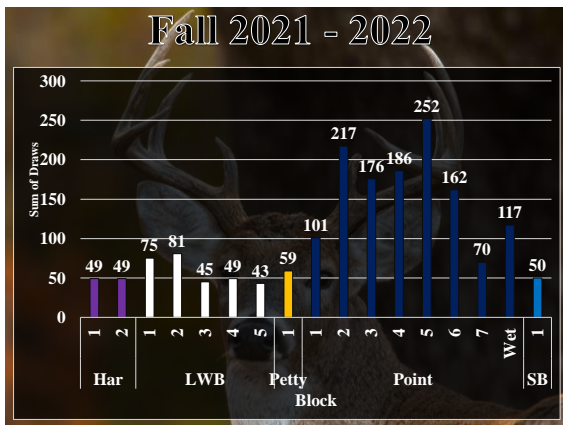
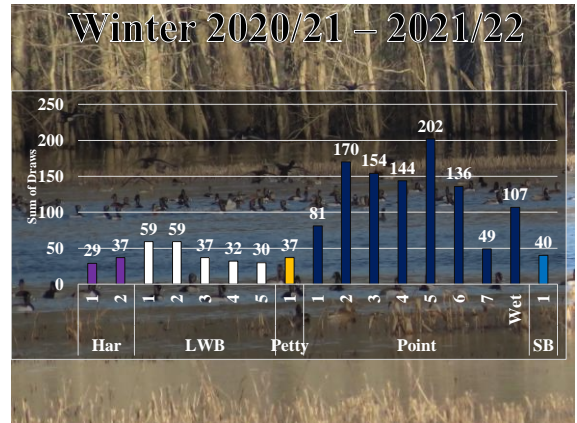
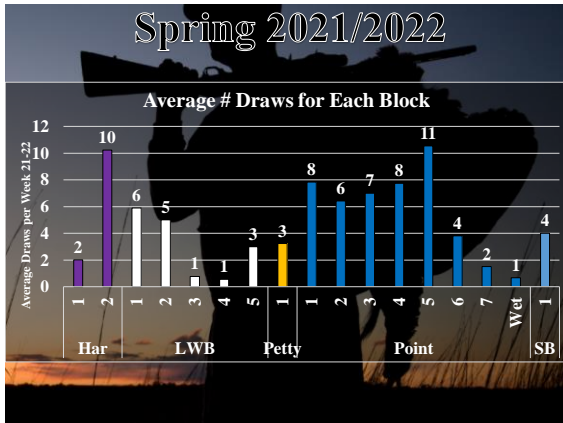
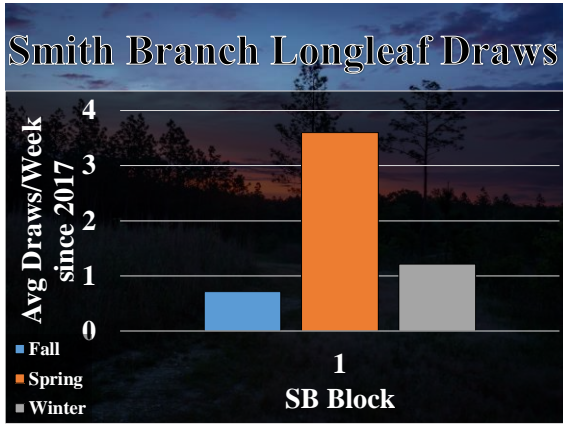


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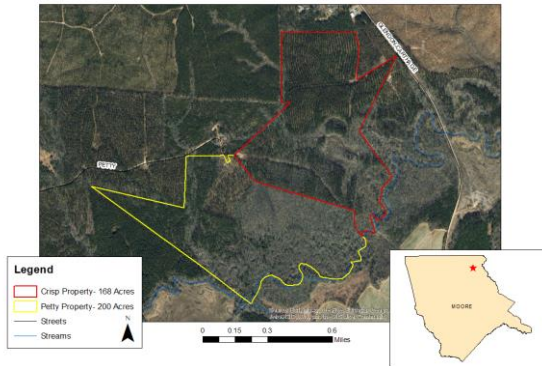








Crisp Property- Moore County



## Conclusion

- Integrated approaches to fund local conservation
  - protecting land in your backyard
- H.E.L.P
  - define objectives
  - flexible
- SAP
  - properties across the Piedmont and Sandhills to offer hunting opportunity
  - a way to give back to local folks
  - passing it on



## Questions

