



Clemson Experimental Forest research aims to improve wildlife habitats

Clemson University | Posted: Sunday, April 24, 2011 6:00 am

CLEMSON - Southeast land managers are learning ways to improve wildlife habitat management practices on private forests through research in the Clemson University Experimental Forest. The research and demonstration efforts are being funded through a Sustainable Forestry Initiative Conservation and Community Partnership Grant totaling \$90,000 over three years.

"More than 75 percent of South Carolina's natural resources are on private lands, so our aim is to provide the research-based information to landowners, foresters and natural resource professionals that manage forests for both timber production and wildlife habitat," said Greg Yarrow, a wildlife ecology professor who is leading the Clemson project with Knight Cox, manager of the Clemson forest, and Rickie Davis, a wildlife biologist.

Working with students and university faculty and staff, Yarrow and project partners have established 25 research plots in the 17,500-acre Clemson University Experimental Forest to test management techniques that improve timber production while enhancing wildlife habitat, protecting water quality, conserving rare species and communities and protecting special sites, which are core components of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative certification program.

Clemson will host workshops to deliver the research results to landowners, which will support the outreach and education requirements in the initiative's unique fiber-sourcing objectives. The work also will help to build partnerships with natural resource agencies and conservation organizations along with current project partners Upstate Forever, the Nemours Wildlife Foundation, the Quality Deer Management Association and the National Wild Turkey Federation.

"Last fall, we collected data about vegetation important to wildlife across all demonstration sites," said John Brunt, a wildlife biology student from St. Matthews. "This spring we conducted prescribed burns on some of these sites to remove brushy undergrowth. We will monitor wildlife habitat and timber growth on these sites and share research findings with landowners later this year."

"SFI includes research among its standard requirements because we know how much this can improve forest management practices," said the initiative's president and CEO, Kathy Abusow. "The work will serve as a model for private landowners across the Southeast - both those certified to the SFI standard and those who meet our fiber-sourcing requirements. It will also provide a teaching laboratory for Clemson students by showcasing innovative approaches to integrate wildlife habitat improvement practices into timber management."

Wildlife habitat

improvement practices

The focus and core goal of the project is to demonstrate and investigate silvicultural and other land-management practices that improve wildlife habitats in managed forest systems. Demonstrated and investigated practices include, but are not limited to, silvicultural practices that can be implemented at the forest stand- and landscape-level that improve wildlife habitats. These practices include promoting aquatic and riparian areas, managing for landscape wildlife habitat features, conserving rare species and communities, protecting special sites and encouraging partnerships with natural resource agencies and conservation organizations.

Clemson Experimental Forest

The 17,500-acre Clemson forest is unusual in that it is a working forest adjacent to the main campus. As such, it is used for teaching, research and outreach programs on sustainable-forest management practices. The forest is strictly managed for sustained or improved timber production, as well as for plant and wildlife diversity, air and water quality and recreational use. Forest operating costs - personnel, equipment, supplies, roads, recreation facilities and maintenance - all are supported by revenue generated from sales of forest products. The Clemson forest is a member of the American Tree Farm System, is certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative forest management standard and has been designated by the Audubon Society as a Global Important Bird Area.

Sustainable Forestry Initiative

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