

## Activity II-A: Written Management Plan (125 Points)

The Written Management Plan is a team event where team members discuss, consider, and provide written recommendations that address current conditions and objectives regarding wildlife populations and habitat on a specified property. A written scenario describing the property, current conditions, and landowner objectives is provided to teams prior to starting the activity. Each team interprets the objectives, identifies the focal species, recommends WMPs and their intended impact, and states how the plan will be evaluated.

The “Judges’ Scoring Sheet – Written Management Plan,” shown below, details how plans are judged. All plans must be written using paragraph format. A sample management plan worksheet is provided below to help teams prepare for writing management plans.

Teams may use **one side** of each of three pieces of paper provided. Two of these sheets are for writing the plan, and the third sheet is for sketching a map of the property illustrating where practices should be implemented. An aerial photo of the area may be provided to assist with the sketch. The team number should be written on the blank back side of each sheet. Plans not written in the proper format or correctly identified will not be judged. Teams will have two hours to complete this activity.

### Example of Written Plan Scenario

#### 2013 National WHEP Written Plan Scenario

#### Atterbury Fish and Wildlife Area, Trafalgar, Indiana

The Atterbury Fish and Wildlife Area (AFWA) is 6,500 acres and was historically owned by the Department of Defense (DoD, Camp Atterbury) and is now managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Historically, DoD leased fields to local producers for row-cropping, but there were no efforts to manage the area for wildlife. The IDNR has decided to manage particular sections of the property, including the one you are on, for species that use early successional stages, such as eastern cottontail and brown thrasher. The northern bobwhite has been identified as the focal species because bobwhite populations in the ecoregion have declined sharply over the past few decades; therefore, quail hunting has been suspended.

Funding for land management is a limitation. Thus, the IDNR has decided to continue to lease fields for row-cropping, specifically corn, soybeans, and wheat. The IDNR has calculated at least 50 percent of the area must be leased to provide sufficient income for management activities. AFWA is open for hunting. The IDNR foresees hunting opportunities for mourning dove and eastern cottontail, which are relatively common in the area.

The area you are considering is approximately 115 acres and includes 60 acres of soybeans. This section is bordered on the north side by a firebreak and a treeline, on the east side by a firebreak, on the south side by the road, and on the west side by a firebreak and woods.

Your task is to prepare a management plan that provides information and recommendations to meet IDNR’s objectives and property limitations. You have 2 hours to complete your plan. This is a team activity. Prepare your plan on 2 sheets of paper, but write only on one side of each sheet. Sketch a map of the area including placement of your management recommendations on the third sheet. Include your **team ID number** on the back of each sheet. Do not write your name or the name of your state on the sheet. Good luck and have fun coming up with your recommendations!

## **Part I: Plan Background (10 Points)**

### ***What are the species to be managed and what are the management objectives?***

The species to be managed include northern bobwhite, eastern cottontail, and brown thrasher. The management objectives are to manage the area for wildlife species that use early successional stages, particularly those listed above, and provide hunting opportunities.

## **Part II: Plan Development (40 Points)**

### ***Species Habitat requirements (20 Points)***

Northern bobwhite use scattered patches of shrubby cover, well interspersed with native grasses, forbs, and bare ground. Areas dominated by forbs are commonly used for brooding cover. A variety of seeds, leaves, and insects are eaten.

Eastern cottontails require brushy cover interspersed with herbaceous openings. They eat forbs and grasses, bark of shrubs and young trees, buds, and browse.

Brown thrashers are found in shrub and bramble thickets, brushy hedgerows, young forests, and forest edges. They eat invertebrates and various seed found on the ground among the leaf litter. They usually nest in shrubs up to 10 feet aboveground.

Mourning dove use areas with annual and perennial grasses and forbs with considerable bare ground for feeding. They nest in shrubs and trees or on the ground. They commonly use agricultural fields for foraging. They require free-standing water daily.

### ***Habitat Assessment (20 points)***

The area under consideration is 115 acres and includes 2 fields of soybeans that have been planted via no-till agriculture that encompass 60 acres. There are field borders surrounding some portions of the soybean fields. There are 2 small woodlots with an open canopy of scattered trees and a dense brushy understory. The remainder of the area contains dense grass (tall fescue) with scattered forbs, brambles, and tree saplings. Brooding cover for northern bobwhite is limited because of a lack of mobility in the thick grass. Brushy cover used for escape and winter loafing by bobwhite is limiting. Cover for brown thrasher only exists in the 2 small woodlots. Cover for eastern cottontail is largely limited to the small woodlots. The tall fescue does not provide overhead cover. Winter cover will be severely limiting for all species after the soybeans are harvested. There is no free-standing water available.

### **Part III: Plan Implementation (40 Points)**

**Control Nonnative Invasive Species** to reduce coverage of tall fescue and allow the seedbank to germinate, which will provide more food and better cover for all 4 species.

**Field Borders** should be established around portions of the soybean fields where there are none. This will increase usable space for northern bobwhite and eastern cottontail.

**Leave Crop Unharvested** will provide soybeans for northern bobwhite, mourning dove, and eastern cottontail into winter.

**Plant Shrubs** between sections of soybean fields that will be retained to provide a corridor connecting the two woodlots. This will increase usable space for northern bobwhite, eastern cottontail, and brown thrasher, and increase loafing and nesting cover for mourning dove.

**Set-back Succession: Prescribed Fire** will set-back and rejuvenate the understory in the woodlots and provide more forage for eastern cottontail and northern bobwhite.

**Water Development for Wildlife** (small pond) should be established to provide free-standing water for mourning doves.

**Wildlife Survey** should be conducted to monitor populations of all 4 species. Point counts may be used for mourning dove and brown thrasher, covey counts may be used for northern bobwhite, and observation counts and hunter harvest data can be used for eastern cottontail.

### **Part IV: Plan Evaluation (15 Points)**

Wildlife survey data will be evaluated annually and tracked over time to estimate population trends. Hunter success and satisfaction will be accessed through surveys. Vegetation surveys will determine if additional treatment is needed to reduce tall fescue, evaluate success of shrub plantings, and evaluate habitat quality for all species.

# Wildlife Habitat Education Program

## Judges' Scoring Sheet – Activity II-A Written Wildlife Management Plan

Scale for scoring: 0 = very poor, no points; 10 = outstanding, maximum points

### Part I: Plan background (10 points maximum)

\_\_\_\_\_ points

- Accurately identified the wildlife species to be managed and accurately identified the management objectives

### Part II: Plan development (40 points maximum)

\_\_\_\_\_ points

- Demonstrated understanding of the habitat needs of each species (20 points)
- Accurately evaluated the area as habitat for each species (what is present and what is lacking) and the management objectives (20 points)

### Part III: Plan implementation (40 points maximum)

\_\_\_\_\_ points

- Included the appropriate management practices and where they should be implemented (10 points)
- Demonstrated knowledge of the effect of various management practices on the habitat and/or the species (10 points)
- Used the appropriate native plant species or recognized nonnative invasive species (10 points)
- Recognized the management compromises necessary to meet the needs of each species and showed understanding of the mutual benefits of implementing certain practices (10 points)

### Part IV: Plan evaluation (15 points maximum)

\_\_\_\_\_ points

- Presented realistic methods for monitoring success of the recommendations (15 points)

### Part V: Format and drawing (20 points maximum)

\_\_\_\_\_ points

- Presented in the appropriate narrative format (10 points)
- Included a drawing or sketch of the area, reflecting the recommended management practices (10 points)

**Activity II-A total (125 points maximum)**

\_\_\_\_\_ points