



## Enon-Sehoy Plantation Uses Prescribed Fire to Improve Quail and Red-cockaded Woodpecker Habitat

**The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy** is a national collaborative effort to bring a broad cross-section of stakeholders together to address wildland fire management challenges. The Strategy directs wildland fire planning activities and has three primary goals: restore and maintain landscapes, develop Fire-Adapted Communities, and improve wildfire response.

Activity	Impact
Forest species managed	4 southern pines (slash, loblolly, longleaf, shortleaf)
Average basal area (square feet per acre)	15-60
Primary species managed on the property	Northern bobwhite quail
# red cockaded woodpecker breeding groups on property	29
Frequency of prescribed fire on entire property	Every 2 years
# acres in conservation easement	18,000
Tons wood thinned annually	10,000

Enon-Sehoy Plantation, located in the Alabama Upper Coastal Plains, is a recreational, quail hunting property renowned for its open-story pine trees and diverse wildlife. The 27,500 acre, privately-owned property contains widely spaced longleaf, shortleaf, loblolly, and slash pine forests (basal area of 15-60 square feet per acre) with diverse understory grasses and forbs, such as bluestem, switchgrass, and the federally endangered American chaffseed. The forests and understory vegetation support abundant wildlife, including deer, turkey, and quail, as well as the threatened Bachman’s sparrow and the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. Within four years, the property’s red-cockaded woodpecker population grew from just 3 clusters to 29 potential breeding groups.

The primary land management technique used to maintain the open canopy landscape and diverse wildlife at Enon-Sehoy is prescribed fire. Since optimizing quail habitat is the main objective for land management at Enon-Sehoy, a careful prescribed fire plan must be used to provide the food,

shelter, and breeding grounds necessary for quail survival. Grasses and other understory plants regenerated by prescribed fire provide quail not only vegetation, seeds, and insects necessary for nutrition, but also shelter from predators. This presents a challenge. Quail habitat is restored by fire, but quail are susceptible to predators without the protective cover of vegetation removed by fire. To achieve both goals of restoration and shelter, the property is burned every two years in a mosaic of 40-50 acre blocks. Burning a patchwork of smaller areas is more time-consuming but enables regeneration of important quail habit while maintaining sufficient shelter.

Maintaining the Enon-Sehoy landscape with prescribed fire every two years has added benefits to surrounding communities. Dangerous wildland fire vegetation fuel is kept to a minimum through regular burns, thus protecting surrounding communities from wildland fire hazard. Less understory vegetation also equates to lower smoke production, a primary complaint of prescribed fire management by the public.

Success stories highlight regional wildland fire accomplishments that support implementation of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy in the Southeast. The stories demonstrate how the Southeast is improving its “fire resiliency” through technology, education and outreach, forest management, collaboration, and more. Success stories also serve as a model for other communities to follow.

The plantation placed 18,000 acres in a conservation easement, which provided federal funding to assist in management of this portion of the property. In addition, Enon-Sehoy thins or clear-cuts, on average, 10,000 tons of wood per year. Forest harvests create and maintain additional quail habitat as well as generate income to continue management of the property.

Frequent prescribed fire at Enon-Sehoy has created not only a unique, treasured hunting preserve, but also a diverse habitat containing abundant wildlife and vegetation.



*Prescribed fire treatment area at Enon-Sehoy Plantation, Alabama. Credit: John Stivers.*



*Widely spaced, or low basal area, pine forest managed for quail habitat at Enon-Sehoy Plantation, one to two seasons following prescribed fire. Credit: John Stivers.*



*Prescribed fire treatment area to left of road, with unburned unit to the right of road. Enon-Sehoy Plantation, Alabama. Credit: John Stivers.*



*Diverse understory following prescribed fire treatment. Enon-Sehoy Plantation, Alabama. Credit: John Stivers.*

**Partners:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Alabama Forest Resources Center, Auburn University, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, private forestry and wildlife biology consultants, and state historic preservation organizations



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