



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Tawas

Reply to: 2670 Threatened & Endangered Species (KWCH)

Date: November 8, 1984

Subject: River Road Fire Rehabilitation

To: Forest Supervisor

The River Road Fire of April 28th has presented an opportunity to make some "new" land management decisions. Fire and Kirtland's Warbler are considered to be a highly compatible relationship, The River Road Fire does present us with a differing set of circumstances.

Several changes have occurred in the vicinity over time, and we believe replanning the future land management practices and classification is necessary. Some of the factors having a bearing on a decision are:

1. The Town site of Oscoda/AuSable has expanded westward with the development of subdivisions, apartment complexes, and high school facilities adjacent and within the National Forest ownership there. We believe future vegetative management on adjacent to U.S.F.S. ownership should include the factor.
2. By virtue of the high population density in the immediate vicinity of the National Forest ownership, a much higher than normal dispersed activity level is apparent. This factor may have a bearing on the future classification of the area and our ability to administer it.
3. FLMP identified certain travelways within the Forest as having a higher than normal visual sensitivity. River Road, a county highway, extends west to east through the burned area. Rather than taking what nature doles out in the form of visual diversity along this travelway, we feel it is important to preplan the corridor from a visual management standpoint.
4. The fire, coupled with natural succession, has shifted the general species composition from the desired Jack Pine cover to one strongly invaded by hardwoods. From a quality standpoint, it appears future KWCH management may well be questionable from a maintenance standpoint.

An intensive survey has been completed on the major portion of the area burned. Data gathered includes basal area, average diameter, presence of regeneration species and type of ground cover. We believe this survey gives us a very good picture of what is presently on the area as well as some excellent information as to what we can expect if we elect to "let nature take its course."

With the above in mind, the District requests forming an Interdisciplinary Team to participate in planning the future rehabilitation and classification for the River Road area. We would like to request Jerry Nilsson, Ross Frid, Bill Irvine, Bill Jarvis, and Horace LaBumbard participate with the District in developing this plan. We would propose two alternative dates for a meeting: Tuesday, December 4, or a day during December 17-21.

Please advise us soon which of these meeting dates is acceptable.




CALVIN NORTON

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ENG
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Tawas

2670 Threatened and Endangered Species (KWCH)

December 11, 1984

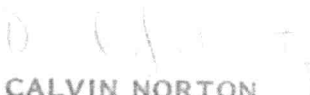
River Road Fire Rehabilitation

Forest Supervisor

An Interdisciplinary Team consisting of Jerry Nilsson, Ross Frid, Bill Jarvis, Horace LaBumbard, Cal Norton, and Dan Moriarity met on November 27 to discuss the future land management of the River Road Fire Area on the Tawas District. The fire burned approximately 1800 acres of National Forest. Of this, approximately 760 acres (59%) of Kirtland's Warbler Critical Habitat burned out of a total of 1,294 acres identified in the Oscoda Unit.

The decisions were:

1. The Oscoda Unit would continue to be managed for the Kirtland's Warbler except the extreme eastern portion of the Cutting Block II located in Section 4, T23N, R9E. This particular unit would be deleted due to its close proximity with the towns of Oscoda/AuSable.
2. A non-KWCH stand located in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 6 is being considered for inclusion into KWCH (C# 74, Stand 2, 53 acres). This would fill in a portion of the original Block IV.
3. River Road has been classified in the Forest Land Management Plan as having a higher than normal visual sensitivity. A corridor plan will be developed within the next year to determine what we would like to manage from a visual standpoint. A survey is being undertaken in selected areas north of River Road. This information will be incorporated into the corridor plan.
4. A fuelbreak plan is being developed for the Huron N. F. and fuelbreaks will be created in the River Road area. In the interim period, a five-chain wide strip will be put in along an existing two track road adjacent to Stand 8 in Section 4. This fuelbreak would also go diagonally across the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 5 in conjunction with salvage operations.
5. On identified KWCH stands, salvage operations will be delayed two to three years to allow natural pine regeneration to benefit from the partial shade. On the other areas, salvage operations can be implemented immediately.
6. Bill Jarvis will work on a new cutting block layout for the Oscoda Unit.


CALVIN NORTON
District Ranger

cc: Jarvis

Reply To: 2470 Silvicultural Systems
2670 Threatened and Endangered Species (KWEH)

Subject: River Road Fire Area Stocking Survey of KWEH

To: District Ranger, Tawas District

In November of 1984 a decision was made to delay salvage operations for two to three years on the Kirtland's Warbler Essential Habitat stands burned in the River Road Fire on April 28, 1984. This was done to allow any natural pine regeneration to benefit from the partial shade. These KWEH stands within the River Road Fire area were resampled in October of 1985 to determine the stocking of jack pine, oak and aspen seedlings. Forty-six plots or approximately 16% of the original plots established in October of 1984 were resampled in a 10 by 12 chain grid pattern. Using the same sampling procedures the number of jack pine seedlings in a 1000th acre plot and oak and aspen seedlings (or sprouts) in a 100th acre plot were counted.

Ten of the 46 plots had at least one pine seedling falling within the 1000th acre plots. Seven of these had only one seedling with one plot each of two, four and five seedlings. This averages out to 390 jack pine trees per acre for the survey area. Of these, seven seedlings appeared to be first year seedlings and eleven were second year seedlings. The seedlings were between two and five inches in height. There were 13 jack pine seedlings found in 1984 and 18 jack pine seedlings found in this survey for a 38% increase over the last year.

Oak seedlings and sprouts were counted using a 100th acre plot with clumps of sprouts tallied as one tree. If there were ten or more oaks per acre the plot was tallied as 10+ oaks rather than counting all of the oak seedlings in the plot. All but ten of the plots sampled had ten or more oak stems per acre. The average number of oaks per acre can not be calculated accurately since each plot was limited to 10+ stems counted. The minimum number of oak per acre if all plots tallied as 10+ had only ten oak stems on it would be 928 stems per acre which is a slight increase over 1984. The true average is probably closer to 1600 oaks per acre. The oak regeneration varies from 6" for seedlings to over 5' in height for stump sprouts with an average of about 3'. The number of oak stems was generally heaviest on the south end of the survey area and decreased towards River Road.

Fourteen of the 46 plots had aspen stems present with twelve of them having at least ten stems. The aspen was heaviest where there had been aspen inclusions prior to the fire but the aspen was not limited to these areas. In a number of areas there were aspen stems which had to be seed origin. The heaviest aspen regeneration was located adjacent to the pre-fire stands of 1, 10, 13, 14, and 15. Again it is not possible to accurately determine the stems per acre of aspen

since ten or more stems was tallied as 10+. The minimum number of stems per acre if all plots tallied as 10+ had only ten stems would be 278 stems per acre. The true number of stems per acre of aspen is probably close to 600 stems per acre. The aspen stems varied from two to ten feet in height and averaged four feet in height.

600 is not much
 to begin with
 200000
 700000
 these 600
 stems survive
 is get another
 quarter

The aspen and oak regeneration was generally heaviest on the south half of the surveyed area. Map #1 shows the distribution of pine, oak, and mixed oak and aspen stems. Map #2 is the original stand map for this area and shows the KWEH area which was burned. Map #3 is the KWEH habitat map for this area from the KW plan. Map #4 shows the location of the plots in the survey area.

1294 ac = Warbler
 actually is 650
 ac = KWEH was
 burned over
 CIA = 325
 J = 125
 W = 160
 Y = 20
 100

The area burned in the River Road Fire included portions of Blocks II, IV and all of Block V in the Oscoda Unit of the Tawas Kirtland's Warbler Management Area. A total of 1294 acres of KWEH habitat was burned. Leaving the burned timber standing to provide shade has not achieved desirable stocking levels of jack pine for Warbler Management. The only areas to show any jack pine seedlings were areas which had pole sized jack pine trees as a seed source. The areas with sapling sized or smaller trees did not have any pine seedlings. This may have been due partly to the heavier ground cover in this area in addition to the lack of a seed source.

2 seasons
 does not tell
 the whole story
 re: reg. potential

Future management in the burned KWEH area will be quite limited for Warbler due to the heavy oak and aspen competition. There is little hope of natural jack pine regeneration on the area in the densities required for warbler. The oak and aspen sprouts are well established on most of the area as is the ground cover. Only 250 to 300 acres of the original 1294 acres of the burned over KWEH area can still be managed for Warbler; and this area will still require some form of oak control. Map #2 shows the area classified as KWEH which should be dropped due to extremely heavy aspen and oak competition.

NOT NECESS -
 SALLY - CAN
 1500/acre
 1000/acre
 1000/acre

∴ plant it

This winter we intend to offer approximately 440 acres in a salvage operation. This is needed as soon as possible to prevent expensive site preparation prior to planting. The KWEH stands are not going to be adequately stocked with jack pine using natural regeneration. We are also planning to remove all oak less than 10" DBH during salvage operations. This will eliminate the need to go back into the stand to cut these trees later to release the regeneration causing additional damage to the seedlings. The larger trees can be left for snags. Most of the aspen overstory has already broken up and is not salvageable. It is doubtful that any material can be salvaged in areas with 30 basal area or more of aspen.