



The Young Forest Project

GROWING WILDLIFE
HABITAT TOGETHER

Help Conservationists Help Wildlife

Become a well-informed wildlife advocate: Visit www.youngforest.org to learn more and to find a habitat demonstration area near you.

Support habitat projects on public and private lands – projects that often provide revenue, jobs, and sustainable timber products, plus better opportunities for hunting, birding, and viewing wildlife. Remember, to have a diversity of wildlife we need a diversity of habitat, including enough young forest. Habitat patches as small as 5 acres can help local wildlife in a big way.

Want to make some young forest on a property that you own or manage? Contact your state wildlife agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, or a professional forester knowledgeable about wildlife.

See www.youngforest.org/content/youngforest-contacts for a list of contacts. For some projects, full or partial funding may be available.

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Young Forest is Natural – and Needed

FOR MOST PEOPLE, YOUTH IS A TIME OF ENERGY AND ACTIVITY, A STAGE OF LIFE THAT'S VIBRANT AND FULL OF POSSIBILITY. THE SAME IS TRUE FOR FORESTS.

A young forest is a light-filled place rich with quickly growing trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and other plants. It may look like so much brush, but it provides essential food and shelter for an amazing range of wild creatures, including many whose numbers have been falling.

In the past, wildfires and flooding created patches of young forest by scouring off areas of older woods, leaving them fresh for new growth. Today, because we have largely controlled those natural processes to protect life and property, we now need to make enough new young forest so that wildlife can thrive: Mammals like bobcats, cottontail rabbits, and snowshoe hares. Birds like towhees and indigo buntings, woodcock and

whip-poor-wills. Reptiles such as wood turtles and green snakes. Animals that live mainly in older forest also home in on patches of young forest to find food and cover.

The good news is that young forest can be created through habitat management. When carefully planned and carried out, logging, mowing, and prescribed burning can help breathe new life into woodlands, transforming select portions of the forest into dense, food-rich hideaways that more than 60 species of dwindling wildlife in the Northeast and Upper Midwest need to survive. Rare and imperiled animals like the New England cottontail and golden-winged warbler share that dense cover with more-abundant ones such as ruffed grouse, wild turkeys, black bears, and many kinds of songbirds.

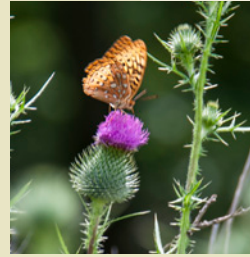


Improve Wildlife Diversity Through:



Harvesting Trees

After a timber harvest, the stumps, root systems, and seeds of logged trees send up thousands of new little trees to cloak the land. Timber harvests often provide income, including funds to pay for more habitat creation.



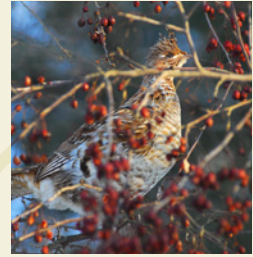
Planting Shrubs

Abandoned fields planted with light-loving native shrubs quickly become wildlife-friendly thickets – or shrubs already growing on a given site can be allowed to spread on their own, yielding productive habitat.



Cutting and Mowing

Low-impact machines with mulching or mowing heads can chew down shrubs that are too old and spindly to provide adequate cover. After cutting, the shrubs grow back densely along with many other plants.



Controlled Burning

Trained specialists set fires that knock back older vegetation and increase soil fertility, spurring the regrowth of trees and shrubs. Fire breaks, water tankers, and up-to-the-minute weather forecasts keep burns under control.



Who Are We?

We're conservationists and private citizens. We're your neighbors and folks down the road. Over the last decade, many partners have joined a science-based effort called the Young Forest Project, extending from Maine to Minnesota and south to Virginia and Ohio. Partners working to carefully make young forest in appropriate places include state and federal agencies, wildlife organizations, private companies, Audubon chapters, land trusts, Native American tribes, and the U.S. military. Foresters and habitat biologists are helping people add a young forest component to their working farms, woodlands, and vacation properties throughout this 17-state region.

Young forest doesn't last forever – generally around 10 to 20 years – so management activities must be fairly frequent and ongoing. Responsible habitat managers look across the landscape and choose the best spots to make and renew young forest.

a fresh cut

in 2 to 3 years

after 10 years

after 20 years



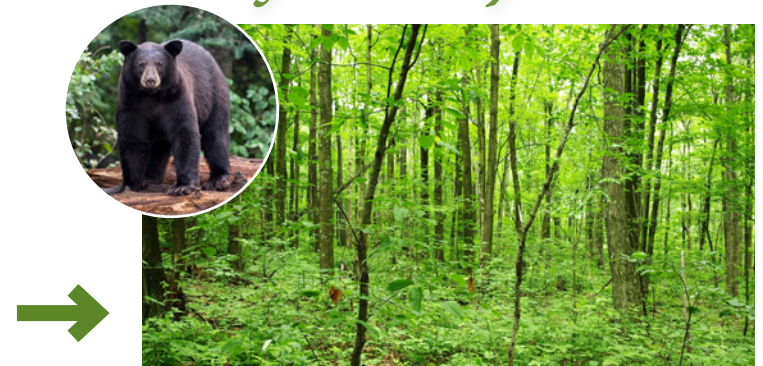
It may look messy, but a fresh timber harvest is a great first step toward creating young forest. In just one growing season, grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and tree sprouts will make this site a magnet for wildlife. Woodcock use new clearings as springtime singing grounds.



In 2 to 3 years, the young forest supports more and different kinds of plants mixed in among the quickly regrowing trees, offering food and shelter to a broad range of animals, including box and wood turtles and nesting and migrating songbirds.



After 10 years, taller trees start shading out some of the ground plants, but the regrowing forest still provides important food and cover for dozens of kinds of wildlife, such as yellow warblers and other songbirds, wild turkeys, bobcats, snowshoe hares, and white-tailed deer.



After about 20 years, the forest attracts animals, such as black bears, that use older woods in addition to young forest. By now, conservationists will have harvested trees elsewhere to keep some young regrowing forest a part of the natural woodland mix.