Osceola National Forest

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP)

Monitoring Quarterly Report (3/18/2016-3/31/2018)

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Tall Timbers Research Station continued its ecological monitoring for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) project on Osceola National Forest to assess management effects on 3 declining "focal" species including Bachman's Sparrow (Peucaea aestivalis), Brown-headed Nuthatch (Sitta pusilla), Northern Bobwhite (Colinus virginianus). This report is an updated summary of the vegetation portion of the analysis. A comprehensive analysis of management effects and recommendations will be provided after the 2018 field season.

YEARLY VEGETATION RESPONSE

Yearly vegetation summaries illustrate improved ecological condition on Osceola National Forest. Due to increased management, the proportion of herbaceous groundcover (grasses, forbs, and legumes) doubled from 2013 to 2017 (Figure 1).
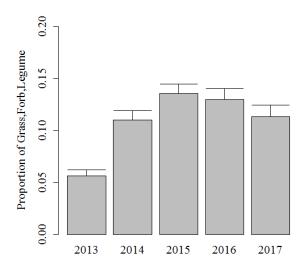

Figure 1. Yearly proportion of grass, forb, and legume on Osceola National Forest, Olustee, FL, 2013-2017. Recently roller-chopped areas $(1 - 90$ days prior to surveys) were excluded. All plots received prescribed fire. Error bars are +1 SE.

Although improved ecological condition of the shrub layer (saw-palmetto, shrub, and hardwood) was not as evident, the maximum shrub height exhibited a decrease between 2013 and 2017 (7.6±0.3 to 7.4±0.2) (Figure 2).
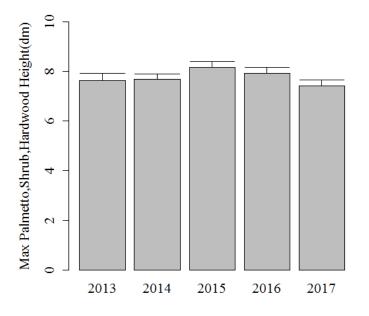

Figure 2. Yearly maximum height of saw palmetto, shrub, and hardwood (decimeters) on Osceola National Forest, Olustee, FL, 2013-2017. Recently roller-chopped areas (1 – 90 days prior to surveys) were excluded. All plots received prescribed fire. Error bars are +1 SE.

FIELD SEASON PREPARATION

To prepare for the upcoming 2018 field season, all gear was checked for repairs and all broken/unusable gear was replaced. The iPad Canvas App for vegetation data entry was edited and revised to fix glitches. Job advertisements for the vegetation and avian technician positions (3) were posted on Texas A & M job board. Three candidates for the 2018 field season were hired after interviews and reference checks. Temporary housing for technicians was found and

leases were signed. Vegetation and avian data collection for the 2018 field season begins on

April 2, 2018.