

# Reconstruction of Wildlife Openings with Native Plants

## 2006 Accomplishments

This 2006 project produced a plan for constructing five wildlife openings with native plants.

Traditionally, wildlife openings in the southern Appalachians have been managed as non-native grass and forb communities inside the forest interior, dominated by exotic species such as orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*), sericea (*Lespedeza cuneata*) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*). In addition, invasive, non-native plants, such as autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), were planted to provide wildlife with soft mast. Although highly productive, these invasive mast species can limit the effectiveness of the wildlife opening by overrunning the other plants in the opening, simplifying the structure of the community, and restricting the range of mast availability. Invasive shrubs can also move into the surrounding forest, displacing native plants.

To increase the structural and functional capability of wildlife openings, and decrease the problems associated with the spread of invasive plant species, we developed a plan to replace non-native, invasive plants with native grasses, forbs and shrubs. Our goal is to increase both the structural diversity as well as the range of mast produced in wildlife openings. Using KV funds for on-the-ground implementation, the plan will be tested on five wildlife openings, beginning this fall.



April Palette, the USFS Intern hired for the project, examines Indian grass, a native, warm-season grass.



Photo: Existing wildlife opening, dominated by fescue grass and autumn olive. Insert: The invasive species autumn olive, which produces abundant soft mast.

Year Awarded: 2006

Project completion: 2006

Report number: 1 of 1

Expenditures:

- FY06 funding \$6,000
- Expended \$6,000
- Remaining \$0

Partners/Contractors/Coop: none

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