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NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
AND BIODIVERSITY MAINTENANCE
PROGRESS REPORT

July 1, 1993 - June 30, 1994

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May 1994

PREPARED FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
UNDER GRANT NUMBER
DE-FG09-87SR15191

MASTER

Thirty-nine days were spent administering hunts on Crackerneck Wildlife Management Area with 1524 people participating. 1,351 USDOE access permits were issued for the area. Applicants represented 37 of South Carolina's 46 counties, as well as 9 other states. Biological data was collected on 89 deer, 6 turkeys, 8 feral hogs, 40 ducks of two species, 24 bobwhite, 3 rabbits, 2 gray squirrels, and 313 fish of 8 species. A news release announcing the hunt schedule was prepared. Preparatory work prior to the hunts included 10 miles of roads brushed and mowed(summer and winter) and 75 WMA signs replaced on 11 miles of boundary as needed. Wildlife opening work included: 24 acres of annuals planted; 10 bags(1,000 plants/bag) of bicolor lespedeza planted on logging decks and 11 established plots brushed and fertilized; 34 linear quail plots planted with kobe lespedeza and partridge pea donated by Quail Unlimited; and 12 acres of wheat and 2 miles of roads top-dressed with fertilizer. Other work on the area included checking and maintaining 21 wood duck boxes; banding 8 wood duck hens and recapturing 3 previously banded birds; erecting a new weigh pole; and repairing the control structure on Skinface Pond. Tours of the area were provided to Pat Jackson(USDOE), Beth LeMaster(USFS), and SCWMRD biologists Baker, Carmichael and Whitney..

Serving as a Coordinating Land User for the SRS Site Use Committee entailed evaluating 75 land use proposals with regard to effects on wildlife populations, 14 USFS timber prescriptions were the most time consuming. As a member of the USFS ID team, attended six meetings to review 10 timber compartments. Served on the Natural Resources Coordinating Committee necessitating meeting attendance, document review for task groups reporting to NRCC, and issued opinion statements on a variety of issues. Served on the Set-aside Task Group reviewing potential impacts to key habitat areas. Issued 17 depredation permits to the USFS for beaver and raccoon. Other meetings attended included SRS highway maintenance proposals, nuisance animals, deer and hog control. RD & D and Crackerneck Harvest and Utilization Reports (spring and fall) were provided to the USDOE. Proposals to the USDOE necessitating several meetings included racoon hunting on Crackerneck and the addition of H.U.#19 to Crackerneck.

Bait sites for turkey trapping were maintained on the SRS for two months. 82 turkeys (43 gobblers, 39 hens) were captured with 54 being used for in-state restoration and 28 being sent out to North Carolina to assist with that state's re-introduction program. All birds were monitored before leaving SRS. Cooperated with Dr. Gene Rhodes of SREL in taking blood samples from all birds to check molecular DNA, electrophoretic analysis of genetics, and parasite presence. Evaluated data on 172 turkeys harvested in Aiken County.

The antlerless deer quota program continued in the district with 140 landowners in Aiken, Barnwell, and Orangeburg Counties being approved for antlerless harvests. Evaluation included field investigation, acreage verification at tax offices, and personal

correspondence. Biological data on 1,477 deer from 50 Aiken, and Orangeburg County clubs were evaluated with a harvest report and future harvest recommendations provided to each club. An additional 760 deer jawbones from District V were evaluated for age distribution and harvest reports with recommendations, were provided to 20 Barnwell County clubs. Assistance was provided with antler scoring for the state records program at sessions in New Ellenton, Barnwell and Columbia. Five days were spent in Edgefield County assisting with data collection on Western Piedmont deer hunts.

Wildlife census work was conducted on wild turkeys, bobwhites, mourning doves, bald eagles, fox squirrels, and furbearers on the SRS and in Aiken and Barnwell Counties. Evaluated 10 wetlands in Aiken County for suitability with regard to wood duck nest box requests. Evaluated the Savannah River Corridor with regard to waterfowl value for a possible cooperative management plan with Georgia DNR.

Additional work on WMA lands included reposting 8 miles of boundary in Aiken County with 100 signs. Work at the Barnwell Airport WMA dove field included: 43 ac. disced, 41 ac. planted, 50 ac. mowed, 9 public dove hunts conducted and data collected. 16 ac. were disced and planted at the Head of the Creek WMA dove field in Gaston. Maps, brochures, tags, and data gathering materials were continually provided to 25 Aiken County check stations. 8 check station signs were constructed and 6 erected at new check stations. Future recommendations for the spring turkey, and regulations brochures were submitted and WMA maps covering Aiken, Lexington, and Crackerneck were updated. 1993 Project Accomplishments and 1994 Project Goals were submitted to Columbia. A Farmer's Home tract near White Pond was evaluated for possible inclusion in the WMA program.

Ten F.A.C.E.(food & cover establishment)plots for 4-H competition were judged in Aiken County with kids from Aiken winning the state competition in two age categories. Assisted with two SCWMRD sponsored kids' fishing rodeos at Graniteville and Barnwell. Technical assistance was provided six individuals in Aiken and Orangeburg Counties with managing deer, turkey, quail, waterfowl, and beaver. 13 depredation permits were issued in Aiken County for beaver, otter, coyote, and gray squirrel. Forest Stewardship work with Aiken County landowners included: site visits(7), plans written(4), and needs checks(1).

Assisted conservation officers on numerous occasions with game law violations, investigation of strange animal sightings, transport of injured raptors for rehabilitation, and nuisance animal complaints. Underwent pistol requalification at the Criminal Justice Academy. Attended the USFS cooperative meeting at the Webb Center, as well as several biologists' and district meetings. Attended a wildlife capture and immobilization seminar at Riverbanks Zoo. After technician Bridges was forced to resign due to complications from Lyme's Disease, applicants were interviewed and Marcia Hall was selected to fill the vacancy.

DATE

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9/9/94

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