

Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge

Forest Management

Long-term Goal:

Enhance the diversity and resiliency of native forest communities through hazard fuel reduction, low intensity prescribed burns, invasive species control, and other forest management actions.

Purpose

In 2024 Harris Neck NWR received funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to enhance forest and scrub-shrub habitat conditions, primarily through hazard fuel reduction. The forested and scrub-shrub habitats of Harris Neck provide important breeding and wintering habitat for many species of migratory birds especially painted buntings, the highest priority landbird in the southeast. This project will provide both a much-needed boost to improve the existing habitats and a more feasible approach for long-term management.

Objectives

- Reduce mid-story fuel loads as well as pine and hardwood basal area;
- Promote an understory dominated by native warm season grasses;
- Increase the use of prescribed fires to minimize catastrophic wildfire hazard.

Methods

YEAR 1

- Use mechanical actions to remove overgrown midstory to create open conditions for proliferation of native warm season grasses;
- Improve the existing longleaf pine stand through reduction in the basal area;
- All invasive species, such as Chinese tallow, will be removed from treatment areas.
- All areas of desirable oaks, such as Live Oak and Laurel Oak, will be excluded from operations.

YEAR 2

- Follow-up control of Chinese tallow and other invasive species;

LONG TERM

- Maintain diversity and resiliency through prescribed fire on a 1-3 year rotation.

For more information, please visit our website at:
<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/harris-neck>

Harris Neck NWR Proposed Forest Management Action

