



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Hiawatha National Forest
2727 N. Lincoln Road
Escanaba, Michigan 49829

Date: August 8, 1995

File Code: 2600
Route To: 2600

Subject: Kirtland Warblers

To: Phil Huber
Huron-Manistee National Forest,
Mio Ranger District

As you are aware, the Hiawatha National Forest has observed male Kirtland's Warblers on the Forest the past several springs, and this year for the first time have a confirmed sighting of a nesting pair.

Given this development, we want to ensure that our management activities conform with Endangered Species Act (ESA) requirements and coordinate with the objectives of the Federal Recovery Plan (FRP) for the species. We also want to ensure our activities are carried out in an ecosystem management context.

On September 18 a meeting will be held at the St. Ignace Ranger District office of the Hiawatha National Office, beginning at 9:30 and ending by mid-afternoon. Three broad areas of discussion for the meeting are:

Update on current and planned Kirtland's Warbler and related ecosystem management activities on the Hiawatha;

Compliance of Hiawatha NF management activities with the ESA;

Coordination of Hiawatha NF management activities with the FRP, and the need to possibly modify the FRP to incorporate portions of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

I feel this meeting will be an important step in ensuring pro-active coordination and compliance with the recovery team's efforts and the ESA. We also encourage attendance at this meeting from affected Hiawatha NF and Huron-Manistee NF's line officers, as well as representatives from the Ottawa NF.

WILLIAM F. SPINNER
Forest Supervisor

cc: Steve Kelley Paul Busch Bob Walker
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Caring for the Land and Serving People



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"CARING FOR THE LAND AND SERVING PEOPLE"

Reply to: 2670

Date: September 13, 1995

Subject: Kirtland's Warbler Habitat Management Field Trip
September 5, 1995

To: Files

Phil Huber in cooperation with Jerry Weinrich, coordinated a field trip on the Huron National Forest and Michigan Department of Natural Resources lands. The day was spent reviewing Kirtland's warbler habitat management. Stops and topics are identified on the agenda that was provided by Phil. Fourteen people attended the field trip from three different agencies. Attendees consisted of one Fish and Wildlife Service person (Seney National Wildlife Refuge), four Michigan Department of Natural Resources people, and nine Forest Service people.

Overall I felt that this was a great trip and participants got a good understanding of our current planting and management programs. Interactive discussions occurred at all stops and successes and concerns were exchanged. This dialog will assist habitat managers as they proceed with future habitat planning efforts and reforestation opportunities.

Issues that I captured from this field trip consisted of natural regeneration and stocking criteria, fill-in planting, leave strips, and seeding techniques. The group felt that when considering whether a stand can be classified as fully stocked for acceptable Kirtland's warbler habitat by natural regeneration means, that agreement on the desired stocking density and distribution is needed. They also questioned how the first year stocking surveys are conducted as compared to third year stocking surveys. No agreement was reached on first year's plot size but generally it was felt that 1/800th acre plot would be accurate. It was felt that third year surveys should be 1/50 acre plots. These plots should also record the number of trees and tree species. A systematic method of tracking the third year plots needs developing so that stocked areas can be delineated from the planting area. A review of the fill-in planting efforts showed that container stock planted in the fall after spring planting or in later years was not producing trees likely to meet densities and structural objective. Bareroot trees fill-in planted during the spring after machine planting were similar to planted trees and will likely meet our desired stocking and structural objective. Leave strips or skips emulating natural wildlife disturbances can be 30 to 60 feet wide and still meet habitat management objectives. Significant changes in structural characteristics result in a few years following harvest activities. Several trees die and many others were blown down during wind events. A highlight of the trip was to see the early success from some of the MDNR planting sites. Early indications are that on some sites this practice is working. We observed numerous seedlings germinating after the first year. It appeared that site characteristics within and near the furrows do impact first year success. These sites need to be evaluated for additional success during

the next couple of years. MDNR stated that they are looking into a three year contract for additional seeding or furrowing work. This is something that we should look into as a possible joint effort. The cost of this action is similar to our current planting costs.

In addition to these planting observations, we reviewed several of the large, greater than 1000 acre, planting sites on MDNR Kirtland's warbler management areas. Perspectives varied among individuals, but data has shown that these areas have higher densities of Kirtland's warblers for greater periods of time. The visual perspective on these varied considerably depending upon topography, leave strips, amount of dead standing material left on the sites, and configuration. This change has recently been implemented upon MDNR and FWS lands in response to new information that has become available. MDNR stated that little negative response has been generated within the areas they have applied it.

These interagency reviews are important and provide an effective mechanism for the different agencies to exchange ideas, develop similar management approaches, and learn from each others successes and failure. I would encourage continuing these efforts every three years so that effective approaches to habitat management can continue to develop.

KENNETH REX ENNIS
Forest Wildlife Biologist

Enclosure

cc:Districts
Leadership Team
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team

