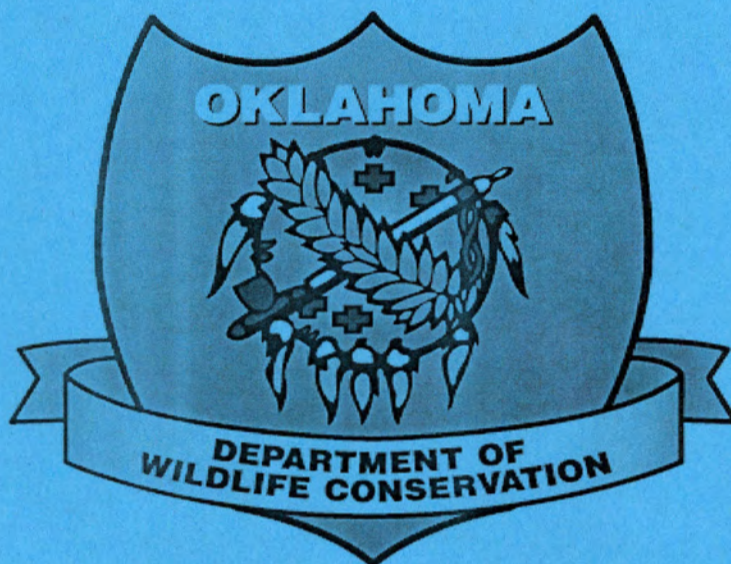


FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT



FEDERAL AID GRANT NO. E-21-16

**RED-COCKEDED WOODPECKER (PICOIDES BOREALIS)
RECOVERY ON THE MCCURTAIN COUNTY WILDERNESS
AREA (MCWA)**

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

October 1, 2008 through March 31, 2010

FINAL ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: Oklahoma

Project No: E-21-16

GRANT PROGRAM: Endangered Species Act, Section 6

GRANT TITLE: Red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) (Picoides borealis) recovery on the McCurtain County Wilderness Area (MCWA)

GRANT PERIOD: October 1, 2008 – March 31, 2010

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: John Skeen, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

I. OBJECTIVE

Recover the Red-cockaded Woodpecker population on the McCurtain County Wilderness Area to 45 active clusters by implementing procedures outlined in the 1991 McCurtain County Wilderness Area Implementation Plan.

II. JOB PROCEDURES

1. Monitoring

- A. Locate, tag, and map new cavity trees within 300 yards of active clusters.
- B. Determine the status of each cavity tree and cluster, especially during the nesting period.
- C. Band adult and nestlings to obtain data on production, dispersal, and mortality and to aid in identifying single bird clans that would benefit from augmentation.

2. Cluster Stand Management

- A. Reduce hardwood midstory and understory trees within 10 acre blocks adjacent to active clusters.
- B. Control the hardwood midstory within clusters by cutting and fire (controlled burns will be done under the Wildlife Restoration Act).

3. Recruitment Stand Management

Identify, mark, and control hardwoods in blocks of suitable habitat within ½ mile of active clusters.

4. Corridors

When needed and feasible, maintain or develop corridors among clusters and recruitment stands.

5. Restrictors and Predator Guards

A. Place restrictors on RCW cavities to prevent enlargement by other woodpeckers and rehabilitate enlarged cavities.

B. Install predator guards on all active cavity trees.

C. Place squirrel guards on trees where flying squirrels have taken over cavities.

6. Artificial Cavities

Install cavity inserts in active clusters to provide at least 5 usable cavities at each site. Install 3 inserts at recruitment sites. When inserts at recruitment stands are activated, install 2 additional inserts.

7. Augmentation

Identify single bird clans and move sub adults to the sites.

III. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

1. Clusters

Thirteen clusters were active during the reporting period (Table 1 and Fig. 1). This is a decrease of 1 from the number active in the previous year. Clusters 1201 and 32 were abandoned and cluster 25 was reactivated (Table 2). The mean number of active trees per cluster was 3.0.

2. Cavity Trees

Cavities at active clusters were checked at intervals of approximately 8 weeks throughout the year and cleaned and repaired as needed. Twenty-five of the 35 natural cavities at active clusters were active, while only 15 of the 68 inserts were active (Table 1). During the year, 3 cavity tree were died from unknown causes.

3. Restrictors and Predator Guards

All usable natural cavities at active and inactive clusters have been restricted and all active cavity trees have been fitted with a 3 or 5 foot section of aluminum flashing- predator guard. When a cavity tree at a recruitment stand or inactive cluster showed RCW activity, a predator guard was installed. During the reporting period, 5 new cavities in 4 trees were restricted and flashing added to 1 tree.

4. Population

During the 2009 nesting season, 13 nesting attempts (including 2 renests) at 11 clusters resulted in 37 eggs and 14 of these hatched (Table 3). No nesting activity was detected at C202, although adult birds were seen at site during nesting period. One successful re-nesting occurred at C205 and an unsuccessful attempt at C2. Only 4 of the 11 nesting attempts were successful and 7 young were fledged. Fall trapping resulted in the recapture of 2 juvenile birds. This is 1 of the poorest recruitment periods since the project began in 1992. No reason has been determined for relative nesting failures of the past 2 nesting seasons, but 3 adult RCW's have been found dead in their roosting cavities in the past 2 years: 1 at C25 in December 2008, 1 at C109 in May 2009, and 1 at C112 in March 2010. Prior to 2008, no such occurrences were observed. These 2 poor recruitment years also coincide with record setting spring rainfall in each of these 2 year.

5. Stand Management

On the area's east side, Compartments 4, 5, and 7 (3,580 ac) and adjacent National Forest (1,398 ac) were control burned on April 12, 2010 and Compartment 1 (1,200 ac) was burned on March 29, 2010 (Fig. 1). No cavity trees were lost or damaged in the burns. In 2009 no beetle spots were observed on the area and no beetle activity was seen throughout Oklahoma (Oklahoma Division of Forestry 2009). Cooperative monitoring of the southern pine beetles with the Oklahoma Division of Forestry will continue.

6. Artificial Cavities

During the period, 3 unserviceable inserts were replaced at active clusters as follows: C112-2 and C5-1. One insert was added at C1201. Thirty two recruitment clusters (Table 2.), provisioned with 3 or more inserts were available on the area.

7. Corridors

No additional corridors, to connect clusters and recruitment stands, were developed. However, thinning in areas containing foraging habitat, clusters, and R-stands continued through the E-56 grant.

8. Augmentation

Because of the apparent loss of all of the young in 2008 and the poor recruitment in 2009, 5 pairs of juvenile RCW's were secured from the Sam Houston National Forest, TX and released at unoccupied sites on the area (Table 5.). Three of these translocated birds were found at C2 in October of 2009. Efforts will be made to locate these birds during the spring of 2010. Based in part on the survival of these birds, the translocation of additional RCW's may be attempted in the fall of 2010.

9. Other Activities

No road construction occurred on the area. Approximately 6 miles of interior roads were graded. Temporary ATV access trails were flagged within thinning blocks to provide access to Department personnel. One controlled deer hunt and one controlled turkey hunt were conducted.

IV CONCLUSIONS

Monitoring of clusters will continue through out the year. If a single bird cluster is found, attempts will be made to move a surplus RCW from a donor population to the site. Additionally, 4 or 5 pairs of RCW's may be translocated to the area from donor populations if survival of those moved the past year warrants the attempt.

Locating suitable sites and constructing new R-stands in the areas recently thinned in the E-56 project will continue.

V. DEVIATIONS

None.

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VII. Date: May 11, 2010

VIII. Approved by: Alan Peoples
Wildlife Division Administration
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

IX. Approved by: John D. Stafford
John D. Stafford, Federal Aid Coordinator
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

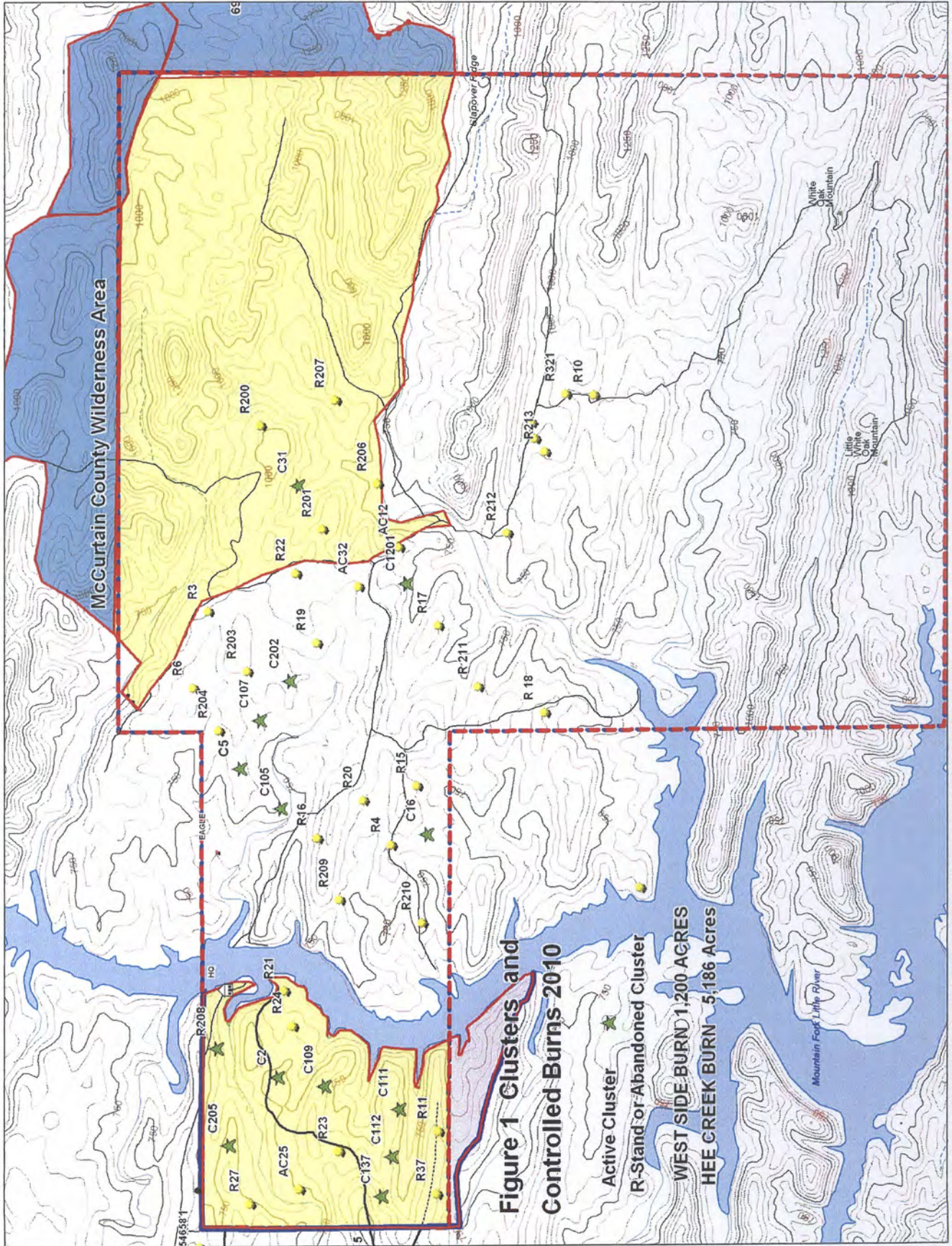


Figure 1 Clusters and Controlled Burns 2010

Active Cluster
R-Stand or Abandoned Cluster

WEST SIDE BURN 1,200 ACRES
HEE CREEK BURN 5,186 ACRES

