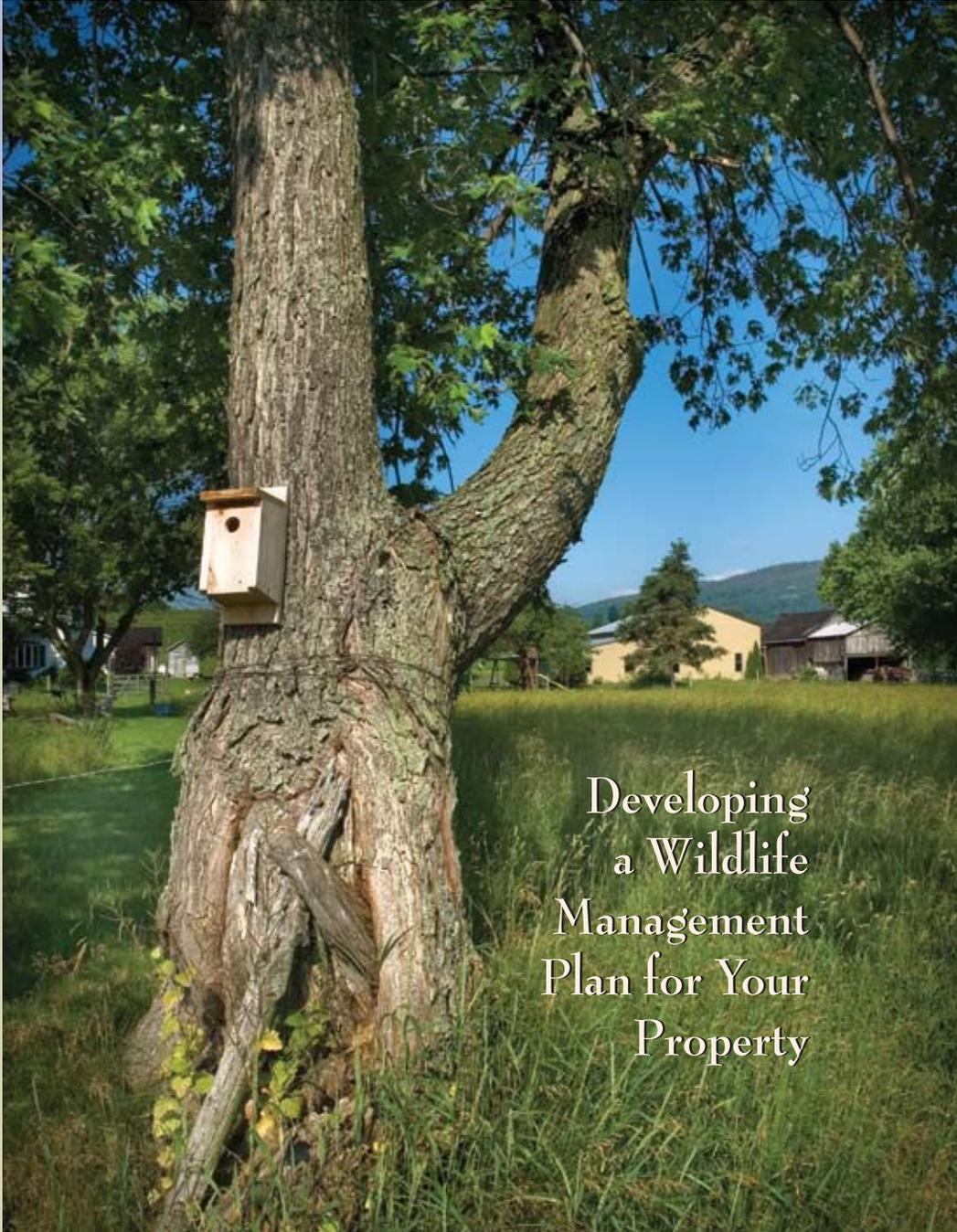


FARMLANDS AND WILDLIFE

of Pennsylvania and the Northeast



Developing
a Wildlife
Management
Plan for Your
Property

PENNSTATE



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

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INTRODUCTION

Using This Resource



This manual is written to emphasize the importance of agriculture in maintaining habitat for our region's wildlife. It is also meant as a guide to farmland wildlife for landowners, habitat management methods and their benefits, methods of wildlife damage control, sources of financial assistance for habitat projects, and additional educational resources. Whether you own 4 acres or 400; whether your focus is crops or animal production; and whether farming is your living or a part-time venture, your property has the potential to provide quality habitat for wildlife.

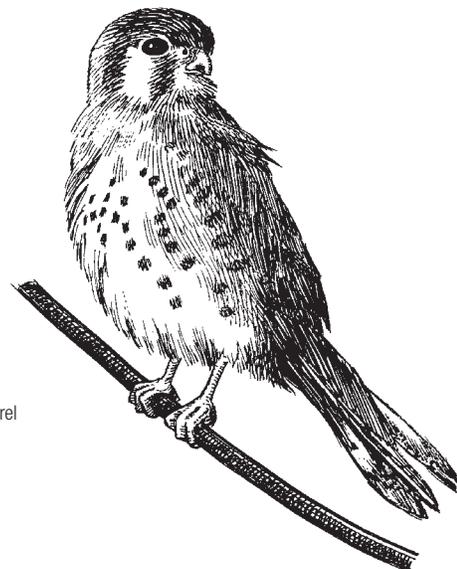
As Pennsylvania residents, we use examples from our state to chronicle the linked histories of wildlife and farmland in our region. Be assured the wildlife trends and management practices we describe in this publication pertain to the many other states of the wider northeastern region. All share a common agricultural history and many common farmland wildlife species. We focus the wildlife details and management practices in this book on the region's bird and mammal species. We do, however, include several land and aquatic habitat practices that will generally benefit the fish, amphibian, and reptile fauna found in your area. Appendix A provides more in-depth information and is grouped by chapter topics. Appendix B lists agencies and organizations in the Northeast that provide technical or financial assistance to landowners.

As you read about the management practices described in this manual, we encourage you to make use of the worksheets in Appendices C and D. These farm evaluation worksheets can be photocopied and used for keeping a checklist of management practices that already exist on your property and to prioritize practices you would still like to carry out.

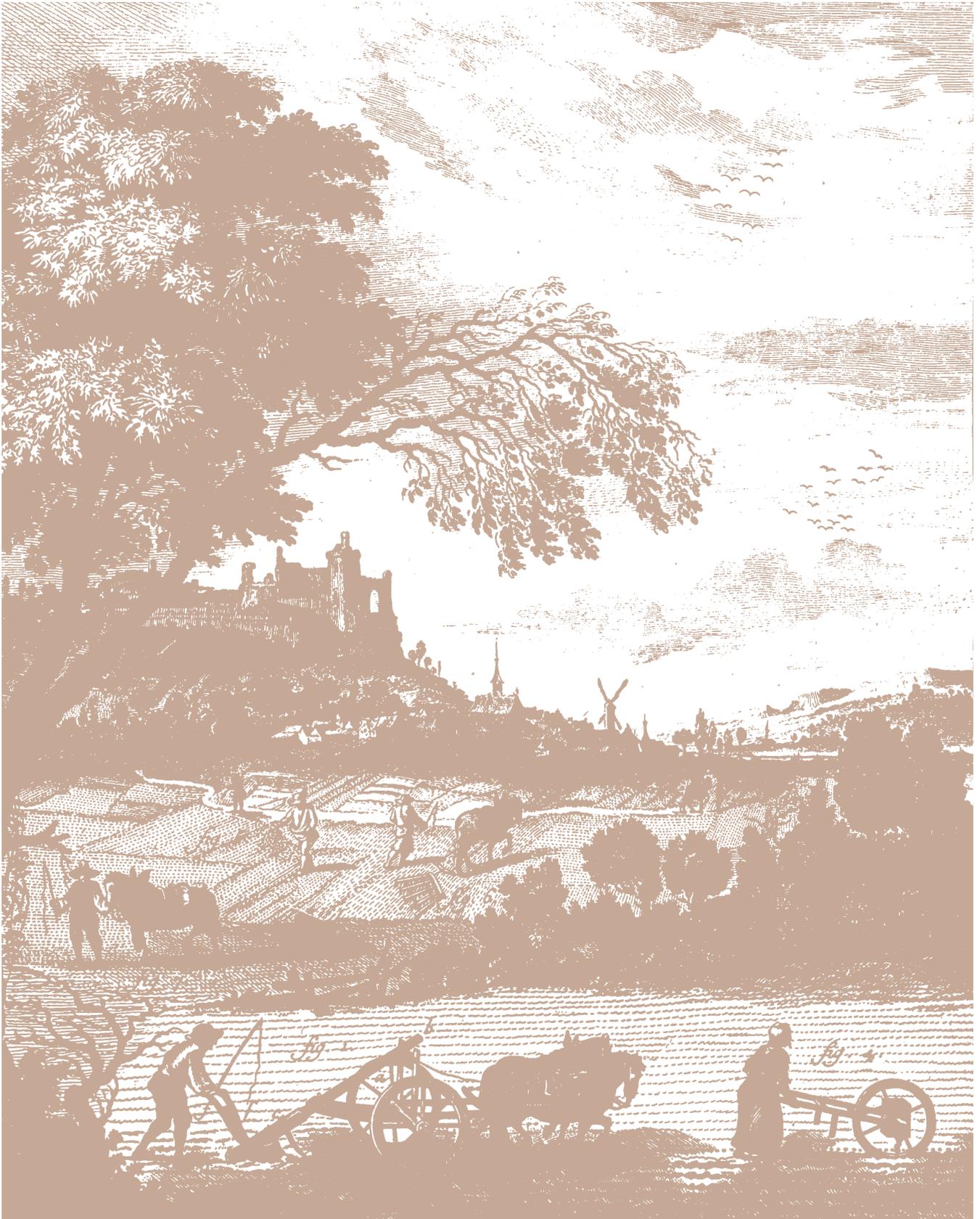
Appendix C is a land evaluation worksheet to help you choose and rank your objectives for creating wildlife habitat. Selecting objectives is the first step in identifying the correct management practices for your property. You can then use the management plan worksheet section to create a timeline for implementing practices and for prioritizing those to be completed in the first year of your management plan, in the second year, or within three to five years. Appendix D provides a separate checklist of methods for preventing and controlling wildlife damage problems that may occur on your property.

It also may be helpful to develop a map of your property. You can use it to plan the locations of your management practices. Contact your county conservation district or the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office for help in obtaining an aerial map of your property.

We hope you find this guide and these tools helpful as you develop your farmland into an even better wildlife habitat.



American kestrel



CHAPTER 1

Northeast Farmlands: Past and Present

NATIVE NORTHEASTERNS

Settlers from Europe arrived here to find a landscape of primeval forest; but the Northeast was not without other land types. The region has a long history of open space: for thousands of years savannahs, found interspersed among the region's forests, were home to many grassland species, including mammals that grazed in open areas. Grassy areas within the forest also were created by human clearing and burning practices, which maintained open spaces even as many large herbivores went extinct. The Northeast's first farmers were Native Americans, who cleared areas for agricultural fields, village sites, firewood, and hunting opportunities. These activities maintained grasslands, barrens, and other large areas of early successional growth; they probably contributed to the survival of the region's grassland bird species.

Many northern New England tribes supplemented their hunting and gathering by cultivating crops, whereas in the lower northeastern states, where longer growing seasons exist, agriculture provided for a significant part of Native Americans' diet. Indian tribes like the Lenape and Monongahela grew crops such as corn, beans, squash, and pumpkins.

FARMING IN THE 1600s

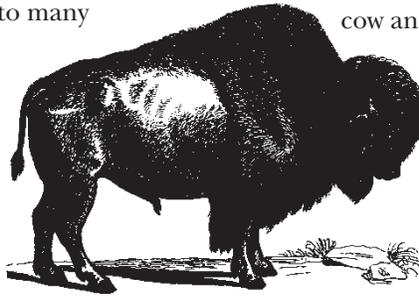
The region's early settlements were marked by family farms located within clearings in the forest, providing habitat for a variety of wildlife species. Early European pioneers brought their own farming traditions to the Northeast. The Pennsylvania Germans, for example, introduced the practice of crop rotation, including a

rotation of corn, oats, wheat, and clover. Generally, a farm was worked by family members of the owner. They were sometimes assisted by hired laborers as well as by apprentices, slaves, and indentured laborers who repaid the debt of passage from England, Ireland, Germany,

Scotland, and other places. Many settlers owned a cow and kept a vegetable garden, making their property fairly self-sustainable. They depended on animal power, including oxen and horses, for field operations.

As the colonial population grew, farmers' markets were organized in towns to sell fresh vegetables, fruits, meat, flocks of poultry, and herds of livestock. One of the first large-scale

markets was built for Philadelphia in 1693. Most Northeast products were sold locally, although eventually more southerly colonies like Virginia and Maryland would export tobacco and other crops to England.



FARMING IN THE 1700s

European immigrants continued to settle the region during the 1700s, cutting, girdling, and burning trees as they expanded from the first eastern settlements. Landowners who farmed continuous grain rotations for several decades, until soil fertility was depleted, would often abandon the land or allow it to remain fallow for 7 to 15 years. At this time, it was common for fields to have brushy edges, including fencerows and hedgerows. Once abandoned, coarse vegetation and brush tended to overtake uncultivated fields, providing additional habitat for wildlife.

During this century northeastern farming communities became more organized in the sale and