Wildlife & Habitat at Bobolink Prairie Farms

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Why Bobolink Prairie Farms?
Disclaimer:
Key Takeaways

Our management changes have resulted in more habitat, of greater diversity

Habitat is a side effect and not a primary driver of our decision making

More habitat and greater diversity in plant communities support more birds and other wildlife
What we’re going to cover:

Two Farms-Historic imagery, land use, and historical habitat & wildlife

Management changes, why we changed, and habitat & wildlife implications
2 Parcels, 2019 imagery
2 Parcels, 1800s GLO

Scattered trees

Forest

Prairie
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amphibians</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reptiles</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breeding birds</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-breeding birds</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammals</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterflies</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odonates</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bobolink

Iowa Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Vermont Bobolink migrations
(Perlut 2018 Auk 135(4))
HABITAT

- Space
- Shelter
- Food
- Water
Legs of the wildlife habitat stool

- Native plants
- Plant diversity
- Vegetation structure
- Managed disturbance
Four ways to create wildlife habitat on every farm

1) Improve existing natural areas
2) Reimagine uses of profit loss areas
3) Layer soil, water, & wildlife conservation
4) Repurpose existing idle areas
What we’re going to cover:

Two Farms-Historic imagery, land use, and historical habitat & wildlife

Management changes, why we changed, and habitat & wildlife implications
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total pasture size (ac)</th>
<th>Number of calves weaned</th>
<th>Average calf weaning weight (lb)</th>
<th>Average calf ADG (lb/d)</th>
<th>Total pounds weaned (lb)</th>
<th>Pounds weaned per grazed acre (lb/ ac)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>6802</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>13173</td>
<td>386</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>9988</td>
<td>304</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

http://www.practicalfarmers.org/farmer-knowledge/research-reports/2014/pasture-monitoring-anderson-farm/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feed Costs</th>
<th>Tons</th>
<th>Cost/ton</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>$/hd</th>
<th>$/hd/day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>11.34</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>$1530.9</td>
<td>$43.74</td>
<td>$1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornstalks</td>
<td>7.81</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>$546.70</td>
<td>$15.62</td>
<td>$.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,077.6</td>
<td>$59.36</td>
<td>$1.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Four ways to create wildlife habitat on every farm

1) Improve existing natural areas
   ➔ Pasture restoration project
   ➔ Cedar management

2) Reimagine uses of profit loss areas
   ➔ Flood prone areas along stream to CRP

3) Layer soil, water, & wildlife conservation
   ➔ Cover crops
   ➔ Strategic CRP along streams
   ➔ Grazing management

4) Repurpose existing idle areas
Partners who’ve helped us

USDA-NRCS, Mike Henderson, Nick Livermore
Iowa DNR-Kathy Koskovich
Prudenterra-Luke Gran et. al.
Cherokee SWCD
Iowa Learning Farms
Practical Farmers of Iowa-staff & members
Family & Friends