

OAK-GRASSLAND RESTORATION DEMONSTRATION AREA PROJECT

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Land Between the Lakes is home to two oak-grassland restoration demonstration areas. The demonstration areas create conditions over a large contiguous landscape to demonstrate the feasibility of ecological restoration of an oak-grassland forest and the benefits it can provide to native wildlife and public recreation. Historical accounts and ecological research indicates these areas had an open oak canopy and understory dominated by grasses created and maintained through the use fire by the American Indians. The demonstration area totals about 8,000 acres divided into the north unit in Kentucky (3,000 acres) and the south unit in Tennessee (about 5,000 acres). The units are located near educational outreach facilities that will encourage public interest and learning opportunities. Treatments will focus on the tree thinning and prescribed fire. Fire effects monitoring and research will continue throughout the restoration effort. “Core” areas adjacent to the demonstration areas serve as controls to gauge the effectiveness of the restoration. Nearly 350 acres in the southern restoration unit were treated with prescribed fire in the spring of 2005, and 70 acres of timber have been marked for thinning. Fire-effects monitoring plots have been established and observations are continuing.

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