

NORTHERN MICHIGAN HABITAT (DEER WINTER RANGE) PROJECT

May 2021 Progress Report

Jim Hammill

Safari Club International Foundation and Northern Michigan Habitat Workgroup

The Northern Michigan Habitat Workgroup (13 members) has for the past two years been aggressively applying for State DNR large grants to improve Michigan U.P. deer winter range conditions. To date we have received two grants totaling roughly \$200,000 to conduct deer winter range improvements on private lands across the U.P. For 2020, we had a list of 28 land owners who wanted us to inspect their properties to make recommendations for habitat improvements and then make those improvements. The improvements include planting of conifers to re-establish winter thermal cover where it has been depleted, planting of herbaceous cover to provide good spring food supply as winter subsides, planting of fruiting shrubs, and planting of long-lived hard mast species (oak). However, because of Covid-19 restrictions, we were unable to visit any landowners in 2020. In 2021, we have been contacted by 30 additional new landowners seeking our assistance. So now we have a huge workload facing us. Our priority now is to visit the most likely private lands that will require large scale habitat projects, and that is what we are currently doing. Also, some of our field time is being spent gathering data for our next large grant application to be submitted in early June.

The money donated to this project through SCI MIC by the Michigan SCI Chapters is used for all the site visits to generate the project descriptions and precise grant application submissions required to be competitive in obtaining large grants. We need approximately \$20,000 annually to do this base work. We are seeking other sources of funds for this base work so that the MIC member chapters do not have to endure the entire financial burden of this effort. However, it needs to be noted that if it were not for the generosity of the Michigan SCI Chapters, this entire program would “fall dead in the water”. We do our best to promote SCI, SCIF and SCI MIC whenever we speak to the public about this habitat project, and I sense that the importance of SCI is being increasingly recognized.

THANK YOU, MICHIGAN SCI CHAPTERS!