



## **2020 NORTH AMERICAN POLICY STATEMENT: MANAGEMENT FOR DIVERSE SUCCESSIONAL STAGES IN EASTERN U.S. FORESTS**

**Purpose:** The intent of policy statements are to provide a formal mechanism for Backcountry Hunters & Anglers to engage in specific conservation issues while establishing clear policy direction that not only defines the parameters of our position statements but the relevance to our mission. As declarations of policy, statements do not direct specific actions, establish policy priorities or allocate BHA resources.

**Sponsored by:** The Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, New York, and New England Chapters of BHA.

**North American Board Action:** Adopted on February 8, 2021

### **North American Policy Statement:**

*Backcountry Hunters & Anglers supports the science-based management of Eastern U.S. Forests to maintain a diversity of forest age-class structures which in turn will promote forest health and habitat suitable for native wildlife populations. BHA encourages federal and state agencies to incorporate and implement management practices to maintain diverse forest age classes, ranging from early successional to old growth. To accomplish this goal, BHA recommends that federal and state agencies:*

- *Use State Wildlife Action Plans as the basis for developing management goals and for developing long-term habitat management plans with specific habitat type and age-class targets.*
- *Apply information on natural disturbance regimes to guide the size, arrangement, and structure of habitat management units, modified as applicable in response to wildlife habitat management goals and to factors such as climate change, invasive species, and diseases.*
- *Include and implement prescribed fire as a management tool in fire-dependent forest communities that simulates historic disturbance regimes in factors such as size, intensity, seasonal timing, and frequency.*
- *Use timber harvest to replace natural disturbances that no longer function as they did historically, such as stand replacing fires, beaver activity, and weather events.*
- *Recognize the importance of intact lands and waters managed under designations like Wilderness, Roadless Areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers while addressing the need for active*

*management in other landscapes in order to ensure healthy forest structure and the health of wildlife populations that require early successional habitat for some or all of their life cycles.*

- *Implement an education and outreach effort to inform stakeholders on the importance of science-based forest management to achieve wildlife habitat objectives for the full suite of species and habitats.*

