



Meshing Wildlife Management with Production Agriculture

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TWRA Private Lands
Biologist/Producer

Background

- Son of a 38 year veteran Wildlife Officer
- Graduated from UTMartin 2002
- Began working in Fisheries then worked my way back to dry land about 7 years ago
- Purchased farm in 2003 and immediately began acquiring information from everywhere.
- “There’s not enough hours in the day!”



Determining your goals and objectives

- If you have not determined your goals and objectives you are wondering around the forest in the dark. (P.S. – Its not if, its when am I going to smack into a tree!)
- In the beginning we knew we had to have income from cattle to pay for the farm.
- We started out running a cow/calf operation.
- We survived, but we struggled!



Determining your goals and objectives cont'd

- We had trouble harvesting enough hay.
- We had trouble with Bull management.
- We had trouble calving.
- We had trouble with working cattle and facilities.
- We had difficulties with our hunting strategies.
- It was time to come up with a new game plan!



Determining your goals and objectives cont'd

- In discussion we determined the main reason for the purchase of this farm was to have a place of our own that our families could grow up hunting and spending time outdoors.
- How do we maximize wildlife management while still having a profitable cattle operation?
- We made the change to stockers and excluded areas specifically for wildlife.



The New Plan

- Basically eliminated haying issues.
- Eliminated bull issues.
- Improved our working facilities.
- Removed cattle from the farm during prime hunting months.
- Added more acreage specifically for wildlife.
- Winner, winner wild game dinner!



Borum Farm_Giles Co

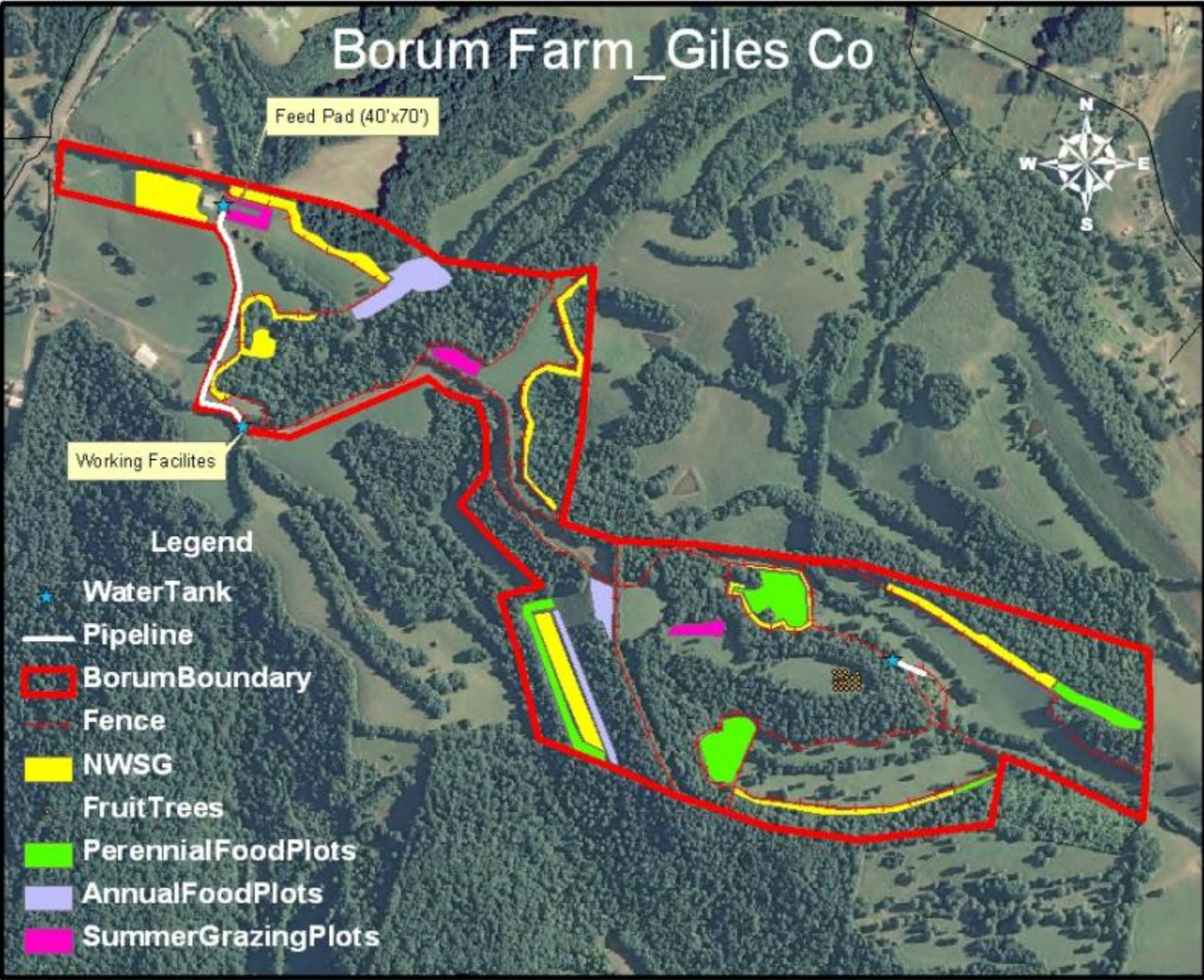
Feed Pad (40'x70')



Working Facilites

Legend

-  WaterTank
-  Pipeline
-  BorumBoundary
-  Fence
-  NWSG
-  FruitTrees
-  PerennialFoodPlots
-  AnnualFoodPlots
-  SummerGrazingPlots



Fencing Layout and Design

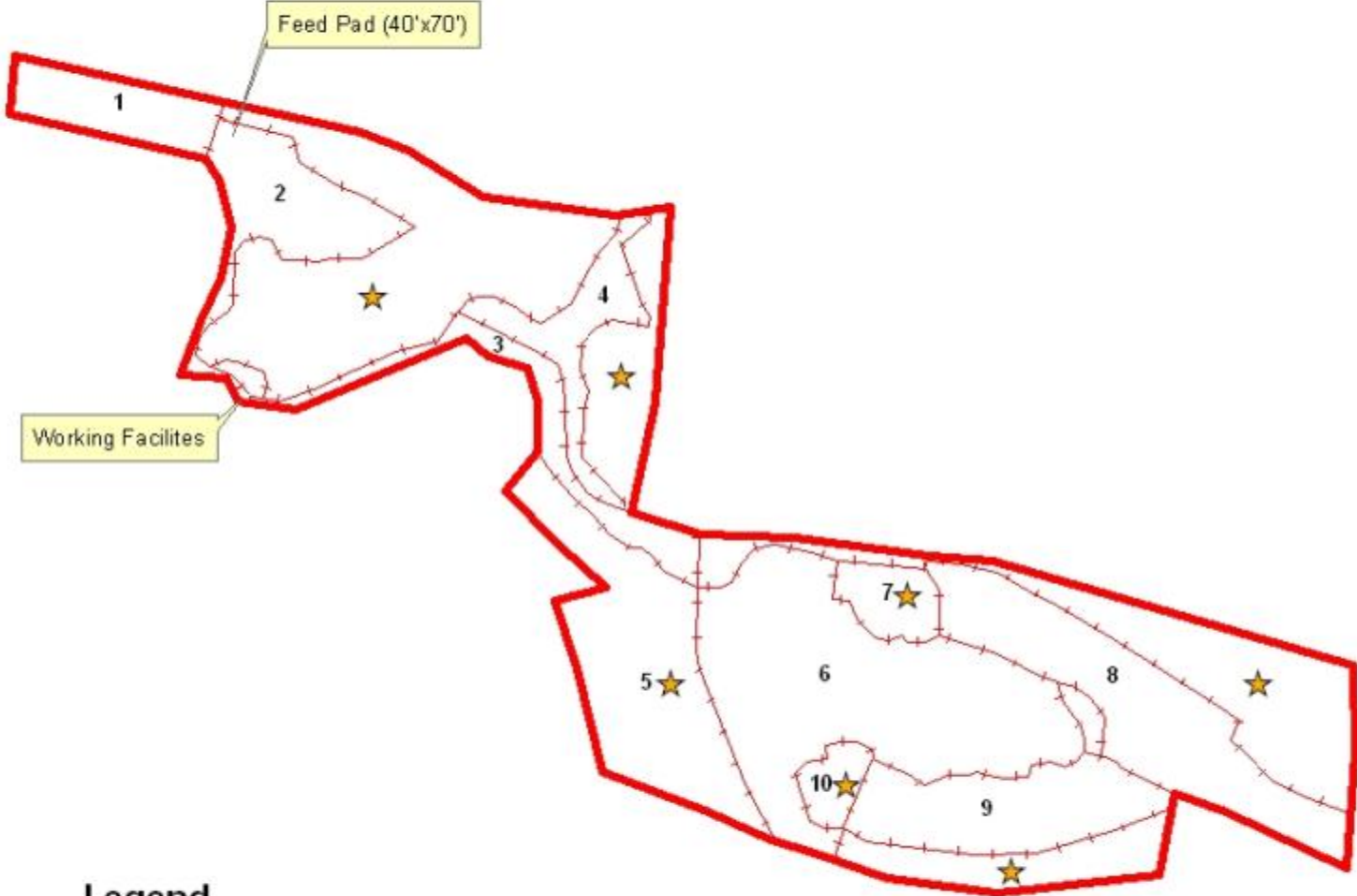
- Once goals are determined the layout and design phase are critical to success.
- We created a 10 paddock design
- Some paddocks are specifically devoted to wildlife, but during times of duress we have the option of bringing them online for grazing or haying.
- This system revolves around one centralized “alley way” style paddock that travels throughout the heart of the farm.

Fencing Layout and Design cont'd



- This design allows us to implement a rotational grazing plan which is encouraged through NRCS programs.
- We installed apprx. 5 miles of interior fencing.
- Along with maintaining apprx. 4 miles of exterior fencing.
- We used “setback” fencing on certain fields to create more nesting habitat throughout the farm.



Borum Farm_Giles Co

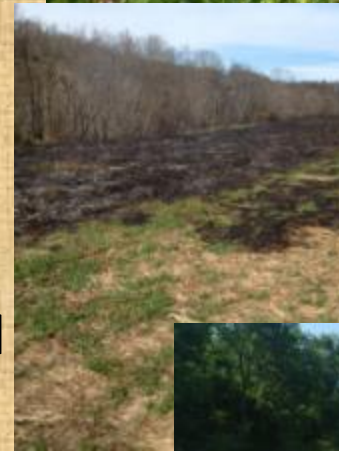


Legend

-  BorumBoundary
-  Fence

Maximizing Wildlife Benefits

- First identify the limiting factors to wildlife.
 - Lack of good early successional cover. (Good nesting and bedding cover)
 - Increase amount and quality of food sources.
- We planted a mixture of native warm season grasses and forbs.
 - Big Bluestem, little bluestem, indian grass, eastern gama grass, illinois bundleflower, partridge pea and a varid mix of native wildflowers.
- We manage these stands using techniques like prescribed burning, strip disking and strip herbiciding.





Maximizing Wildlife Benefits cont'd

- We expanded on existing fruit trees on the farm and created an orchard. (Apple and pear trees)
- We planted numerous species of mast producing trees. (Sawtooth, white oak, red oak, American plum, Southern crabapple)
- We integrated throughout the farm a total of about 15 acres worth of perennial and annual food plots.
 - Annual plots consisted of corn and beans.
 - Perennial plots were a mixture of red, white and crimson clover along with wheat and oats.



Borum Farm_Giles Co

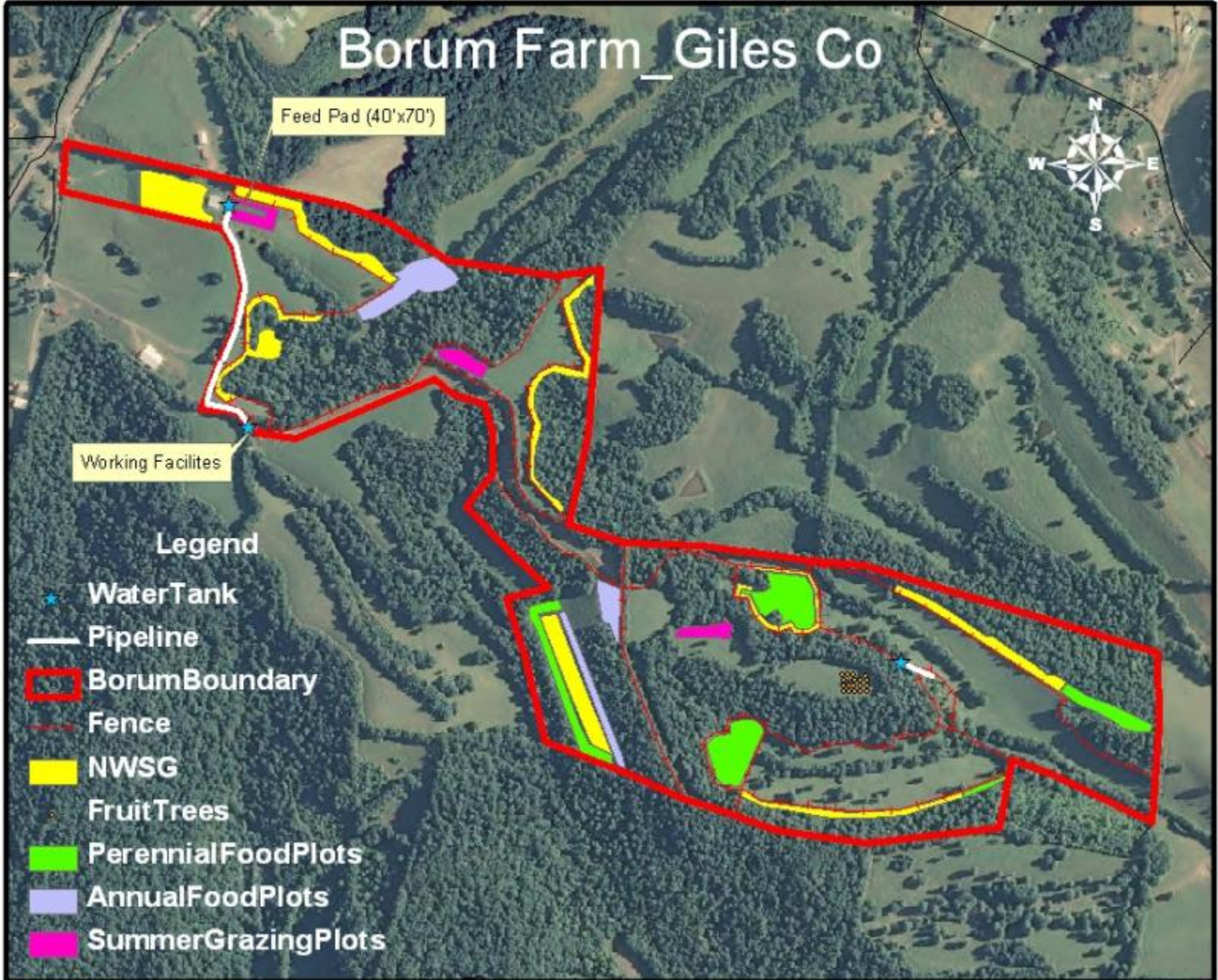
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Maximizing Cattle Production

- Installed three alternative watering sources along with digging a pond and using natural springs on the farm.
- Built all new working facility.
- Added hay storage capacity.
- Installed heavy use concrete feed pad.
- Pasture renovations. Began drilling wheat and oats in most paddocks in the fall. For early spring grazing.



Maximizing Cattle Production cont'd

- Implemented warm season grazing techniques
 - We strategically located three warm season grazing patches that consisted of a mixture of sorghum sudan, beans, millet, milo, sunflowers and various clovers.
- They were followed with a fall planting of red clover and wheat.
- These plots served double purpose as excellent late season grazing and good “food plots” for wildlife also.



Utilizing “ALL” Available Resources

- We used every acronym in the book.
 - NRCS (WHIP, EQIP), TWRA, TDA, TNLIP, GCSCD
- Don't be afraid to ask for help!
- Talk to your local District Conservationist, Extension Agent, State Game and Fish Biologist, Co-op representative.
- The money is out there, you just have to find it!





