



Wildlife Needs Young Forest

Did you know that carefully planned timber harvests help wildlife in a big way?

After a timber harvest, young forest grows back quickly – and thickly – providing much-needed food and hiding places for animals, including many whose populations have been falling. In the past, nature made plenty of young forest, but because we’ve suppressed most natural processes, such as wildfires, we must now help make this critically important habitat.

Trees are a renewable resource. When we cut them in the right places, we help dozens of kinds of wild creatures,

both rare and common, that need young forest – a type of habitat that has dwindled over the past 50 years. To have a diversity of wildlife, we need a diversity of habitats, including young regrowing woodland.

Public and private landowners plan and carry out timber harvests to create and refresh patches of young forest in strategic areas within more-mature forested landscapes. Habitat managers also use other techniques, including controlled burning and mowing shrubs, to keep the right amount of young forest on the land.

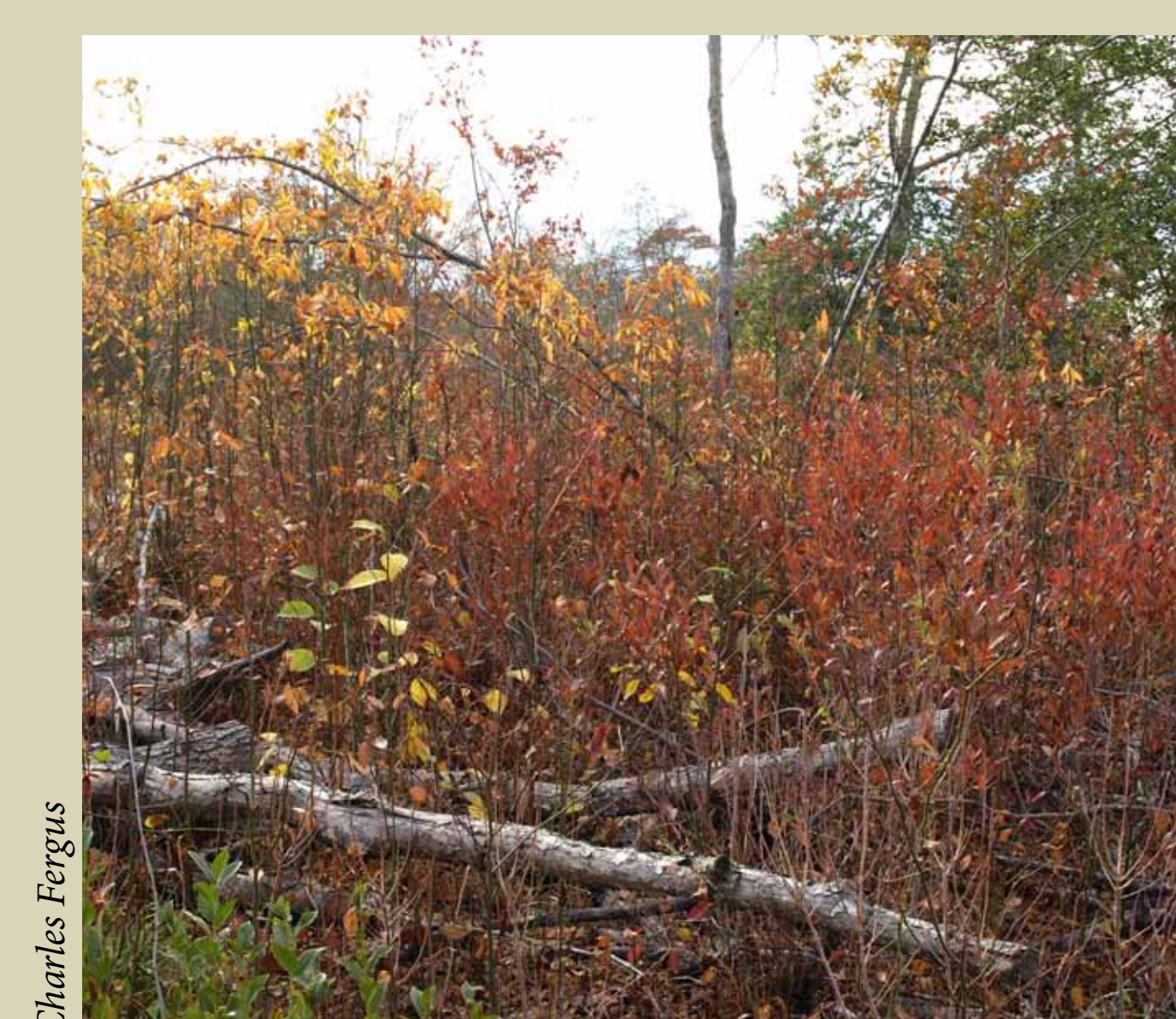


a fresh cut



It may look messy at first, but a fresh clearcut is the first step toward creating new young forest. In just one growing season, grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and tree sprouts will make this site a magnet for wildlife.

in 2 to 3 years



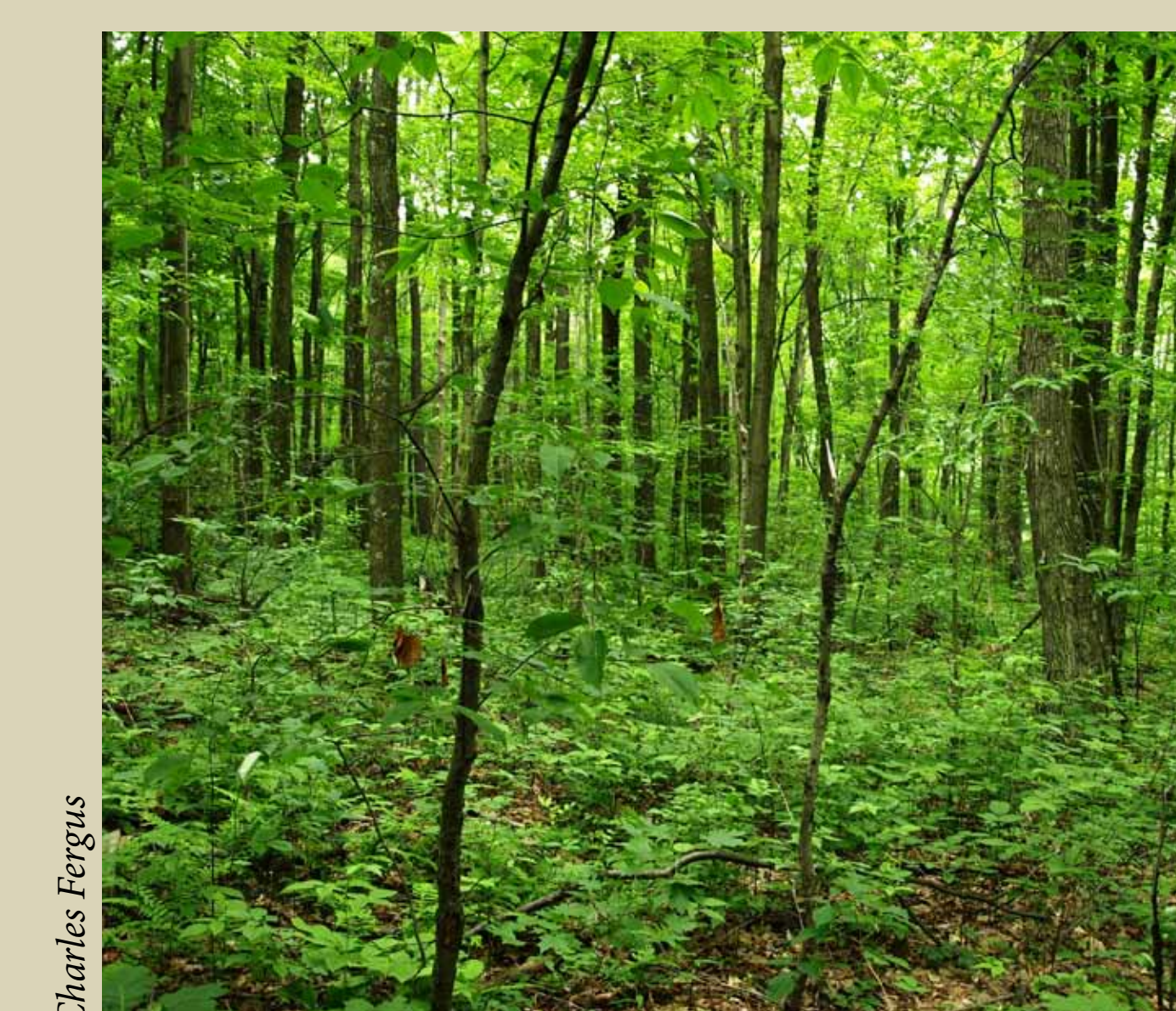
In 2 to 3 years, the young forest supports more and different types of plants mixed in among the quickly regrowing trees, offering food and shelter to a broad range of wild animals from warblers to bears.

after 10 years



After 10 years, taller trees start shading out some of the ground plants, but the regrowing forest still provides important food and cover for bobcats, woodcock, songbirds, and a host of other creatures.

after 20 years



After about 20 years, the forest attracts animals that need older woods. By now, conservationists will have harvested trees elsewhere to keep some young regrowing forest a part of the natural woodland mix.

To keep the land healthy, we need a balance of different habitats, including some young forest.

