

February 25, 2008

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Dear Jon:

I hope this letter finds you and yours doing well. This report is intended to provide a brief analysis of quail hunting potential for Honey Lake Plantation in Madison County, Florida. Management strategies will be recommended for increasing the overall quality of this property for wild quail production as well as providing some information on other game management opportunities.

Honey Lake Plantation encompasses approximately 3,600 acres in Madison and a small portion of Jefferson County, Florida. Approximately 2,000 acres of this total were part of the original Honey Lake Plantation, which has a long and colorful history as a hunting property. The remaining acreage is composed of planted pine stands of various ages. While some pre-merchantable planted timber occurs, the majority of these stands are of merchantable age. A variety of soil types occur on Honey Lake Plantation with approximately 40-50% of the acreage in cypress ponds, hardwood bottoms and drainage basins. The upland soils on the property are of excellent quality for wildlife management. The interspersed ponds, cypress heads, drainage basins and upland hills create tremendous natural beauty and a fantastic opportunity for development of a magnificent multi-game property.

The current owners of Honey Lake have implemented a quality deer management program based upon sound deer management principles. In addition to year-round supplemental feeding, an excellent distribution of long-season deer food plots has been established. The current turkey population on this property is as high as anywhere in the Southeast and would provide tremendous hunting opportunities. The addition of year-round feeding and an aggressive mammalian predator control program could potentially increase this already excellent population. I would make a guess that there is no location on 3,600 acres that you could go on a good spring morning and not hear a gobbler call.

The current quail density on the original Honey Lake portion of the property is fair whereas the wild bird density on the planted pine portion is low. Current densities of quail are based upon conversations with Honey Lake Staff and field reconnaissance. A wild quail census should be conducted on this property next fall to more accurately

access the quail population. Four courses have been identified that should provide approximately 28 hunts per year once all habitat modifications have been implemented (Map 1 and Table 1). Three of these courses are on the original Honey Lake portion of the property and one course could be developed on the planted pines section. These 4 courses represent approximately 1,200 acres of dry, non-bedded land. Additional dry land occurs on this property; however only non-bedded land was considered for creation of quail courses. I would utilize these bedded, dry land areas for incorporation of low-intensity quail techniques and to serve as continual sites for capture and relocation of quail to the principal hunting courses.

Table 1. Potential quail hunting courses on Honey Lake Plantation.

Course Name	Approximate Acreage
Home Shoot	400
Lake Course	300
Pecan Groove	250
Pine Ridge	250
TOTAL	1,200 acres

A considerable amount of habitat management has occurred on Honey Lake over the past few years. In addition to the standard management techniques such as burning, mowing and planting a considerable amount of woodland mulching and herbiciding has occurred. All cypress ponds, drain interfaces and thinned planted pines stands have been completely mulched. These areas will be allowed to resprout and treated with Garlon to suppress future hardwood growth. This will create an attractive interface between the moist-site areas and the uplands on this property. Additionally, this mechanical – chemical combination will greatly facilitate future management of these areas. The vast majority of upland sites on this property have been mowed and treated with Garlon over the past two years. This treatment will also provide dividends for many years to come in terms of hardwood control. The combination of woodland mulching and herbiciding has created highly attractive courses on this property.

Future quail management strategies on this property will deal primarily with incorporation of standard quail management techniques such as year-round feeding and aggressive trapping of mammalian predators. In addition to these techniques a considerable amount of work will need to occur on the Pine Ridge Course to bring it up to par with the other Courses. An aggressive timber harvest should occur on this course to allow for “sun lighting” of the understory and creation of food plots and fallow fields. Several pockets of thinnable timber occur on the original Honey Lake portion of the property and these areas should also be harvested in conjunction with the Pine Ridge Course. The majority of the upland portions of the remaining three Courses have an attractive and well-stocked overstory of pines and a rich and productive understory. I would recommend increasing the distribution of fallow fields in these areas by selective timber harvesting and the use of a “Hydra Stumper” for stump removal. Further diversification of the understory on these areas can be achieved by alternating frequency of fire and a limited amount of seasonal soil disturbance.

I would also recommend that wild quail be relocated to all four Courses on this property. While the three Courses on the original Honey Lake portion of the property should respond fairly quickly to intensive quail management, the relocation of wild birds will greatly speed up the process of developing a premier quail hunting property. My recommendation would be to relocate 100 birds the first year (March 2009) to the 3 original Honey Lake Course, and an additional 40-50 birds the following year to the pine Ridge Course. This delay in relocating to the Pine Ridge Course will allow adequate time for needed habitat modifications and regrowth of understory vegetation on this area.

In closing I feel that Honey Lake Plantation has tremendous natural beauty and excellent potential for a premier multi-game hunting property with an emphasis on wild quail production. If you have any questions regarding this report please feel free to contact me at the number on the letterhead. Thank you for allowing me to do this brief habitat analysis and I would be delighted to provide additional assistance to whomever should be fortunate enough to purchase this magnificent property.

Sincerely,

Brad Mueller
American Wildlife Enterprises

