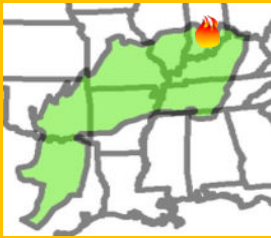


# Wallow Hollow Woods

## FIRE SCIENCE HOT SPOTS

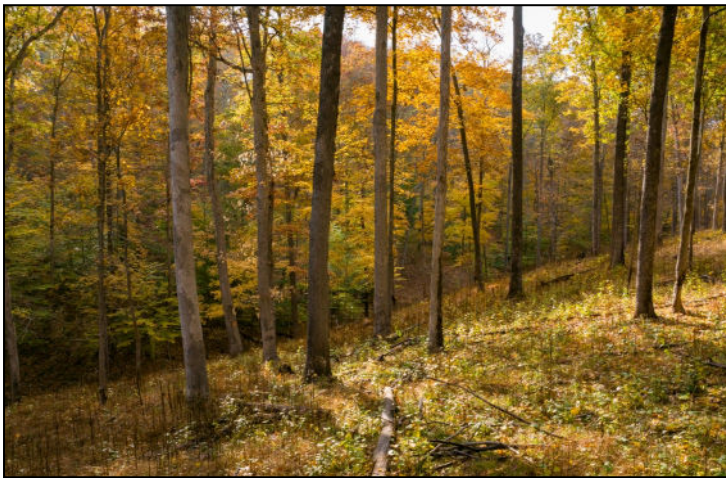


In this feature, we bring into focus fire science on-the-ground

Wallow Hollow Woods, owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), is located in the Brown County Hills region of southern Indiana. TNC has been working here for decades, focused on sustaining and restoring this regionally significant large

contiguous forested landscape that provides important habitat for migratory songbirds, and other rare plants and animals. When TNC acquired the 128-acre property in 2014, it was (and remains) a conservation priority because it connects a group of adjacent conservation lands, including sites owned and managed by Indiana Department of Natural Resource (Youngman's Woods Nature Preserve), Indiana University (Lilly-Dickey Woods), and another TNC property (Hitz-Rhodehamel). At Wallow Hollow Woods, initial forest inventories showed that, while there was limited oak regeneration occurring in forest canopy gaps created from a 2003 timber harvest, midstory encroachment from beech, maple, and ironwood trees associated with fire exclusion was intense (i.e., top-left (background) and top-right inset images below). Such a dense forest midstory is a major inhibitor of successful regeneration of fire-adapted oak and hickory species, and open-canopy conditions that are favorable to some bat and migratory songbird species, including the Cerulean Warbler (inset, bottom-left image).

The Nature Conservancy 



Since acquiring the property in 2014, TNC has implemented prescribed fire (the first of which occurred in April 2018, shown in the top-right photo above), midstory thinning (hack and squirt), and non-native invasive plant species treatments (primarily for Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*)) to restore a fire-conditioned open woodland (e.g., top-left (foreground) and bottom-left images above) favorable to certain migratory songbirds and other important bird species, such as red-headed woodpecker, eastern whip-poor-will, eastern towhee, and eastern screech owl. For many reasons, the

site serves as an excellent field tour location to share valuable management lessons and experiential knowledge, such as at a recent tour for the Southern Indiana Cerulean Warbler Birdscape collaborative effort, shown in the bottom-right image. Learn more about TNC's work in Indiana using prescribed fire by watching this great video, [Return the Burn: Importance of Prescribed Fire](#). Click on each photo to view a full-size image. Photo credits: top-and-bottom left: Fauna Creative, bottom-left inset: Doug Greenberg, all others The Nature Conservancy.