2013 Envirothon Habitat Management Oral Scenario

Habitat loss is the number one threat to wildlife today. Populations of many species in Connecticut are declining due to loss of early successional habitats. The DEEP Wildlife Division, which is responsible for conserving Connecticut's native wildlife, owns the 313-acre Spignesi Wildlife Management Area in Scotland and needs to develop a management plan for the property.

The New England cottontail (NEC) is a candidate species being considered for listing under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Connecticut and several other states, with assistance from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, are implementing plans to increase NEC populations. The CT DEEP is considering managing habitat for NEC at the Spignesi Wildlife Management Area in Scotland.

Your team has been hired by the DEEP Wildlife Division to
  1.) assess the suitability of this area for NEC management, and
  2.) Prepare and present a management plan for the property based on your assessment.

  ❖ Maps and further information are on ctenvirothon.org

You will give a presentation to the state wildlife biologists.

Your plan should:
  1. Justify habitat management plans being proposed.

  2. Describe management practices to be implemented.

Please be sure to address the following in your plan:

1. Describe the natural resources including current habitat conditions of the WMA. Give an assessment of the suitability of the property for management of New England Cottontail.

2. Give a description of the kinds of threats and pressures that have put your focus species at risk. Discuss the kinds of changes that are likely to pose threats in the future.

3. Explain your management recommendations, how they will be implemented, and your rationale for your proposed habitat management plans, given the current conditions, the habitat potential, and the WMAs placement within the landscape.

4. What are the species that will benefit from the proposed habitat management at this WMA? Which species are of Greatest Conservation Need (GCN)? Give background information on these GCN species and the threats that they face.

5. Explain the process of succession, describe how it affects the GCN species discussed in item 4 above and explain how it will affect future management of the WMA.

6. How could this work be funded?