

Scouting for *mizise* (wild turkey) on public lands
in the deep forest of Bayfield County, WI



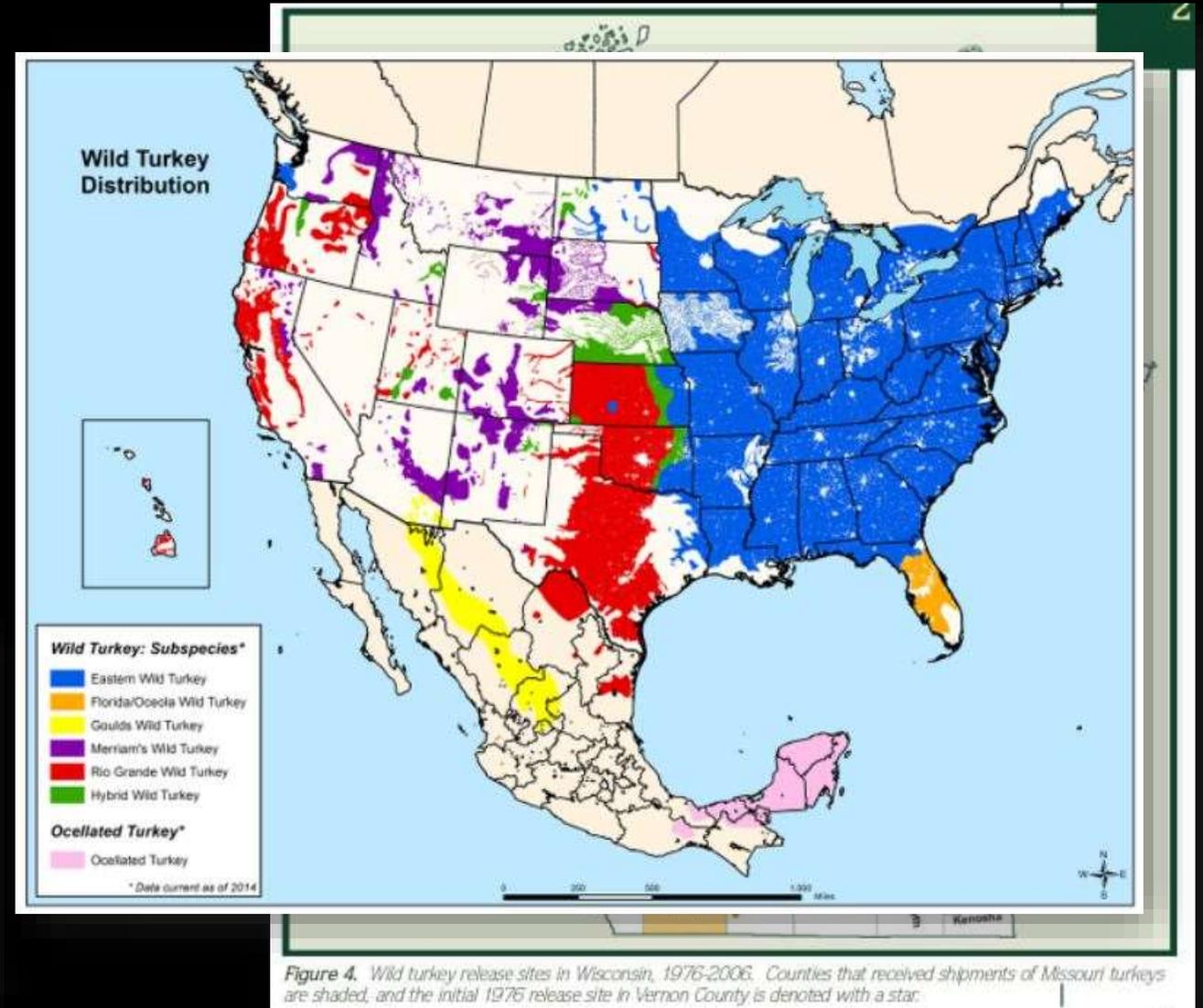
GLIFWC ReCharge 2020

Skills Training Session

T. Bartnick - Wildlife Biologist

Brief history of wild turkeys in Wisconsin

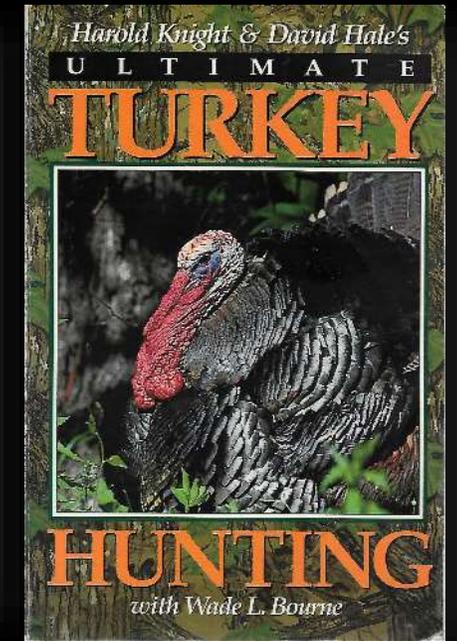
- Ranged primarily across the southern 1/2 of Wisconsin prior to European arrival
- Population extirpated by the early 1900s
- Restoration started with release of turkeys in Vernon County in 1976
- Additional releases in the northern counties through 2006
- Northern population has been doing well, despite doubts



Scouting

- Part of the process of preparing for the hunt and studying all of the information that is available:
 - **Preparation at home** – looking at maps, aerial photos, hunting apps, landownership, reading about the target species, internet resources, etc.
 - **Preparation in the field** – driving roads, visiting sites, and looking for sign (tracks, feathers, scratches, scat, roosts, etc.)

Is the site accessible?
Are turkeys present?
What are their behavioral patterns?



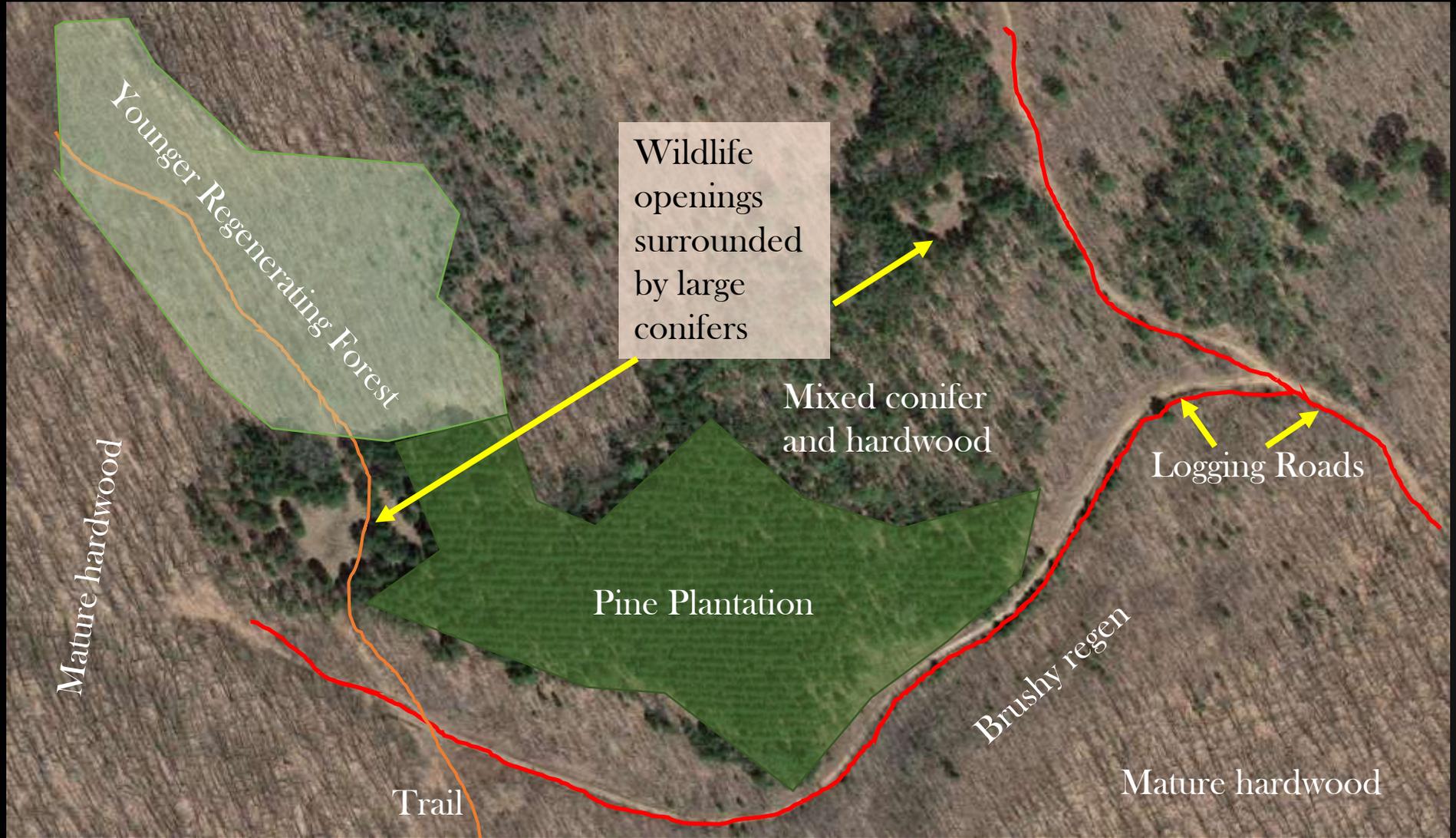
Using Aerial Imagery

Use a variety of resources: Hunting apps (OnX, HuntStand, etc.), Internet Browser Maps (Google, Bing, etc.), County GIS (different years, LiDAR, ownership), DNR maps

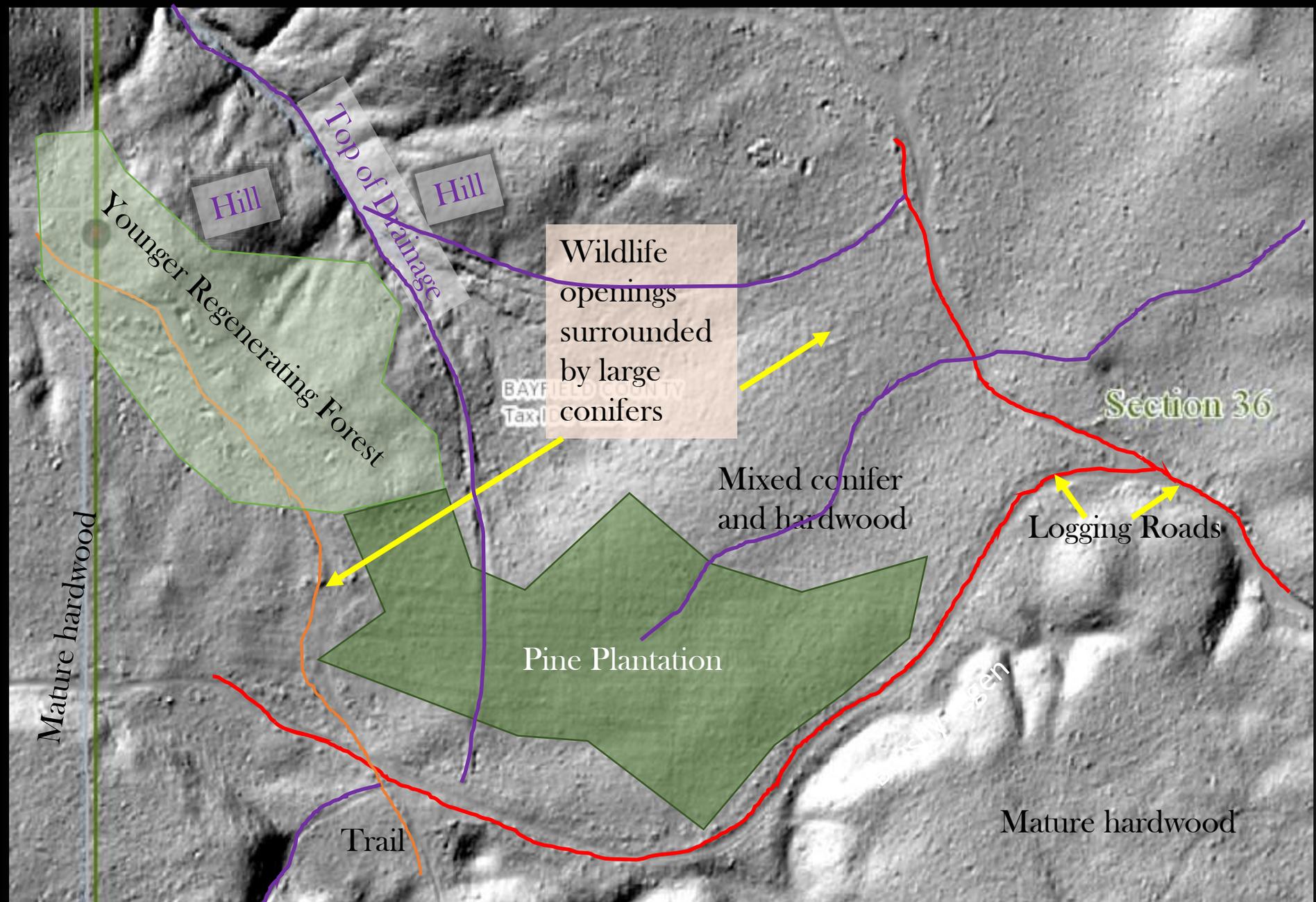
- Easy to access
- Use basic aerial photo interpretation to ID different features:
 - Young forest stands
 - Plantations
 - Mature forest
 - Edge habitat
 - Water/Riparian areas
 - Roads/Trails
 - Ridgelines
 - Draws/Ravines



- Obvious features: different habitat types, mixed age forest stands, pine plantation, good access via roads and trails, wildlife openings, etc.
- The only critical component missing is a water source, but there are some wooded ponds just to the south, and a seasonal stream/spring to the north



- LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) can reveal features that cannot always be seen from aerial photos





Mizise scouting – habitat/landscape considerations

- Prefer areas with 30-70% forest cover (hard to find on public lands in northern Bayfield County)
- Different habitat for different needs:
 - Roosting habitat: large trees with horizontal limbs (oaks, mature conifers)
 - Foraging habitat: mast species (oaks)
 - Nesting cover: dense brush, fallen trees, near forest edge
- Edge habitat (open-forest, conifers-hardwoods, road-forest, ROW-forest)
- Reliable food source (acorns/mast, forest edges and roadsides usually have a lot of insects in the spring)
- Topography can be important – roosting on ridgelines/hilltops
- Water sources (springs, ponds, creeks, etc.)

Selecting a place to set-up

Pay attention to features of the landscape:

- Roads, hiking trails, game trails
- Density of understory brush, downfallen trees, etc.
- Forest floor: noisy oak leaves, pine needles, moss, broken branches

Large trees (width of shoulders)

Line of sight (at least 50 yards)

Angle of sun (ability to see, shadows)

Away from roads/ATV trails/hiking trails



My first northwoods turkey - 2019

