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1. Rank the following habitat characteristics in order of their importance to masked bobwhite quail. Some of the variables listed below will have positive impacts while others will be negative, please rank the importance of a variable irrespective of this difference. Different variables cannot be given the same rank. A rank of 1 is the most important while a rank of 16 is the least important.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)	11 (11)	12 (12)	13 (13)	14 (14)	15 (15)	16 (16)
Grass Cover	X															
Forb Cover					X											
Brush and Shrub Cover									X							
Mammalian Predators																X
Leguminous Shrubs						X										
Invasive Plant Species															X	
Summer Forb Diversity								X								
Tree Cover														X		
Woodland/ Grasslands Edges							X									
Avian Predators										X						
Thermal Refugia			X													
Bare Ground											X					
Vegetation Height (Herbaceous)												X				
Herbaceous Species Diversity				X												
Structural Diversity (of Vegetation)		X														
Arthropod Diversity and Abundance													X			

*Other (please specify):* Many of the options express the same attributes in different ways, so the answers may be difficult to interpret. By default, if we have high "structural diversity" we will have many of the other veg.attributes.

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2. There is considerable difference of opinion as to the relationship between woody vegetation and masked bobwhite habitat suitability. The graphs above represent various interpretations of this relationship. Please rate the graphs according to the likelihood that each graph approximates the relationship between woody vegetation cover and masked bobwhite habitat suitability and rank your confidence in this choice. An answer of 1 indicates the most likely relationship whereas 9 indicates the least likely.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Graph 1					X				
Graph 2				X					
Graph 3						X			
Graph 4								X	
Graph 5							X		
Graph 6							X		
Graph 7			X						
Graph 8		X							
Graph 9			X						
Confidence (1= very confident, 9= a pure guess)				X					

*Please comment on your choices :* Bobwhite need woody cover as part of the mosaic of habitat diversity. Without woody cover bobwhite will be absent or present in very low numbers. As woody cover increases so will bobwhite, until the habitat becomes dominated by woody cover and substantially reduces the grass/herbaceous cover. As this happens, the bobwhite population will likely decline.

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3. The above graphs represent three different interpretations of the relationship between masked bobwhites and both bare ground and nest substrate height. Please rank the graphs in order of their likelihood in approximating the true relationship. An answer of 1 indicates the most likely relationship whereas 9 indicates the least likely. Also, please provide your confidence in your ranking.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Bare Ground Graph 1		X							
Bare Ground Graph 2							X		
Bare Ground Graph 3				X					
Bare Ground Confidence (1=very confident, 9= complete guess)			X						
Nest Substrate Height Graph 1			X						
Nest Substrate Height Graph 2					X				
Nest Substrate Height Graph 3								X	
Nest Substrate Height Confidence (1=very confident, 9= complete guess)				X					

*Please comment on your choices :* There needs to be sufficient bare ground for the bird to move easily and thus access the various habitat components. Moderate to high % of bare ground results in a more xeric environment and exposes the birds to a greater chance of predation. I believe that having a high nesting success is the key to sustaining a bobwhite population. Grass cover needs to be sufficiently tall/dense to ameliorate high ground temperatures during the nesting period. Moderate to tall grass height also protects from predation. The term "Mean Height" is somewhat problematic because the average may represent a very high mix of grass heights or a more uniform height. Either may have value to the birds depending on the growth form of the species and, possibly, the amount of food provided by the various grass species.

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4. The above graphs represent nine different interpretations of the relationship between masked bobwhites and herbaceous cover. Please rank the graphs in order of their likelihood in approximating the true relationship. An answer of 1 indicates the most likely relationship whereas 9 indicates the least likely. Also, please provide your confidence in your ranking.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Graph 1				X					
Graph 2						X			
Graph 3					X				
Graph 4			X						
Graph 5				X					
Graph 6		X							
Graph 7							X		
Graph 8								X	
Graph 9								X	
Confidence (1= very confident, 9= just guessing)				X					

*Please comment on your choices :* I believe 10-20% herbaceous cover is needed. Their function is (1) to provide food, (2) to provide cover, and (3) they may reduce ground temperatures and increase humidity by evapotranspiration. The plant growth form will determine how beneficial it is in contributing to (3). A substantial contribution makes the herbaceous cover more valuable.

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5. The above graphs represent six different interpretations of the relationship between masked bobwhites and the amount of visual cover. Please rank the graphs in order of their likelihood in approximating the true relationship. An answer of 1 indicates the most likely

relationship whereas 9 indicates the least likely. Also, please provide your level of confidence in your ranking.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Graph 1				X					
Graph 2									X
Graph 3						X			
Graph 4							X		
Graph 5								X	
Graph 6					X				

Confidence (1= very confident, 9= just guessing)

X

*Please comment on your choices :* I interpreted the site distance to be "horizontal" site distance, not vertical. I consider avian predators to be much more important than ground predators; therefore, I did not rate any graph as "1 or 2". If you focus is on site distance at nests, then I would rank graphs 5,6 and 4 as #1,2, and 3.

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6. Please describe, with as much detail as possible, the habitat features which best represent optimal masked bobwhite habitat.

Bobwhite benefit from a habitat mosaic interspersing grasses, forbs, shrubs, trees and bare ground. A large number of grass/forb species makes it more likely that at least some species will grow well each year, given the highly variable weather conditions in Arizona. Therefore, species richness is important. The key problem in southern Arizona is that the annual precipitation amounts are inadequate to grow good bobwhite habitat. Competition for moisture between plant species means some will "lose", resulting in less than acceptable habitat conditions. This is exacerbated by the bi-modal distribution of the precipitation. The bi-modal pattern interrupts plant growth, results in development of "cool" and "warm" season plant communities, and shortens the breeding season for bobwhite. Simply stated, Southern Arizona cannot produce "optimal" masked bobwhite habitat. We must make "trade-offs" between the desired habitat attributes to provide at least minimally acceptable habitat. Plants that use large amounts of water, such as mesquite, need to be selected against to provide more water for other species. Plant species contribute to bobwhite habitat by providing food, thermal moderation, horizontal and vertical screening, and nesting sites. Therefore, plants that provide the greatest number of these values need to be selected for when making decisions about habitat management. Litter is valuable for ameliorating ground temperatures, recycling nutrients and retaining moisture. Therefore, treatments such as controlled burns are problematic. Brush piles may contribute cover and loafing areas without competing for moisture. Natalty must be greater than mortality for us to successfully restore masked bobwhite populations. Predator control has been suggested to help reduce mortality. I am reluctant to initiate this for several reasons: (1) the other native quail species do not need such help to persist; (2) once started, what would be the trigger to stop it; (3) predator control is most easily directed at mammalian predators, but avian predators are the most effective at killing quail (and most avian predators are protected by law); and (4) the challenge given to the Recovery Team was to establish self-sustaining populations of masked bobwhite. Therefore, I consider poor reproduction rates to be the limiting factor in accomplishing our goal. Fred Guthry and others have published several papers suggesting high temperatures cause thermal stress to incubating bobwhite and may kill embryos and reduce nesting attempts. I believe any management options that can moderate high temperatures at nest sites will be beneficial. Also, loafing cover that moderates high temperatures is important. As we make habitat management decisions I would recommend: (1) provide the best nesting habitat that is practical; emphasize good densities of perennial bunch grasses in patches that are well distributed throughout the landscape. (2) create small food plots throughout the landscape that are managed for forb production. Possibly use burning or discing to stimulate forb growth. (3) implement soil disturbing practices that aid in water infiltration. (4) reduce the density of young mesquite and replace with brush piles or shrubs. Talk with botanists (such as Tom Vandevender) about what shrub species might be best to provide food, cover and moisture requirements less than mesquite. (5) decide whether removing most of the mature mesquites would reduce raptor use of those areas (would this be considered a "take" by making habitat less useful to federally protected species?). John Goodwin

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