



Tree and Shrub Pruning

Trees and shrubs have the potential to be damaged from pests, disease and wildfires. In order to keep this risk minimal, pruning eliminates branches that show signs of stress from disease, insect infestation, or could become fuel for a wildfire. Pruning branches of trees and shrubs can improve the quality of wood products, production of plant products such as nuts, fruits and boughs, as well as increase the health and vigor of the woody plant. Pruning also helps to reduce wildfire, pest and disease risk by eliminating branches that show signs of stress.



Structures For Wildlife

Structures for wildlife are any structures installed to replace or modify a missing or deficient wildlife habitat component. The purpose is to provide structures, in proper amounts, locations and seasons to enhance or sustain non-domesticated wildlife, or modify existing structures that pose a hazard to wildlife. The practice applies to all lands where planting or managing vegetation fails to meet the short-term needs of the species or guild under consideration.



Other Forestry Practices Available

Other forestry practices are available through the NRCS, including alley cropping, firebreaks, stream crossings, access roads, prescribed fire, fire breaks, and more. Contact your local NRCS Service Center in your county for more information.

Helping People Help the Land

NRCS provides America's farmers and ranchers with financial and technical assistance to voluntarily put conservation on the ground, not only helping the environment but agricultural operations, too.

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United States Department of Agriculture

Healthy Forest and Wildlife Practices

Assistance Available Through EQIP



Forest Management Plan (CAP)

A forest management plan is a site specific Conservation Activity Plan (CAP). This practice applies to non-industrial private forestland which will benefit from the development and implementation of conservation and resource management practices. To receive financial assistance for implementation of conservation practices a forest management plan must be developed.



Riparian Forest Buffer

A riparian forest buffer improves water quality by filtering contaminants from entering open water. Woody vegetation stabilizes the banks along water bodies, improving fish and wildlife habitat. These buffer zones reduce the amount of sediment, organic matter, nutrients, pesticides, and other pollutants in surface runoff and the amount of nutrients and other chemicals in shallow groundwater.



Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation

Windbreaks are planted to provide needed protection in preventing damage to farmsteads from wind and snow. Open areas of cropland can be protected from wind erosion by establishing windbreaks. A renovation improves an existing windbreak that is no longer functioning or growing satisfactorily. That may be because of poor design, overcrowding, dead or dying trees, insufficient width, or extreme competition from sod or weeds.

The following practices require a Forest Management Plan that meets the Forest Stewardship criteria and must be developed prior to practice implementation. The plan must specifically state that these practices are needed to address a resource concern.



Road Trail and Landing Closure

Roads, trails and landings can be re-located to reduce and/or eliminate erosion from steep erodible areas, and avoid sensitive areas such as wetlands and riparian areas. The closure of roads, trails, and/or landings and associated treatment will address resource concerns including gully erosion and sedimentation to water bodies. It will re-establish vegetation on roads and trails no longer needed, provide for human safety, and protect wildlife habitat.



Woody Residue Treatment

Clearing forested areas of down woody debris reduces the risks of wildfires while reducing the population of potential harmful insects. This practice allows removal and disposal of “slash” which is left over after a timber harvest or a forest stand improvement. This slash can be converted into wood chips. The branches and tree tops can be redistributed on the forest floor in a manner that allows for quick decomposition. These activities cut down on the amount of fuel that would be available in case of a fire and prevents the spread of insects and disease.



Brush Management and Herbaceous Weed Control

Brush management can be used to improve or restore native habitats. Treating invasive and noxious plant species can reduce sedimentation, improve water quality and maintain or increase wildlife habitat and values. Many plant species are “out of place” and this practice allows for the use of herbicides or mechanical treatments to remove these weeds and invasives. The goal of this practice is to allow desired plant communities and wildlife habitats to re-establish in a forested or pasture environment.



Forest Stand Improvement

Forest stand improvement involves many activities. Degraded or infested trees are cut, the forest is thinned allowing for the new growth to mature. A healthy stand improvement enhances the forest, the understory vegetation and allows for plant regeneration to restore natural communities. These activities reduce soil erosion, sedimentation and runoff. Other benefits include improved water conservation and wildlife habitat.



Early Successional Habitat

Manages plant succession to develop and maintain early successional habitat to benefit desired wildlife and/or natural communities. Provides habitat for species requiring early successional habitat for all or part of their life cycle. Early successional habitat is available on all lands that are suitable for many kinds of desired wildlife and plant species. Management will be designed to achieve the desired plant community structure (e.g., density, vertical and horizontal cover) and plant species diversity.



Forest Trails and Landings

Access to your woods is important to maintain and manage a healthy stand of trees. This practice minimizes damage to soil, water, plant and animal resources. It is not intended to establish trails for recreational activities. Forest trails and landings involves the creation and/or management of temporary or infrequently used routes, paths, or cleared areas. This practice is for establishing a new trail/landing or restoring old ones in your forest land.



Tree and Shrub Establishment

New established trees and shrubs are established under this conservation practice to control erosion and maintain soil moisture. Areas that are favorable for planting woody vegetation are eligible for this activity. Plantings can also take place in areas to reinforce an existing stand of trees in understocked woodlands. Tree and shrub establishment can also be used to diversify existing stands and increase wildlife habitat.



Tree and Shrub Site Preparation

Tree/shrub site preparation involves the treatment of areas to improve site conditions for establishing trees and/or shrubs. It encourages natural regeneration of desirable woody plants and permits artificial establishment of woody plants. This practice may be applied on all lands needing treatment to establish trees or shrubs.