



Conservation Practice Overview

November 2022

Fuel Break (Code 383)

A fuel break is a strip or block of land on which the vegetation, debris, and litter have been reduced and/or modified to control or diminish the spread of fire.

Practice Information

Fuel breaks are planned and located at strategic locations on the landscape to minimize wildfire risk and unwanted damage to land and structures. Fuel breaks support the application of prescribed fire to improve forest and plant health, wildlife habitat, or livestock forage. A fuel break is typically an easily accessible strip of land of varying width (depending on fuel and terrain). Fuel breaks split up large, continuous tracts of dense, natural fuels, thus reducing the risk of wildfire. Removal of ladder fuels reduces the risk of crown fires.



Fuel breaks need to be treated or grazed to avoid a buildup of excess litter, and to control noxious and invasive plants.

Fuel breaks must be inspected periodically and woody materials such as dead limbs or blown-down trees removed or treated to maintain the diminished risk of fire spread.

Common Associated Practices

Fuel Break (383) is commonly associated with the conservation practices such as Prescribed Fire (338) Firebreak (394), Access Road (560), Forest Trails and Landings (655), Tree/Shrub Pruning (660), and Woody Residue Treatment (384).

For areas with soil erosion potential after a fuel break is installed, the following practices may be used: Critical Area Planting (342), Sediment Basin (350), Structure for Water Control (587), and Access Control (472).

Where grazing or wildlife objectives/concerns exist, Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) and Prescribed Grazing (338) may be applicable.

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.