

Early Successional Habitat Development/Management Disking

Virginia Conservation Practice Job Sheet

647(a)



No area may be disked in consecutive years.

These areas should be protected from livestock.

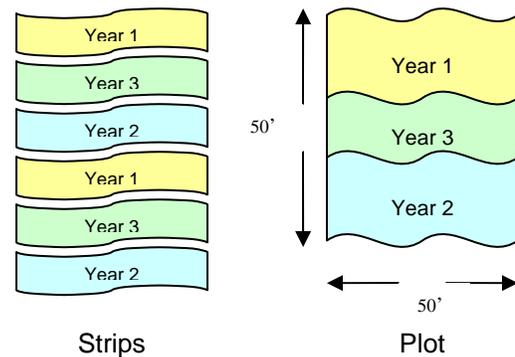


Figure 1. Strip Disking or Plot Disking

Definition

Disking for wildlife is the process of disturbing soil and existing vegetation in an area by using a disk.

Purpose

Disking disturbs the ground surface and vegetation to prevent an area from going through succession to a woody condition and stimulates establishment of annual plants that provide wildlife food and cover. Disking increases plant diversity and temporarily reduces the density of warm-season grass plants allowing for improved wildlife movement. It is the preferred management method to retain and improve wildlife habitat on open land.

Requirements

Disking may be done in strips or plots. Strips should be 30 – 50 feet wide and should be laid out on the contour in an alternating pattern (Figure 1). For steeper areas (slope \geq 4%) use 50 foot wide strips with inactive strips in between also at least 50 feet.

Plots should be a minimum of 50 feet wide and divided into thirds (Figure 1).

Disk areas should be established close to good permanent escape cover.

Operation and maintenance

The plot or strip should be disked in one or two passes so that 30-40% of the vegetation remains. The disks should run at a shallow depth of 2 to 3 inches.

Disk 1/3 of a site each year on a rotating basis. For best results, disk the areas in late winter to early spring. Do not disk during the primary nesting season (April 15 – August 15).

Specifications

Site-specific requirements are listed on the back page and additional provisions are entered on the job sketch. Specifications are prepared in accordance with VA NRCS Field Office Technical Guide. Refer to practice standards Upland Wildlife Habitat Management code 645, and Early Successional Habitat Development code 647.

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