



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

# Early Successional Habitat Development/Management Herbicide Application

## Virginia Conservation Practice Job Sheet

647(f)



### Definition

Herbicide application for wildlife habitat is the process of spraying existing vegetation in an area.

### Purpose

To enhance the wildlife habitat value by encouraging a diverse forb/legume community and a more open stand of vegetation. Herbicide application is an effective management tool that can be utilized where vegetation has become too thick to benefit the target species or a lack of plant diversity does not provide the desired habitat. By spraying, habitat quality is improved through a reduction of woody growth, plant residue and stand density and an increase in favored seed producing plants, bare ground, and insect abundance.

### Requirements

Early successional fields must be established for a minimum of three years before initiating a herbicide application.

Spraying will be done according to label recommendations, and meet all state and federal laws.

Spray recommendations will be made by industry professionals once the identified plant species targeted are identified and dates of application outlined.

Spraying will be performed between July 16 and February 28, except in the situations listed below. It is

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also recommended, but is not required, to delay spraying until after August 15 to reduce the chance of harming fledgling birds and other young wildlife.

The time period for spraying may be extended until April 30 when either: a) herbicide application follows a previous MCM disturbance activity or b) controlling cool season grasses in a warm season grass cover.

Spraying shall not be planned in the following areas:

- Areas where herbicide application will have minimal affect or potentially cause a negative impact on existing cover.
- Areas planted to trees and/or shrubs.
- Environmentally sensitive areas marked on the plan map.

Erosion from sprayed areas will not exceed tolerable limits.

Fields will be sprayed in blocks no larger than 20 acres. Sprayed areas shall be rotated around the field and interspersed with unsprayed areas.

Spraying operations will be performed along field contours, or across the slope, when practical.

### Operation and maintenance

Invasive and noxious weeds shall be controlled.

Participants should be wary of tile blowholes, groundhog holes, fallen tree limbs, and other hazards that may have developed since they were last in the field.

Herbicide application may be a good choice on areas where other practices involving soil disturbance would cause soil erosion or water quality concerns.

### 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, Early Successional Habitat Development/Management code 647, and Pest Management code 595.