



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

E314A

Brush management to improve wildlife habitat

Conservation Practice 314: Brush Management

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture, Range, Forest, Associated Ag Land

RESOURCE CONCERN: Plants; Animals

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 10 years

Enhancement Description

Brush management is employed to create a desired plant community, consistent with the related ecological site steady state, which will maintain or enhance the wildlife habitat desired for the identified wildlife species. It will be designed to provide plant structure, density and diversity needed to meet those habitat objectives. This enhancement does not apply to removal of woody vegetation by prescribed fire or removal of woody vegetation to facilitate a land use change.

Criteria

- This enhancement will be applied in a manner to achieve the desired control of the target woody species while protecting the desired species through mechanical, chemical, or biological methods, alone or in combination. NRCS will not develop biological or chemical treatment recommendations except for biological control using grazing animals. NRCS may provide clients with acceptable biological and/or chemical control references.
- Identify wildlife species of concern and landscape specific brush habitat functionality that is consistent with the related ecological site steady state or another desired state that will meet the objective.
- Brush management will be planned and applied in a manner to meet the habitat requirements for wildlife species of concern as determined by the state's NRCS Wildlife Habitation Evaluation Guide (WHEG).



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- Evaluate wildlife habitat with the state NRCS WHEG and manage for a value of 0.60 or greater.
- Brush management will be designed to achieve the desired plant community based on species composition, structure, density, and canopy (or foliar) cover or height.
- Conduct treatments during periods of the year that accommodate reproduction and other life-cycle requirements of target wildlife and pollinator species.



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Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- Prior to implementation, meet with NRCS to complete the Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG) evaluation at the site.
- Prior to implementation, determine and write down clear objectives for brush management and implementation of this enhancement.
- Prior to implementation, develop a map delineating the areas to be treated and enrolled in this enhancement.
- During implementation, maintain records of applied treatments (pesticide used, rate applied, timing, etc.) and grazing restrictions. The records must support the label requirements for re-entry or grazing restrictions when applicable.
- After implementation, reassess habitat condition with NRCS using the WHEG.
- After implementation, provide records for review by NRCS to verify enhancement was implemented to meet criteria.

NRCS will:

As needed, provide technical assistance to participant as requested.

- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Brush Management (Code 314) as it relates to implementing this enhancement.
- Prior to implementation, confirm brush management and grazing management plan objectives clearly identify the wildlife of concern for the area.
- Prior to implementation, meet with participant to complete WHEG evaluation at the site.

Existing WHEG score = _____ Planned Post Implementation WHEG score = _____

- Prior to implementation, NRCS will make cover or density measurements at georeferenced transects on key areas within the treatment area.
- After implementation, NRCS will return to georeferenced area to measure cover or density and report the results.
- After implementation, review records to verify participant implemented enhancement to meet criteria.

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- After implementation, review record of applied treatment (pesticide used, rate applied, timing, etc.) and grazing restrictions.
- After implementation, reassess habitat condition using the Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide.
Post Implementation WHEG score = _____

NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

Participant Name _____ Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____ Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature

Date



SOUTH DAKOTA (SD) SUPPLEMENT TO CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

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Additional Criteria for SD:

In addition to the criteria specified in the national job sheet E314A, the following additional criteria apply in SD:

- Nesting/fawning dates in SD are May 1 through August 1.
- Consult the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office to determine the wildlife and/or pollinator requirements. Wildlife habitat and lifecycle requirements are found in Biology Technical Note No. 15, including attachments. The local NRCS office shall follow and use the species or guild habitat requirements as identified in Biology Technical Note No. 15 and its attachments.
- Sheep can be used for invasive woody species. Other species can be utilized if documentation is provided that supports their use in control of the targeted woody species.
- For additional information, see the SD Prescribed Grazing Standard (528), Brush Management Standard (314), and the appropriate SD Range and Biology Technical Note(s).

Additional Documentation Requirements for SD:

In addition to the documentation requirements specified in the National job sheet E314A, the following additional documentation requirements apply in SD:

- Complete the SD Grazing Tool (SD-CPA-39 Forage/Animal Inventory, Grazing Schedule using the SD-CPA-15 or similar form, and SD-CPA-16 (Record of Livestock Grazing) or similar grazing records document).
- Complete a drought contingency plan using the SD Drought Tool or provide the participant with a copy of the example drought contingency plan located within the SD Prescribed Grazing Technical No 9.
- Complete the SD Wildlife Habitat Quality Rating Worksheet (SD-CPA-19).
- Complete the SD Brush Management Job Sheet (SD-CPA-21).



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Example: Brush Management (Cedar Removal) Monitoring Plan

The goal of this monitoring plan is to ensure the desired plant community is achieved and maintained.

Maintenance expectations of the contract holder:

- Grazing Deferment is required for two years following cedar removal. The deferment period will be for a minimum of 60 percent of the growing season each year (3-months of no livestock on areas of cedar removal). The growing season is considered to be April 1 – October 1. Following the grazing plan made by the NRCS will help to ensure you meet this requirement.
- Spot treatment of individual plants or areas needing retreatment should be completed as needed while woody vegetation is small and most vulnerable to desired treatment procedures.

Items that should be completed following removal of cedars include:

1. Establish a Key Area or Monitoring Point where the brush has been removed.
2. Monitor that area with a photo point. Photos will be taken in the identical spot annually and approximately at the same time of year. This monitoring will be completed every year after the treatment has been completed. At least one photo should be taken; but it would be beneficial to take a general landscape photo and a close up. Please review the SD Monitoring Tool, Range Technical Note 8 for more information on Photo Point Monitoring.
3. Things to document: a) percentage of brush regrowth occurring, b) vegetation changes - what species are coming back in this area (desirable or non-desirable) and percent ground cover, c) weather conditions (precipitation/climate), d) utilization and grazing records, and e) management needed (spot treatment, etc.).