



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E383A

**CONSERVATION
STEWARDSHIP
PROGRAM**

Grazing-maintained fuel break to reduce the risk of fire

Conservation Practice 383: Fuel break

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Forest and Range

RESOURCE CONCERN: Plants

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 10 Years

Enhancement Description:

The area has existing fuel break(s) of 30 to 60 feet in width, supporting a mixture of woody sprouts and some herbaceous vegetation. Warm-season perennial vegetation will be established on the fuel breaks and will be over-seeded with cool-season annual forages in the fall. Grazing will be managed on the fuel breaks to remove or modify the fine fuel vegetation, thus reducing the risk of fire spread from ground fires. Ground cover will be maintained to control soil erosion and facilitate prescribed burning.

Criteria:

States will apply general criteria from the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard Fuel Break (Code 383) as listed below, and additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.

- A fuel break has been constructed around the property or around the targeted site to minimize the risk of damaging wildfires and to enhance the ability to conduct prescribed burning.
- Fuel breaks will be planted with desirable warm-season perennial vegetation as prescribed by local grazing land specialists. Over-seeding with desirable cool season annual forages will take place in the fall.
- The vegetation on the fuel break will be managed using a prescribed grazing plan. Animal stocking levels and rotation periods are designed to manage vegetation and avoid harm to sensitive plants.
- Manage grasses and forbs to minimize fine fuels.



- If trees or shrubs are not sufficiently controlled through grazing management, single-tree treatment with saws or chemicals will be applied.
- If herbicides are used, refer to criteria in NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Integrated Pest Management (Code 595).

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Documentation and Implementation Requirements:

Participant will:

- Prior to implementation, determine and document the existing fuel breaks on the enrolled acres. Provide as much detail as possible such as length, average width, existing vegetation and past management activities. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed)
- Prior to implementation, determine and document those sites capable of integrating into a grazing management plan with the establishment of desirable warm-season perennial vegetation and cool season annual forages. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed)
- Prior to implementation, develop or update a prescribed grazing plan to guide the establishment of forages, animal stocking levels and rotation periods. Provide to NRCS field office. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed)
- (If prescribed burning is used) Prior to implementation, in combination with grazing to manage vegetation, develop or update a prescribed burn plan to guide the frequency and duration of burning. Provide to NRCS. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed)
 - Prior to implementation of a prescribed burn, assess the existing fuel load using appropriate tools and methods for the geographic area. Determine the need for pre-treatment of the vegetation and fuels to facilitate a desired fire intensity to achieve the vegetation objectives. Apply as needed, complimentary NRCS Conservation Practice Standards such as Firebreak (Code 394) and Woody Residue Treatment (Code 384) to achieve appropriate conditions. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed)
 - Prior to implementation, acquire a written burn plan for the enrolled land use acres that meets the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Burning (Code 338) and any additional state NRCS requirements. Provide to NRCS for review and approval.
 - Prior to implementation of a prescribed burn, acquire all necessary approvals and permits (local, state, federal as applicable).
 - During implementation, and prior to ignition of each prescribed burn, acquire a current fire weather forecast and ensure all weather conditions are within those prescribed in the written burn plan. If conditions are not within prescription, postpone burn.
 - During implementation, and prior to ignition of any prescribed burn, notify NRCS to confirm NRCS verification for any planned changes will meet NRCS or State required enhancement criteria.
 - After implementation of each prescribed burn, conduct a post-burn evaluation as required within the burn plan and provide to NRCS.



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- During implementation, install and maintain erosion control measures as needed for the site. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)
- After implementation, provide NRCS documentation of the vegetation established and timing of grazing activities on the fuel break.

NRCS will:

- Prior to implementation, as needed, provide technical assistance in determining sites for enhancement implementation that meet specified criteria.
- Prior to implementation, NRCS will provide participant recommendations for suitable perennial and annual vegetation establishment and provide assistance in development or revision of a prescribed grazing plan.
- Prior to implementation, as needed, provide explanation and technical assistance to the following NRCS Conservation Practice Standards as they relate to implementing this enhancement.
 - Prescribed Burning (Code 338)-*Not Available in WA*
 - Fuelbreak (Code 383).
 - Firebreak (Code 394).
 - Woody Residue Treatment (Code 384).
 - Integrated Pest Management (Code 595).
 - Additional Conservation Practice Standards for erosion control, as needed for the site.
- (If prescribed burning is used) Prior to implementation, review and certify the prescribed burn plan meets the enhancement criteria and any additional state NRCS requirements.
- Prior to implementation, review the prescribed grazing plan to ensure objectives of the enhancement will be met when used in combination with all other practices.
- During implementation, evaluate any planned changes to verify they meet the enhancement criteria.
- (If prescribed burning is used) After implementation of each prescribed burn, review the post burn evaluation provided by the participant. Discuss any encountered issues, and as needed, provide assistance for changes in planning and procedure for the remaining prescribed burns.
- After implementation, review documentation of the vegetation established and timing of grazing activities on the fuel break to verify the enhancement was implemented to meet the enhancement criteria.



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.

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Participant Name _____ Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____ Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature

Date





WASHINGTON SUPPLEMENT TO
CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

CONSERVATION
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PROGRAM

E383A

Additional Criteria for Washington

- In addition to the criteria specified in the National job sheet E383A the following additional criteria apply in Washington:
 - For forests, fuel breaks will be at least 100' wide when placed along, roads open to the public, railroad tracks, and along property boundaries. (WA Forest Practices WAC-332-650)
 - For forests, fuel breaks will be at least 200' wide when placed along property boundaries adjacent to public use areas or neighbor's structures that are worth >\$1000. (WA Forest Practices WAC-332-650)
 - In Washington, plant fuel breaks with cool season bunchgrasses and for Rangeland, forage kochia (*Bassia prostrata*) is acceptable as well. Non-native bunchgrasses often work better, with forage kochia, as fuel breaks than do native bunchgrasses.
 - Appropriate plant species, and seeding rates for **Eastern Washington** rangeland plantings can be found in the **Plant Materials Technical Note 1 Seeding Guide** in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx> in Section I/Reference Lists/Technical Notes by Discipline/Plant Materials
 - **Prescribed burning is not required for this enhancement. Practice 338 Prescribed Burning is not offered in WA. Washington NRCS does not provide Technical or Financial Assistance for prescribed burning.** For prescribed burning information or guidance, the participant will contact their local WA DNR for information on prescribed burning, burn plans and required burn permits.



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Additional Documentation Requirements for Washington

- In addition to the documentation requirements specified in the National job sheet E383A the following additional documentation requirements apply in Washington:
 - When describing the vegetation within the fuel break include spacing of overstory trees (if any) and height of pruning for overstory trees (if any) as well as a species list for seeding herbaceous plants and their combined general cover.
 - Proof of compliance with WA DNR burn plan and permit requirements will be available for review by NRCS.
 - Records of all grazing activities including:
 - a. Annual forage inventory,
 - b. Annual forage-animal balance,
 - c. Periods of grazing and/or browsing, deferment, rest, and other treatment activities for each management unit,
 - d. How adequate vegetative cover was maintained on sensitive areas, riparian areas, wetlands, and other habitats of concerns, and
 - e. How other grazing restrictions, as identified by other governmental programs and laws, were followed.