



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E666133Z1

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Creating structural diversity with patch openings

Conservation Practice 666: Forest Stand Improvement

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Forest; Associated Ag Land; Farmstead

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Degraded Plant Condition

PRACTICE LIFE SPAN: 10 Years

Enhancement Description

Forest stand improvement that creates patch openings. Size and shape of patches will be based on characteristic natural wind disturbances, which will vary geographically and by forest type.

Criteria

- States will apply general criteria from the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) 666 as listed below, **and additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.**
- Describe the extent or size and orientation of treatment area(s).
- Forested acres planned for this enhancement must be treated during the contract period.
- Forests must have an “acceptable growing stock” level below 80 sq. ft. of basal area per acre.
- Forested acres targeted for patch development must contain species for regeneration from the NRCS state list of suitable trees. Species on this list have the ability to regenerate from seed, sprouts, or other natural regeneration sources.



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- Size of patches to be treated can vary from 1 to 10 acres, be distributed throughout the forest and cannot total more than 50% of the area.
- Trees removed during patch development having marketable quality can be sold.
- Slash and cull trees within patches must be mitigated to allow for natural regeneration to occur. This can be accomplished by killing remaining live trees in patch areas and following up with:
 - Windrowing
 - Wildlife piles
 - Chipping
 - Removal for firewood
- Refer to criteria in CPS Integrated Pest Management (595) to assist with site-specific strategies for pest prevention, pest avoidance, pest monitoring, and pest suppression. Time tree felling to avoid buildup of insect or disease populations.
- Implement forest stand improvement activities in ways that avoid or minimize soil erosion, compaction, rutting, and damage to remaining vegetation, and that maintain hydrologic conditions.
- Protect site resources by selecting the method, felling direction and timing of tree felling, and heavy equipment operation. For temporary access use CPS Forest Trails and Landings (655), to protect soil and site resources from vehicle impacts.
- Use CPS Access Road (560), for more heavily used roads associated with forest stand improvement activities.
- Where slash and debris will be generated, use CPS Woody Residue Treatment (384), to appropriately treat slash and debris, as necessary, to assure that it will not present an unacceptable fire, safety, environmental, or pest hazard. Remaining woody material will be placed so that it does not interfere with the intended purpose or other management activities.



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- Do not burn vegetative residues except where fire hazard or threats from diseases and insects are of concern or when other management objectives are best achieved through burning. When slash and other debris will be burned onsite use CPS Prescribed Burning (338).
- The enhancement will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and with States' Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality.
- If management of the remaining forest area (between patch openings) provides a conservation benefit, management can be accomplished at the same time as patch opening creation. Use applicable criteria from CPS Forest Stand Improvement (666) when managing the general forest area.

Documentation Requirements

- Plans and specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, implementation requirements, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.
- Specific stand-stocking guidelines, including evaluation of acceptable growing stock, will document both the pre- and post-treatment stand condition.
- Identify the desired species to be regenerated, and include documentation that these species are present and vigorous enough to produce seeds, shoots, sprouts, or other means of natural regeneration.
- Include a map showing the location of patches.
- **Additional documentation as required by NRCS State Office.**