



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E666137Z3

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Increase diversity in pine plantation monocultures

Conservation Practice 666: Forest Stand Improvement

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Forest; Associated Ag Land; Farmstead

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Fish & Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat

PRACTICE LIFE SPAN: 10 Years

Enhancement Description

Create small openings to provide diversity in pine plantations, which are typically monocultures and inhospitable to wildlife. Small openings are one-half (0.5) to three (3) acres in size. The cleared area will have the vegetation removed through cutting, mulching, or other means compatible with the site.

Criteria

- States will apply general criteria from the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Forest Stand Improvement 666 as listed below, **and additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.**
- Apply to sites which have a closed canopy and few native herbaceous or shrub plants in the understory.
- Select sites with ≥ 50 square feet of basal area per acre.
- Selected sites must contain pine species included on the NRCS state list of pine species on that have the ability to regenerate from seed.
- Create openings to have varying sizes. The size of openings shall be between one-half (0.5) to three (3) acres, be distributed throughout the forest and total 10-30% of the forested acres. If possible, locate openings so that lower-quality trees will be removed. Vary shapes of openings to correspond with land features (e.g., a wetter area within the



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plantation with poorer-quality trees), or to utilize sunlight effectively to encourage regeneration within the opening.

- Minimize damage to residual trees when the openings are being created and prepared.
- Slash and cull trees must be mitigated to allow for natural regeneration to occur. This can be accomplished by applying the following treatments singly or in combination:
 - Windrowing
 - Wildlife piles
 - Removal for firewood or other non-commercial purposes
 - Biochar creation
- Retain any desirable tree species that provide diversity in the plantation, that are not of the planted pine species.
- Time tree felling to avoid buildup of insect or disease populations. 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.
- 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.
- The enhancement will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and with States' Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality.

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.

- Document pre- and post-treatment stand condition. Include maps showing locations of openings within the stand, and rationale for their placement and configuration.
- **Additional documentation as required by NRCS State Office.**

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