



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E612133X3

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Sugarbush management

Conservation Practice 612: TREE/SHRUB ESTABLISHMENT

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Range, Forest, Associated Ag Land

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Degraded Plant Condition

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 15 years

Enhancement Description

Establish or maintain species diversity in a sugarbush to enhance pollinator and wildlife needs. Maintain at least 20% of basal area in species other than sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) to provide species diversity. Half of the trees that are not sugar maples (10%) will be mast producing species (hard or soft mass). Use maple tree tapping guidelines that minimize tree damage.

Criteria

- States will apply general criteria from the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Establishment (Code 612) as listed below, and additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.
- Maintain the sugarbush in a fully stocked condition based on an appropriate stocking guide.
- Tap trees sustainably, minimizing impact to the trees and the forest, using appropriate equipment and methods for the geographic area.
- Diversify the stand by maintaining or planting 20% of basal area in species other than sugar maple.
- Half of the trees that are not sugar maples (10%) will be mast-producing species that help sustain wildlife populations.



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- When the existing sugarbush does not have 20% of basal area in species that are not sugar maple, tree species to plant will be selected based on their adaptation to the climatic region, soil properties and capabilities, and light requirements for establishment in the sugarbush. A precondition for any tree/shrub establishment is appropriately prepared sites. Use criteria in NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (Code 490). If some sugar maples must be removed to achieve correct stocking levels and/or allow space for planting new trees, use criteria in NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Forest Stand Improvement (Code 666) to identify characteristics of trees to remove.
- No plants on the Federal or state noxious weeds list shall be planted.
- Planting or seeding rates will be adequate to accomplish the planned purpose for the site.
- Planting dates, and care in handling and planting of the seed, cuttings or seedlings will ensure that planted materials have an acceptable rate of survival for the intended purpose.
- Only viable, high-quality and adapted planting stock or seed will be used.
- Selection of planting technique and timing will be appropriate for the site and soil conditions.
- Refer to criteria in NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Integrated Pest Management (Code 595) to assist with site-specific strategies for pest prevention, pest avoidance, pest monitoring, and pest suppression.
- Each site will be evaluated to determine if mulching, supplemental water or other treatments (e.g., tree protection devices, shade cards, weed mats) will be needed to assure adequate survival and growth.



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Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- Prior to implementation, prepare the planned acres for tree or shrub establishment. Refer to NRCS CPS Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (Code 490). (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)
- Prior to implementation, if existing sugarbush does not have 20% of basal area in species that are not sugar maple, select tree species to plant based on adaptation to climatic region, soil properties and capabilities, and light requirements for establishment. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)
- Prior to implementation, if needed, remove the necessary number of sugar maple to achieve the correct stocking level and/or allow space for new tree planting. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)
- Prior to implementation, select planting technique, arrangement and spacing design, and timing appropriate for the site and soil conditions. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)
- During implementation, notify NRCS of any planned changes to verify they meets the enhancement criteria.
- During implementation, protect the planting from plant and animal pests and fire.
- During implementation, evaluate the site to determine if mulching, supplemental water, or other treatments will be needed to assure adequate survival and growth.

NRCS will:

- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (CPS 490) as it relates to implementing this enhancement.
- Prior to implementation, verify the enhancement is planned for acres that have been appropriately prepared for tree/shrub establishment.
- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Integrated Pest Management (Code 595) as it relates to implementing this enhancement.
- Prior to implementation, verify no plants on the Federal or state noxious weeds list are included in the planned combination.
- As needed, prior to implementation, NRCS will provide technical assistance in:



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- Planning site preparation meeting NRCS CPS Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (Code 490).
- Selecting a combination of tree and shrub species selected for their extensive, spreading root systems, rapid establishment, and tolerance for pollutants, nutrients, or contaminants contained in runoff or soils at the site.
- Selecting planting techniques, arrangement and spacing design, and timing appropriate for the site and soil conditions.
- The use of additional erosion control as needed for the site.
- Preparing specifications for applying this enhancement for each site using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.
- During implementation, evaluate any planned changes to verify they meet the enhancement criteria.
- After implementation, verify the planned trees and shrub species have been established to specifications developed for the site.
- After implementation, verify the planting is protected from pests and fire.
- After implementation, verify site conditions will support adequate survival and growth of planted trees.

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