



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E314134Z

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Brush management that maintains or enhances wildlife or fish habitat

Conservation Practice 314: Brush Management

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture, Range, and Forest

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Degraded Plant Condition

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 10 years

Enhancement Description

Brush management is employed to create a desired plant community on the landscape, 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 species of concern and landscape specific brush habitat functionality in the objectives of the brush management enhancement.

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- 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).
- Evaluate wildlife habitat with the state NRCS WHEG and manage for a value of 0.75 or greater. State approved WHEG's are located in Biology Tech Note No. 40.
- Brush management will be designed to achieve the desired plant community based on species composition, structure, density, and canopy (or foliar) cover or height. On rangeland/forestland or other natural areas use Ecological Site Descriptions (ESDs) or Range Sites to develop planned desired conditions. Treatments must be congruent with dynamics of the ecological site(s) or range sites and keyed to the plant community phases that have the potential and capability to support the desired plant community. If an ESD or range site is not available, provide best available documentation on best approximation of the desired plant community composition, structure and function. Colorado Brush Management Standard, Specification and other supporting documentation will be referenced for design specifications of brush management.
- Conduct treatments during periods of the year that accommodate reproduction and other life-cycle requirements of target wildlife and pollinator species.
- Prior to implementation, obtain an appropriate management plan based on the land use where this enhancement is being planned. The plan will be based on NRCS Conservation Practice Standards Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) or Forest Stand Improvement (Code 666). The management strategy must complement NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Brush Management (Code 314). If treatment area is grazed with livestock, a prescribed grazing plan is required; this plan will be designed to consider plant re-establishment, wildlife habitat objectives and desired plant community objectives. Reference Colorado Prescribed Grazing standard, specification and other supporting documentation.

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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. Provide CO314 Brush management Implementation Requirements or equivalent documentation.
- 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. 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:

- 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. Only use limitation factors that correlate to factors that address wildlife or fish habitat (plant composition, structure, heights) and can demonstrate change based on the conservation practices implemented (primarily brush management, prescribed grazing, forage health plan).

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

- Prior to implementation, NRCS will make cover or density measurements at georeferenced transects on key areas.

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- Prior to implementation review the brush management plan to make sure the methodology and design will meet the needs of the objectives, as well as making sure special considerations (soil erosion, seasonal issues, etc.) are accounted and planned for. When chemical treatment of brush is planned, NRCS will complete a WinPST run.
- Prior to implementation review the grazing management plan to make sure that the plan is consistent with the objectives, and special considerations.
- 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.
- 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

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