Voluntary Management- Inner Seedling Planting

PURPOSE

Management Activities in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) ensure plant diversity and wildlife benefits are enhanced throughout the contract period while maintaining soil and water resources. From the 2018 Farm Bill, USDA with input from other federal, state, and local partners, identified practices that require management activities and those that are voluntary. In Indiana, management activities for tree practices were approved as voluntary and are not required. This document describes inner tree/shrub seedling planting within re-enrolled tree plantation as a voluntary Management Activity.

The intent of inner planting new trees or shrubs is to increase plant diversity and improve wildlife habitat in existing CRP tree plantings. Over time, some planted tree species may decline or die within the plantation. Many possible changes could cause some tree species to decline in health or favor one species over another, such as the emerald ash borer impacts on ash (Fraxinus spp.). Some mortality may be due to changes in site condition by increasing wetness or dryness once crop fields are converted over to trees. Other changes may be due to changes in landowner interests or current environmental issues; such as pollinator and monarch initiatives.

Multiple benefits from inner seedling planting of trees/shrubs can include: increase plant diversity, increase early and late successional wildlife habitat, supplement existing amount of tree/shrubs per acre, and to meet changing landowner and/or program objectives.

FREQUENCY

This practice is only offered for existing/re-enrolled tree plantings in Indiana. Inner planting within new plantings (due to mortality) is considered a maintenance practice and not a management practice. Inner seedling planting can begin as soon as technically feasible. Management Activities must be completed by the end of year 6 of a 10-year contract and by the end of year 9 of a 15-year contract.

PLANNING

Inner seedling planting will follow the Tree/Shrub Establishment (612) Standard in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG).

Follow the Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) Standard (FOTG website) for tree species selection and planting densities depending on the target wildlife species.
Potential woodland habitat types may include:

- General Wildlife
- Early Successional
- Edge Feathering
- Closed Canopy
- Savanna

**SPECIFICATIONS**

The following are specifications for inner planting seedlings in CRP tree planting in Indiana:

- An assessment of existing stand condition must be done by a resource professional before implementing this practice. (See Specifications Sheet).
- A site-specific planting plan or Inner Seedling Planting Specifications Sheet is required.
- Trees and/or shrubs are allowed to be planted where feasible, i.e. along edges, within gaps and small openings.
- Existing native trees or shrubs will not be removed to inner plant new seedlings.
- Conifers may be planted, if they do not exceed 50% of the total number of trees/shrubs planted.

**GENERAL CRITERIA**

Planting densities will follow recommendations for target wildlife species found in the Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) Standard.

Controlling weeds before, during, and after planting will increase tree survival and improve tree growth and vigor. Site preparation before planting is necessary to control existing grass or weedy vegetation. Contact a professional forester, Purdue University Extension Service or a licensed pesticide applicator for specific herbicide recommendations. Always apply herbicides according to labeled directions.

Control all weeds within a three (3) foot circle around each tree or a two (2) foot band along each side of each row. Control weeds in the spring before or during tree planting. On sites with existing sod, apply herbicides both in the fall and again in the spring prior to or during tree planting.

Inner seeding will not be performed from April 1 through August 1 to protect the primary nesting period for grassland bird species. It is also recommended, but is not required, to delay inner seeding until after August 15 to reduce the chance of harming fledgling birds and other young wildlife.

**OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE:**

- Trees and shrubs will be inspected periodically and protected from adverse impacts including insects, diseases or competing vegetation, fire and damage from livestock or wildlife.
- Eliminate or control locally invasive and noxious plants to a level where they do not compete with trees.
- Follow all pesticide labels as applicable.
- Access by vehicles or equipment during or after site preparation and spraying will be controlled to minimize erosion, compaction and other site impacts.
### IN- CRP Management-Inner Seedling Planting

#### INNER SEEDLING PLANTING - SPECIFICATIONS SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landowner:</th>
<th>County:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm:</th>
<th>Tract:</th>
<th>Field(s):</th>
<th>Acres:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONCURRENCE OF IDNR DISTRICT FORESTER (IF required):**

*Required on CP3, CP3A, and CP31, or as requested by FSA or NRCS

### ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING STAND CONDITION

If planting in gaps, a resource professional such as IDNR District Forester, NRCS, TSP, Consulting Forest, or a Purdue Extension Forester will assess the reason for the tree/shrub death or decline. These professionals will determine if trees/shrubs are able to be re-planted in the same area, and/or recommend different species to plant based on site conditions and objectives.

**Findings:**

### SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Soil Type(s):**
- **Soil Drainage Class:**
- **Habitat Type**¹:
- **Species Benefited**¹:
- **Plant Spacing**¹: \( x \)
- **Plants/Acre**¹:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Species (or Substitute)</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total (rounded to the next highest 100)**

**Total (rounded to the next highest 100)**

¹ **Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) Standard; Table 3–Tree Planting Densities**

### Before Planting in Year

**Predominant Weed Cover to Control:**

- [ ] Mowing (in the fall prior to planting) **Dates:**
- [ ] Herbicide₁ (applied per label): **Dates:**
- [ ] Herbicide₂ (applied per label): **Dates:**
- [ ] Other: **Dates:**

### Planting Method in Year

- [ ] Tree Planting Method: **Dates:**
- [ ] Herbicide (applied per label): **Dates:**
- [ ] Other: **Dates:**

### Post Planting Maintenance and Weed Control

- [ ] Maintain a 3-ft. weed & grass-free radius for up to years around each tree for optimal growth **Dates:**
- [ ] Herbicide (applied per label): **Dates:**
- [ ] Replace dead trees to ensure 70% stocking rate: **Dates:**
- [ ] Other: **Dates:**

### Additional Information

---

Page 3 of 4  
Helping People Help the Land.  
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.  
July 2020
SITE/SKETCH MAP
(On re-enrolled tree plantings, map area to be seeded. Include environmentally sensitive areas to be avoided.)