



**Tennessee Job Sheet
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
Forest Management Activities
Conservation Practices No. 666 and 645**

**FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
IN THE CONSERVATION RESERVE
PROGRAM (CRP)**



Photo courtesy David Stephens; Bugwood Network, USFS, UGA

General Provisions

Forest Management Activities are eligible on any CRP practice with acreage established to trees (CP3, CP3A, CP4B, CP4D, CP11, CP22, CP23, CP23A, CP27, CP31, CP38C). The most likely practice needing management will be CRP practice CP11 (Vegetative Cover-Trees-Already Established).

A total of three management activities are allowed, subject to approval by the Farm Service Agency County Committee, and with an approved scheduling and revision of the CRP conservation plan and contract (CRP-1):

- Thinning
- Pruning
- Timber Stand Improvement

Thinning and timber stand improvement are restricted to pine plantings at least 7 years old or hardwood stands at least 10 years old. Pruning is restricted to tree 'health' pruning. Pruning is allowed on any age and stand of species that experienced damage, or young hardwood stands containing disease prone tree species, i.e. fruit/mast production species that would benefit from pruning.

Forest management practices are allowed to enhance the cover (i.e. silvicultural benefit) but must also provide plant community diversity and enhance the

value of the established cover for wildlife. These management activities are not eligible for the sole purpose of improving timber quality for timber production.

Forest management activities may be scheduled at any time of the year (including during the primary nesting season) as provided in the conservation plan.

Annual rental payments are retained by the program participant in those years thinning is conducted.

SPECIFICATIONS

THINNING

Two types of tree thinning are allowed:

1. Pre-commercial thinning (with cost share)
2. Commercial thinning (without cost share)

Pre-commercial thinning is the deadening of overstocked competing trees by girdling, hack and squirt method, or tree injection, allowing those trees to remain standing, or cutting (shearing or felling) and either leaving the intact tree on the forest floor for wildlife habitat or grinding/chipping and spreading the material.

Commercial thinning is the cutting and removing of competing trees from the stand, and because the trees are large enough to have commercial value the trees are allowed to be sold to a mill for processing.

The number of trees remaining after thinning (residual stand) will be based upon the participant's objective, within the following limits to protect wildlife habitat values:

- A. Average number of trees per acre not less than 30% of the original tree stocking; **OR**
- B. The residual stand after thinning shall have an average stand basal area of 40-70 square feet per acre; **BUT**
- C. The residual stand shall never be less than a stand basal area of 40.

BASAL AREA EXAMPLE: The basal area of a 13.5 inch diameter tree (breast height) is approximately 1.0 square foot. A residual stand basal area of 40

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with tree sizes averaging 13.5 inches would consist of approximately 40 trees per acre after thinning.

From a silvicultural perspective (i.e. to protect from insect and disease damages) the residual stand basal area after thinning should not be less than the soil site index (NRCS published soil survey data) minus 25, unless a TDF, NRCS, or consulting (technical service provider) forester approves a more intensive thinning.

For commercial thinning all log landings must be located outside of the CRP contract acreage.

PRUNING

Pruning to improve health from damage will be limited to only those areas exposed to the following conditions:

- Herbicide injury from drift
- Ice damage
- Dieback from drought or extreme cold
- Flooding (abnormal)
- Wind damage

Pruning to prevent disease problems and/or improve fruit/mast production of young hardwoods is limited to areas of the stand containing high fruit or mast producing hardwood species or disease prone hardwood species, such as walnut, pecan, crabapple, dogwood, sawtooth oak, and red oak species.

Pruning primarily of lower branches (crown raising) of young hardwoods to prevent disease or improve mast/fruit production is restricted to the following conditions:

1. Never prune more than 33% of the height of the tree, or 25% of live crown height.
2. Prune live limbs only in the dormant season.
3. Cut live limbs at the branch collar. If no obvious branch collar, cut ¼ inch from the main stem.
4. Limit most pruning to < 2 inch diameter limbs.
5. Never prune limbs larger than 4 inches.
6. Prune dead limbs at any time of the year.
7. Do not prune healthy limbs near diseased trees.
8. Do not apply 'wound dressing' after pruning.
9. After pruning diseased limbs, sanitize equipment before pruning healthy limbs.
10. Remove basal and epicormic (sub-par stem buds on lower limbs or trunk) sprouts.

Pruning (crown raising) of undamaged softwoods such as pines is not allowed. Softwoods, as well as

many hardwood species, will self prune lower limbs in time, so the treatment is not cost effective.

TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT

Timber stand improvement shall consist of the removal of low quality, deformed, severely stressed, or otherwise cull trees from the stand according to the 'single tree selection' method of harvest.

The following conditions must be met to apply this forest management activity:

1. Individual trees of ALL sizes must be included in the harvest. No high grading or diameter limit cutting is allowed.
2. Cut or deadened trees shall be evenly distributed throughout the stand to create "single tree canopy gaps".
3. Trees to be removed from the stand shall be treated in the same manner as described for "pre-commercial thinning" (e.g. deadened and left standing, felled and left, felled and grinded).
4. At least five otherwise cull trees per acre considered to be a valuable wildlife tree shall be retained (e.g. oaks, beech, shagbark hickory, sugar maple, etc.).
5. Residual basal area shall be at least 70% of the pre-harvest basal area.

Operation and Maintenance

All harvesting/cutting management activities shall be in strict accordance with the *Guide to Forestry Best Management Practices in Tennessee* (<http://www.tennessee.gov/agriculture/forestry/bmps/html>.)

SLASH MANAGEMENT

In all thinning or timber stand improvement activities, residual wood material shall NOT be dozed into piles, stacked, or windrowed within the CRP acreage. All wood refuse must be evenly spread within or removed from the CRP acreage using one or more of the following techniques:

1. Scattering
2. Mulching
3. Chipping
4. Prescribed Burning (note: burning quality hardwoods will lower commercial value)

USDA cost share program participants must comply with contract requirements. This job sheet may not meet contract requirements. Other job sheets are available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. For additional information, contact your local USDA Service Center, Natural Resources Conservation Service office or your local County Soil Conservation District office.

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CRP FOREST MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTION

PLANNED ACTIVITY	FIELD NO. (S)	ACRES	PLANNED APPLICATION DATE	INITIAL STAND STOCKING RATE (TREES/AC)	RESIDUAL STAND STOCKING RATE (TREES/AC)	PRE-HARVEST BASAL AREA (SQ. FT./AC)	RESIDUAL STAND BASAL AREA (SQ. FT./AC)
PRE-COMMERCIAL THINNING							
COMMERCIAL THINNING							
TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT							
PRUNING							

If the above table is used as a planning tool for developing or modifying the CRP contract, in addition to filling in the appropriate columns enter the following client information in the blanks below.

LANDOWNER (PRODUCER) _____
(Signature)

Date _____

CRP CONTRACT NO. _____

TRACT NO. _____

COUNTY _____

NRCS DISTRICT _____
CONSERVATIONIST (Signature)

Date _____

COC Approval _____
(Signature)

Date _____