

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT OF RARE OR DECLINING  
HABITATS**

(Ac.)

**CODE 643**

**DEFINITION**

Restoring and managing rare and declining habitats and their associated wildlife species to conserve biodiversity.

biological or chemical methods or a combination of all four.

To restore desired habitats, invasive species and noxious weeds shall be controlled. When possible, control will be done on a “spot” basis to protect native forbs and legumes that benefit native pollinators and other wildlife.

**PURPOSE**

- Restore land or aquatic habitats degraded by human activity
- Provide habitat for rare and declining wildlife species by restoring and conserving native plant communities
- Increase native plant community diversity
- Management of unique or declining native habitats

Undisturbed areas shall be conserved and protected on a sufficient extent of the area to sustain disturbance-intolerant species.

Management practices and activities are not to disturb cover during the primary nesting period (April 1 – August 31) exceptions could be granted for periodic burning or mowing when necessary to maintain the health of the plant community. Mowing may be needed during the establishment period to control weeds.

Note” NRCS uses the term “wildlife” to include all animals, terrestrial and aquatic.

Species and seeding rate specifications will be prepared to achieve desired habitat condition.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

Sites that previously or currently support the rare or declining habitat targeted for restoration or management.

Only certified, high quality and ecologically adapted plant materials will be used. When feasible, only local ecotypes will be used.

Site preparation, planting dates and methods, and plant material care and handling shall optimize vegetation survival and growth.

**CRITERIA**

Methods used will be designed to protect the soil resource from erosion and compaction.

A pretreatment assessment of the targeted habitat will be documented to provide a baseline for comparison with post-treatment habitat assessment.

Vegetative manipulations to restore plant and/or animal diversity can be accomplished by prescribed burning, or mechanical,

Use of fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals shall not compromise the intended purpose of this practice.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service [State Office](#) or visit the [electronic Field Office Technical Guide](#).

**NRCS, GA**

**January 2008**

## CONSIDERATIONS

All necessary local, state, and federal permits shall be obtained by the landowner (or designee) prior to the restoration.

Consult the GA DNR document "Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy" Section IV for a complete list of rare and declining habitats in Georgia. The documents can be located at:

<http://www.gadnr.org/cwcs/Documents/strategy.html>

Also in this document is a list of rare and protected species in Georgia.

Confer with other agencies and organizations to develop guidelines and specifications for conserving declining habitats.

Haying, grazing and other management activities will be planned and managed (including exclusion) as necessary to achieve and maintain the intended purpose.

Vegetative manipulations to restore plant and/or animal diversity can be accomplished by prescribed burning or mechanical, biological or chemical methods, or a combination of the four.

## PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for this practice shall be prepared for each habitat type. Specifications shall be recorded using approved specifications sheets and job sheets. Narrative statements in the conservation plan or other acceptable documentation may provide supplemental information to the specifications and job sheets.

## OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Habitat conditions should be evaluated on a regular basis to adapt the conservation plan and schedule maintenance to ensure the desired habitat condition.

Management and maintenance activities should be rotated to mimic natural disturbance regimes.

## REFERENCES

M. G. Barbour and W. D. Billings (eds.). 2000. *North American Terrestrial Vegetation*. Cambridge University Press, New York, Second Edition, 695 pages

Kuchler, A.W. 1964 *Potential Natural Vegetation of the Conterminous United States*. American Geography Society, Special Publication 36. 116 pages + map Second edition (revised), 1975.

Noss, R.F., E.T. LaRoe III, and J.M. Scott. 1995. *Endangered ecosystems of the United States: a preliminary assessment of loss and degradation*. Biological Report 28; National Biological Service, Washington, D.C.