

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
NEW JERSEY  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**FOREST TRAILS AND LANDINGS**

(Ft.)

**CODE 655**

**DEFINITION**

A temporary or infrequently used route, path or cleared area within a forest.

**PURPOSE**

- Provide infrequent access to forest stands for management activities including fire suppression.
- Provide periodic access for harvesting, removal and collection of forest products.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

Trails and landings are applicable on forested areas. Refer to the standard Access Roads (560) for travel-ways that will be designed and used frequently or repeatedly for vehicular traffic. For recreational trails refer to the standard Recreation Trail and Walkway (568),

**CRITERIA**

**Streamside Management Zones (SMZ) criteria as defined by the NJ Bureau of Forest Management (1995) shall be observed at all times.** Trails and landings shall be located outside of the SMZ.

**General Criteria Applicable To All Purposes**

Trails and landings will be of a size, gradient, number and location to accomplish the intended purpose. Slopes over 35% shall not have trails. Landings shall be located on slopes between 2-6%.

Trails shall be located to minimize adverse onsite and off-site impacts such as accelerated erosion, riparian area degradation, stream channel and streambank damage, hydrology modification, aesthetics or unacceptable damage to advance regeneration, residual growing stock or wildlife habitat. Threatened and endangered species shall not be adversely impacted by trails or landings.

Landings shall be placed in areas with adequate drainage on soils suitable for log staging and equipment activity.

Trails and landings shall be cleared no more than to a size necessary to accomplish the management objective.

Timing and use of equipment will be compatible with site and soil conditions to maintain site productivity and minimize soil erosion, displacement and compaction.

Slash, debris and vegetative material left on the site after use will not present an unacceptable fire or pest hazard or interfere with the intended purpose.

Drainage and erosion control measures for trails shall be located to minimize water flows and keep erosion rates to acceptable levels. Water breaks, water bars, open top culverts, broad based dips or other US Forest Service recommended measures shall be implemented on long sloping trails to prevent erosion.

Trails and landings shall be revegetated to control erosion as needed. Refer to the standard Critical Area Planting (342). Locally invasive and noxious plants will not be used for revegetation.

Measures will be used to control or protect against locally invasive species. If pesticides are used, refer to the standard Pest Management (595).

Stream crossings shall be avoided wherever possible. If unavoidable, cross at a 90° angle and use criteria in standard Stream Crossing (578).

Landings that have been compacted shall be subsoiled after final use to encourage infiltration, before being seeded.

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

Assure safe ingress and egress to site.

Locate landings and trails to preserve aesthetic qualities.

Establish landing size and locations before cutting trails. Consider log size, loading method, and skidding equipment to be used.

Consider soil health when planning trail layout. Do not clear trails in saturated soil conditions.

Minimize wetland disturbance when planning and installing trails.

Landings and trails may be used for wildlife food and cover plantings.

Reinforce sections of wet soil with slash and log corduroy if practical.

Favor native species for revegetating trails and landings.

Landings and trails may be utilized as firebreaks. Consider fire hazard and access to fire lookout towers or other structures when planning trails.

Consider cultural resources and environmental concerns such as threatened and endangered species of plants and animals, natural areas and wetlands.

### **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Periodic inspections of landings and trails will be conducted and maintained as necessary.

Landings and trails utilized as firebreaks will be properly maintained to accomplish this purpose.

Landings and trails shall be closed where needed for erosion control, safety and liability, and reduced maintenance costs. Refer to the standard Use Exclusion (472).

Landings and trails no longer needed and not used as a firebreak can be retired. They shall be sufficiently revegetated as needed. Use the Critical Area Planting (342) standard.

### **REFERENCES**

A Landowner's Guide to Building Forest Access Roads. USDA Forest Service Radnor, PA. 1998.

Best Management Practices for Forestry. UNH Cooperative Extension, Durham, NH. 2004.

BMPs for Erosion Control for Logging Practices in Ohio. The Ohio State University Extension Service, Columbus, OH 2004.

New Jersey Forestry and Wetlands Best Management Practices Manual. New Jersey Bureau of Forest Management. Trenton, NJ 1995.

[http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/nj\\_bmp\\_manual1995.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/nj_bmp_manual1995.pdf)

Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality. Virginia Department of Forestry, Richmond, VA. 2002.