

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
PRACTICE DOCUMENTATION GUIDE
FUEL BREAK**

383

383 – STEP 1. INITIAL EVALUATIONS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to determine the landowner's desire and need to design and create fuel breaks for management or protection from wildfire purposes in New Mexico. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service, Practice Standard 383).

The landowner must be interviewed to determine the purpose and need for fuel breaks within the forestlands. Some considerations will include the landowners intended placement of the fuel breaks in positions where they will reduce the risk of the spread of crown fire or to control prescribed burns.

383 – STEP 2. INVESTIGATIONS, SURVEYS, AND INVENTORIES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to identify all of the mandatory preliminary operations that are required before the fuel breaks can be sited and planned. This will include identifying all needed utility clearances, archeological clearances, and identifying the proper USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle sheet and other needed maps.

383 – STEP 3. PRACTICE DESIGN

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to plan the fuel breaks, identify the objectives, and develop a record of the completed actions taken.

All required deliverables for the design, installation, and compliance are found on the New Mexico Statement of Work. This document will be followed to successfully complete the project.

The local conditions will need to be assessed at the proposed site in order to identify any possible problems that may arise.

This involves assessing the local forest and topographic conditions and the local land uses, among other things. Erosion control must be implemented. Grasses and forbs must be managed to control fine fuels. Slash should be managed to control pest or minimize fire danger. Tree overstory must be sufficiently thinned to reduce crown fire risk. Vertical separation between fuel layers must be done to eliminate "ladder fuels" which will allow the fire to reach the upper canopies. All appropriate maps and reports must be reviewed with the landowner. An awareness of the types of equipment and materials used in the construction of fuel breaks is essential, and a list of accepted materials must be provided to the landowner. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service Practice Standard 383, Practice Specification 383, and pertinent job sheets).

The landowner will need to provide the contractor with the appropriate standards, statement of work, job sheets and personal expectations.

383 – STEP 4. PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to document and describe the methods and materials used during the construction of the fuel breaks.

This will include the documentation of the equipment and tools used, techniques and methods used at each site, and recording the relevant information from each site on the approved specification sheets, statement of work, job sheets, technical notes and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

Practice Documentation Guide 383-2

383 - STEP 5. OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to assure the proper management and maintenance is completed at the job site.

(See Natural Resources Conservation Service, Practice Standard 383, Practice Specification 383, and appropriate job sheets.

This requires a familiarity with the design and management objectives in order to minimize erosion potential and to maintain the site in a proper and safe fashion while meeting the objectives of the project. These measures should be discussed with the landowner.

383 – STEP 6. COMPLIANCE OR SPOT CHECKING

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this step is to determine that all work has been completed to the standards required by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

All completed NRCS forms should be collected from the landowner and submitted to the appropriate persons. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service Practice Standard 383, Practice Specification 383, Statement of Work (Fuel Break) and associated job sheets).

II. DOCUMENTS

Copies of all completed job sheets and associated work sheets should be submitted to the Natural Resources Conservation Service representative within 10 working days of completion of the project. .