

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE GENERAL SPECIFICATION**

FOREST SLASH TREATMENT

(Ac.)

CODE 384

GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

Procedures, technical details, and other information listed below provide additional guidance for carrying out selected components of the named practice. This material is referenced from the conservation practice standard for the named practice and supplements the requirements and considerations listed therein.

The mechanical components of this practice may adversely impact significant cultural resources and should be submitted to a cultural resource specialist for a determination of impacts before the practice commences.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies on forested areas in a county declared a natural disaster by the Governor of Arkansas. Eligible forested areas will have large quantities of broken trees, uprooted trees, woody slash and debris from catastrophic storm damage requiring treatment to restore forest conditions.

Practice must be completely installed within 3 years of the storm event.

The tract must have enough damage to limit access through the stand, have the risk of catastrophic wildfire, have the risk insect damage, limit access to forage for grazing and browsing animals, create poor aesthetics, and/or limit the site for natural regeneration.

METHODS

The method of slash treatment will be based on; 1) desired purpose(s) and 2) the condition and extent of residual slash. When determining

method and timing of slash treatment, consider air quality regulations, burning requirements, available resources, and ability to use the woody biomass and regeneration needs. The slash treatment must adequately protect land and water resources and comply with the Arkansas BMP recommendations for water quality. http://www.forestry.state.ar.us/bmp/bmp_review.html

Slash treatment methods:

Removal: Slash is removed from the site. This method is suited to areas with higher slash accumulations where other methods may not sufficiently reduce undesired materials in order to utilize the material, or dispose of it safely.

Lopping and scatter: Lopping is the cutting of limbs, branches, treetops, small diameter trees, or other woody plant residue into lengths so that the remaining slash will lie close to the ground. Scattering is the spreading of lopped slash evenly over the ground so that the remaining slash will lie close to the ground. This method is suited to areas with lower slash accumulations and is effective for such accumulations in meeting height requirements, facilitating use of the treated area by humans and animals, improving aesthetics, and distributing material more uniformly and closer to the forest floor for faster decomposition. Safety equipment (e.g., goggles, gloves, chaps, ear plugs) must be worn when using chainsaws or other lopping equipment.

Piling and burning: Piling is placing, laying, heaping or stacking of slash into piles to facilitate intended burning. Burning is igniting piled slash under prescribed conditions to reduce the amount and continuity of fuels.

Burning must be consistent with the Prescribed Burn Practice 338.

A written detailed prescribed burn plan **MUST** be developed

PRIOR to the implementation of the burn according to standards specified in GM 190 – Part 413 Subpart B and the Arkansas amendment to national policy. (See Job Sheet JS-338 for the prescribed burn plan worksheets) A copy of the burn plan **MUST** be kept in the client’s conservation plan folder along with the management prescription.

These methods are suited to areas with adequate spacing between residual trees or areas with few or no residual trees. Unburned piles or windrows can serve as nesting and escape cover for wildlife. When machine piling or windrowing, a “brush rake” (blade with tines) will minimize pushing surface soil into slash accumulations. Synthetic materials (e.g., old tires, petroleum products) will not be incorporated in piles. Any burning will be conducted so as to minimize heat damage to residual trees. Windrows should align with the contour as much as possible.

Chipping: This method includes the mechanical conversion of slash to chips and chunks of varying sizes to distribute on site or utilized offsite as landscape mulch. For safety purposes, humans and animals must be excluded from areas being treated by equipment that flails and throws chips and chunks. Operate machinery to minimize bark damage to the residual trees. This chipped material can also be used as woody biomass fuel or pulp for paper products.

Crushing: This method involves the use of heavy ground-based equipment that crushes/grinds slash to a depth not exceeding 2 feet. The closer crushed/grounded material is to the forest floor, the quicker decomposition occurs and the less chance of fire reaching into the above canopy layers.

CONSIDERATIONS

Treat slash so concentrations of 1” size material and larger (10.0-hour fuels) do not exceed 2 feet in height (with exceptions for piling and windrowing of up to 10 feet heights and 20 feet widths).

Position piles and windrows to prevent fire damage to crop trees and desirable vegetation

and minimize erosion. Place piles in open areas as much as possible

Consider wildlife needs when performing treatments. Occasionally, leave a few small scattered piles for wildlife cover.

Pile or remove slash sufficiently to allow access to forage. Trees of undesirable species or with low quality can be incorporated with the slash to allow the increased production of forage. The site can not be converted to non-forest.

Cut hazard trees (trees that are likely to fall or have large limbs that are likely to fall).

Slash that is lopped and scattered, shredded, or crushed will not exceed 24 inches in depth on any part of the treatment area.

Treatments of slash should not cause further damage the desirable residual trees.

Treat slash to prevent spread of fire within 100 feet of public roads and railroads and 200 feet of areas with frequent concentrated public use. Slash treatment will be coordinated with fire break needs as applicable.

Trees of undesirable species or with low quality can be incorporated with the slash to allow the increased production of forage. Enough trees will be left to allow normal forest management activities. The site is **NOT** to be converted to non-forest.