

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**FOREST SITE PREPARATION**

**(Acre)**

**CODE 490**

**DEFINITION**

Treating areas to improve site conditions for establishing a forest.

**PURPOSES**

- Encourage natural regeneration of desirable woody plants.
- Permit artificial establishment of woody plants.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

On all lands where establishment of woody plants is desired.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable To All Purposes**

The method, intensity and timing of site preparation will match the limitations of the site, equipment, and the requirements of the desired woody species.

An appropriate site preparation method will be chosen to protect any desirable vegetation.

Remaining slash and debris shall not create habitat for or harbor harmful levels of pests.

Remaining slash and debris shall not hinder needed equipment operations or create an undue fire hazard.

Erosion and/or runoff will be controlled.

Soil compaction and displacement will be minimized.

All chemicals will be applied in accordance with label guidelines.

Comply with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations during the installation, operation and maintenance of this practice. (Refer to M.G.L. c. 132, §§40-46 Massachusetts' Forest Cutting Practices Act and regulations at 304 CMR 11.00 et. seq (DEM); M.G.L. c. 48, §§16-20, An Act Relative to the Handling of Slash; and 310 CMR 7.07 (1-6) Open Burning regulations).

**CONSIDERATIONS**

The site preparation method should be cost effective and protect cultural resources, wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, water resources, and identified unique areas.

Visual quality objectives should be considered when selecting site preparation methods.

Anticipate possible off-site effects and modify the site preparation design accordingly.

Consider personnel safety during site preparation activities.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Plans will address method of site preparation, species, and protection required for desirable woody plants.

Specifications for applying this practice and protection of the site shall be prepared and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan or other acceptable documentation. (See Forest Site Preparation (490) Specifications Guide.)

The following practices may be used in conjunction with this standard:

- Brush Management (314)
- Critical Area Planting (342)
- Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647)
- Field Borders (386)
- Fish Stream Improvement (395)
- Mulching (484)
- Riparian Forest Buffer (391)
- Tree and Shrub Establishment (612)
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
- Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380)
- Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation (650)
- Wetland Restoration (657)
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Repair erosion control measures as necessary to ensure proper function. Access by vehicles during site preparation or after (i.e., before adequate tree and shrub establishment occurs) should be controlled to minimize erosion, compaction and other site impacts.

### **REFERENCES**

Burns, Russell M. *Silvicultural Systems for the Major Forest Types of the U.S.* (USDA Forest Service Ag. Handbook No 445.)

Division of Forests and Parks, Bureau of Forestry. 1995. Chapter 132 Guidance Document. Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management: Boston, MA.

Kittredge, David B., Jr., and Michael Parker. 1995. *Massachusetts Forestry Best Management Practices Manual*. Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and US Environmental Protection Agency: Boston, MA.

Leek, William B., Dale S. Solomon, and Stanley M. Filip. 1969. *A Silvicultural Guide For Northern Hardwoods In The Northeast*. NE. Forest Exp. Sta., Broomall, PA. (USDA Forest Service Resource Paper NE-143).

Middlesex Conservation District. *Woodland Management Guide For Woodlot Owners in Massachusetts*. Revised 1998. Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire Conservation Districts: Northampton, MA.

USDA-NRCS. *National Forestry Handbook*. 2001. NRCS Forestry and Agroforestry: Washington, D.C.