

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

FOREST SLASH TREATMENT

(Ac.)

CODE 384

DEFINITION

Treating woody plant residues created during forestry, agroforestry, horticultural activities or catastrophic events, to achieve management objectives.

PURPOSE

- Reduce hazardous fuels (*fuel loads that pose an unacceptable risk of wildfire*)
- Reduce the risk of harmful insects and disease
- Protect/maintain air quality by reducing the risk of wildfire
- Enhance aesthetics
- Reduce the risk of harm to humans
- Improve the soil organic matter
- Improve the site for natural or artificial regeneration.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies on areas with quantities of woody slash and debris requiring treatment.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Slash treatment and the condition and extent of residual slash shall be planned and the method selected based on purpose(s).

Slash treatment methods (i.e. burning, chipping, lop and scatter, shredding, removal, crushing) will achieve landowner objectives while adequately protecting land and water resources.

Care shall be taken to minimize injury to or function of the residual plant communities.

Timing of treatment shall coincide with intended purpose(s) and minimize impact on other resources.

Any burning activities shall comply with PRESCRIBED BURNING (338). Burning associated with slash treatment must meet all local and state burning regulations.

Slash and debris left on the site after treatment will not present an unacceptable fire, safety, environmental, or pest hazard. Such remaining material will not interfere with the intended purpose or other management activities.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Reduce Hazardous Fuels

Reduce the amount of fuels to an acceptable level by controlling height, size, amount and distribution.

Additional Criteria to Reduce the Risk of Harmful Insects and Disease

Degree, intensity and timing of treatment shall take full advantage of harmful insect or disease characteristics to enhance the effectiveness of control.

Treat slash in timely manner so that it does not create a harmful insect situation.

Comply with PEST MANAGEMENT (595).

Additional Criteria to Protect/Maintain Air Quality by Reducing the Risk of Wildfire

Activities will be consistent with established regulations and guidelines for PM10 and PM 2.5 emissions, ozone precursors (NOx and VOCs),

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as well as smoke and fugitive dust, and state and local permit requirements.

When feasible, use chipping, shredding, bio-fuel composting, or other techniques in lieu of burning.

Additional Criteria to Enhance Aesthetics

Slash that is scattered or piled and left on the site will be further treated to meet client objectives and any state or local requirements for aesthetics and visual resources.

Additional Criteria to Reduce the Risk of Harm to Humans

Slash that is scattered or piled and left on the site will be further treated to meet client objectives and any state or local requirements for safe use of the area.

Additional Criteria to Improve Soil Organic Matter

Slash will be of a size and closeness to soil to accelerate in decomposition.

Slash treatment shall not adversely affect soil health and quality.

Additional Criteria to Improve the Site for Natural or Artificial Regeneration

Slash will be treated to complement treatments specified in TREE/SHRUB SITE PREPARATION (490).

Care should be taken to minimize injury to existing natural regeneration when treating slash.

CONSIDERATIONS

When determining method and timing of slash treatment consider air quality regulations, burning requirements, available resources, ability to use woody biomass and regeneration needs.

Consider wildlife needs when performing and timing treatment.

Consider the beneficial and other effects on cultural resources, and threatened and endangered species, 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.

Use current NRCS job sheet **JS-MO384** to document treatment methods and practice specifications.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Monitor populations and the potential of damage to site resources by harmful pests and take controlling actions as necessary. Comply with PEST MANAGEMENT (595).

Access by vehicles or people will be controlled during treatment for safety. Comply with USE EXCLUSION (472).