

Woody Cover Control

Prairie/Glade/Savanna/Open Woodland

Job Sheet

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
 Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)
 University of Missouri Extension – The School of Natural Resources

For:	County:
Field(s):	Farm #:
Date:	Tract #:
Designed By:	Contact Information:

WOODY COVER CONTROL ON PRAIRIES, GLADES, SAVANNAS AND OPEN WOODLANDS WILL HELP RESTORE THESE DECLINING COMMUNITIES

PURPOSE:

Prairie, glade, savanna and open woodland communities were once a common site across Missouri. These communities have largely disappeared due to the elimination of fire, invasive species, and conversion to agriculture use. Where fire has been eliminated, invasion of dense shrubs and trees has occurred, most notably cedar in southern Missouri and elm, locust and Osage orange in northern Missouri. This woody vegetation has shaded out the native grasses and forbs that once dominated these areas. Removing this woody vegetation with a process known as “woody cover control” will help restore these declining communities.



SPECIFICATIONS:

- Where practical, only use chainsaws or other hand methods (hatchet, basal spraying, etc...) to remove unwanted woody vegetation. Avoid using heavy machinery (clipper or bulldozers) on these sensitive natural communities.
- Woody vegetation may be cut down or girdled and left standing. Eastern red cedar should be cut down. Treat all stumps and cuts, except cedar and pine, with the appropriate herbicide to prevent re-sprouting.
- Any woody material not marketable or used as firewood should be left to burn. The remaining woody material may be stacked in piles and burned, or left in place and allowed to dry cure before conducting a prescribed burn. Do not place slash piles next to desirable trees or on highly erodible slopes. Do not use heavy equipment to push the cut woody material into piles. Allow the woody material to cure for 6 to 12 months before conducting a controlled burn. Wait 1 or 2 years if the ground is completely covered with cedar slash and other debris. Delaying the first prescribed burn will ensure a more complete burn of the cut material and reduce the amount of volatile fuels and damage to desirable vegetation. Remove any volatile fuels (ex. cured cedar trees) from within 50 feet of a firebreak.

- The remaining canopy trees should consist primarily of characteristic species for the community being restored.
- Leave scattered shrub islands for additional diversity and cover.

MAINTENANCE:

- In general after the initial WCC operation, adequate control of woody component in prairie, glade, savanna and open woodland communities are best managed by the use of prescribed fire.
- Burn frequency and timing of the burns should be based on a recommendation from a resource agency representative
- Additional woody cover control may be necessary during the restoration process as the canopy matures.

Use the following chart as guidance for the natural community being restored:

Habitat	Remaining canopy cover	Characteristic species	Comment
Glade	Less than 30%	Oak and hickory. Occasionally cedar, shortleaf pine, dwarf hackberry and chittimwood.	Thin the heaviest on the glade and less as you move into the surrounding wooded community.
Savanna	10 to 30%	Oak, hickory and persimmon. Shortleaf pine where native.	Thin the heaviest on ridge tops and south and west facing slopes.
Open Woodland	30 to 80%	Oak, hickory and ash. Shortleaf pine where native.	Thin the heaviest on ridge tops and south and west facing slopes.
Prairie	Less than 10%	Oak and shrubs.	Will depend on site conditions. Few trees should remain. Generally, trees and shrubs would have been scattered along streams.

PRIMARY HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Restoration and management of declining habitats.
- Provide natural food and cover for many declining animal species.

Consult with NRCS, MDC, or University Extension for additional recommendations.

Comment:



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