

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 #:	Acres:
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 disturbances such as fire, introduction of invasive species, and conversion to agriculture use. Where fire has been eliminated, invasion of dense shrubs and trees has occurred, most notably red 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” (WCC) and adding prescribed fire will help restore these declining communities.



SPECIFICATIONS:

- Where practical, only use chainsaws or other hand methods (hack and squirt, basal spraying, etc.) to remove targeted unwanted woody vegetation. Refer to Controlling Undesirable Trees and Shrubs Information Sheet IS-MO666cut.
- Bulldozer use is not an acceptable restoration method for prairie, glade, savanna, or open woodland.
- Use of clippers or tree shears is not an acceptable restoration method for glade, savanna, or open woodland sites unless the “Suitability for mechanical site preparation – (surface), Rating class” is designated as “Well suited” (eFOTG Section II – County Soil Information. Forestland Interpretations – Forestland Site Preparation). Exceptions may be granted after site evaluation by area office staff.
- Woody vegetation may be cut down or girdled and left standing. Where possible, cut all stumps at ground level. Treat all stumps and cuts immediately with the appropriate herbicide to prevent re-sprouting. Eastern red cedar stumps do not need a herbicide application when cut below the lowest branch with green growth.
- The remaining canopy trees should consist primarily of characteristic species for the community being restored. Leave scattered shrub islands for additional diversity and cover.

- Any downed woody material not marketable should be left to burn or used as firewood. Allow woody material to cure for 6 to 12 months before conducting a controlled burn. If the ground is completely covered with cedar slash and other debris, wait 1 or 2 years before conducting a controlled burn. 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 (e.g., red cedar trees) from within 50 feet of a firebreak.
- To reduce fuel load, it may be desirable to stack the remaining woody material and burn the piles when there is snow on the ground or shortly after a rain. 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.

MAINTENANCE:

- Prairie, glade, savanna, and open woodland are fire dependent communities and **prescribed burning is required** when restoring and managing these communities.
- Prescribed burns once every 1-3 years during the initial stages of the habitat restoration will be used to maintain control of woody invasion and restore herbaceous vegetation.
- After the community is restored, prescribed burns will be conducted on a 3 to 5 year rotation, preferably sometime between November and February, or as recommended by a resource planning professional. Refer to the Prescribed Burning Information Sheet (IS-MO-338) for information on prescribed fire and the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard RESTORATION and MANAGEMENT of RARE or DECLINING HABITATS (643) for additional management recommendations.
- Additional woody cover control will be necessary during the restoration process as the canopy matures.

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

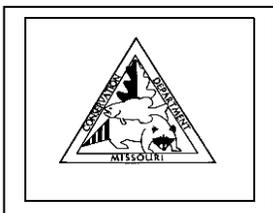
Habitat	Remaining canopy cover	Characteristic species	Comment
Glade	Less than 30%	Oak and hickory. Occasionally cedar, shortleaf pine, dwarf hackberry and woolly buckthorn.	Thin the heaviest on the glade and less as you move into the surrounding wooded community.
Savanna	10 to 30%	Oak, hickory and persimmon. 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%, & No trees greater than 12' tall.	Oak and shrubs.	Thin based on site conditions. Few trees should remain. Historically, trees and shrubs were scattered along prairie streams.

PRIMARY HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS:

- RESTORATION and MANAGEMENT of RARE or DECLINING HABITATS (643).
- 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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