

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
MONTANA CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

## FOREST TRAILS AND LANDINGS (ACRE)

### CODE 655

#### DEFINITION

A temporary or infrequently used route, path or cleared area within a forest.

#### PURPOSE

- Provide infrequent access to forest stands for management activities including fire suppression.
- Provide periodic access for removal and collection of forest products.

#### CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

Trails and landings are applicable on forested areas.

Refer to the **Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section IV** – standard Access Roads – Code 560, for travel-ways that will be designed and used frequently or repeatedly for vehicular traffic.

#### CRITERIA

##### General Criteria Applicable To All Purposes

Trails and landings will be of a size, gradient, number and location to accomplish the intended purpose.

They shall be located to minimize adverse onsite and off-site impacts such as accelerated erosion, riparian area degradation, stream channel and streambank damage, hydrology modification, aesthetics or unacceptable damage to advance regeneration, residual growing stock or wildlife habitat.

Select the proper type of harvesting and yarding machine for the topography involved to minimize the number of harvest roads required.

Lay out harvest trails so that they intersect as infrequently as possible to minimize the risk of water concentrations. Downhill skidding of logs to a landing can result in concentrated flow pattern. Install the proper drainage control features to minimize erosion.

Avoid the location of harvest trails in drainage ways. Where possible, locate landings on horizontally straight or convex slopes. Avoid concave slopes and other areas of concentrated flows.

Timing and use of equipment will be commensurate with site and soil conditions to maintain site productivity and minimize soil erosion, displacement and compaction.

On soils with poor trafficability or susceptibility to compaction, limit season of use to periods when soil is dry or frozen. Temporarily suspend operations when soils become wet or unfrozen.

Slash, debris and vegetative material left on the site after use will not present an unacceptable fire or pest hazard or interfere with the intended purpose.

Drainage and erosion control measures for trails shall be used and located to minimize water flows and erosion rates to acceptable levels.

**Water bar and reseed harvest trails after log skidding is complete.**

Trails and landings shall be revegetated to control erosion as needed. Refer to the **Field Office**

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**Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.**

**NOTE:** This type of font (**AaBbCcDdEe 123..**) indicates NRCS National Standards.  
This type of font (**AaBbCcDdEe 123..**) indicates Montana Supplement.

**Technical Guide (FOTG), Section IV – standard Critical Area Planting – Code 342.**

**Some level of scarification (30-40 percent) may be needed for seedbed preparation when relying on natural or direct seeding.**

Locally invasive and noxious plants will not be used for re-vegetation.

Measures, including the use and treatment of equipment, will be used to control or protect against locally invasive species. If pesticides are used, refer to the **Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section IV –standard Pest Management – Code 595.**

**All activity is done in accordance with the Montana Streamside Management Zone (SMZ) law and Montana’s Best Management Practices (BMP).**

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

Assure safe ingress and egress to site.

**Placement of harvest trails on slopes greater than 50 percent is not recommended.**

Locate landings and trails to preserve aesthetic qualities **and minimize erosion.**

Landings and trails may be used for wildlife food and cover plantings.

Favor native species for revegetating trails and landings.

Landings and trails may be utilized as firebreaks.

Consider cultural resources and environmental concerns such as threatened and endangered species of plants and animals, natural areas and wetlands.

## **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using **maps**, approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes and narrative statements in the

conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

**As a minimum, the Forest Trails and Landings practice will have the following components in its plan and specifications:**

- **A narrative that describes the producer’s goals and objectives. Identify why the practice is needed and feasible.**
- **An environmental assessment of the planned practice that includes the potential impacts on soil, water, animals, plants, air and humans.**
- **An alternatives narrative that identifies and describes several methods that could be used to address the resource issue. Also identifying the producer selected method.**
- **The Montana Forest Trails and Landings practice job sheet and specification.**
- **Plan map and soil map of site with location of practice on the map.**
- **Operations and maintenance instructions.**

**Specifications for re-vegetation of landings and trails should include species, timing and method of application.**

## **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Periodic inspections of landings and trails will be conducted and maintained as necessary.

Landings and trails utilized as firebreaks will be properly maintained to accomplish this purpose.

Landings and trails shall be closed when and where needed for erosion control, safety and liability, and reduced maintenance costs. Refer to the **Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section IV – standard Use Exclusion – Code 472.**

Landings and trails no longer needed, and not used as a firebreak, can be retired. They shall be sufficiently revegetated as needed.