

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**  
**CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**  
**WOODY RESIDUE TREATMENT**

(Ac.)

**CODE 384**

**DEFINITION**

The treatment of residual woody material that is created due to management activities or natural disturbances such as but not limited to ice storms, tornadoes, hurricanes and/or wildfires to reduce the fuel load, improve access and achieve management objectives.

**PURPOSE**

- Reduce hazardous fuels
- Reduce the risk of harmful insects and disease
- Protect/maintain air quality by reducing the risk of wildfire
- To improve access for management purposes
- Improve access to forage for livestock and wildlife
- Enhance aesthetics
- Reduce the risk of harm to humans and livestock
- Improve the soil organic matter
- Improve the site for natural or artificial regeneration.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

On all lands, except active cropland, where woody residue requires treatment.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes**

The condition and extent of residual woody material shall determine the treatment method selected based on the operator's purpose.

Treatment methods (i.e. piling, burning, chipping/masticating, lop and scatter, off-site removal, crushing, etc.) 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.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service <a href="#">State Office</a> or visit the <a href="#">Field Office Technical Guide</a> .
---

Any broadcast burning activities shall comply with the Texas NRCS conservation practice standard, Prescribed Burning – Code 338.

Any residual woody material 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 planned 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**

The degree, intensity and timing of treatment shall consider the characteristics of harmful insects or diseases to enhance the effectiveness of control.

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

Activities will be consistent with established smoke management guidelines especially when burning is used to reduce the woody debris.

**Additional Criteria to Improve Access to Forage for Livestock and Wildlife**

Woody material shall be piled, contour windrowed, or removed sufficiently to allow access by livestock and wildlife, and to maximize forage growth.

**Additional Criteria to Enhance Aesthetics**

Woody material left on the site that is scattered, windrowed or piled may 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 and Livestock**

Woody material left on the site that is scattered, piled or windrowed may 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**

Woody material should be of a size and/or closeness to soil to accelerate decomposition.

**Additional Criteria to Improve the Site for Natural or Artificial Regeneration**

Woody material should be treated to complement treatments specified in Tree/Shrub Site Preparation – Code 490 when planning for natural or artificial regeneration.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

When feasible, consider chipping, shredding, off-site disposal, bio-fuel composting, or other techniques in lieu of burning.

When determining what method and timing of woody residual treatment, consider the amount and type of material to be treated, available resources and contractors, ability to use the woody biomass, regenerating the site, location of the site, and access. If prescribed burning is going to be used to reduce the woody debris consider air quality, burning regulations, fuel load and smoke management guidelines.

Consider wildlife habitat needs (e.g. large downed wood, snags, brush piles, etc.) when planning the timing of and performing treatment.

Consider establishing artificial habitat (e.g. bat boxes, nesting platforms, rock piles, etc.) where needed.

Consider pollinator needs when planning and performing 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.

## **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Monitor the site for harmful pests and take controlling actions as necessary.

Access by vehicles or people should be controlled during treatment for safety.

Monitor vegetation growth. Unwanted vegetation or excessive re-growth may occur, requiring treatment.

Monitor the site for invasive non-native species. These invasive species should be controlled so they do not take over the site.

## **REFERENCES**

Ecological Restoration Institute 2010. Treating Slash. Northern Arizona University. Flagstaff, Arizona. <http://www.eri.nau.edu/en/information-for-practitioners/treating-slash>

Bennett, M. and Fitzgerald, S., 2008. Reducing Hazardous Fuels on Woodland Property: Disposing of Woody Material. Oregon State Extension publication EC-1574-E.

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**

**CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**APPROVAL AND CERTIFICATION**

**Woody Residue  
Treatment  
Code 384  
(acres)**

**PRACTICE SPECIFICATIONS APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**/s/ Rick Williams**  
State Forester

\_\_\_\_\_  
**1/11/2013**  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State Resource Conservationist

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

These practice specifications are needed in Section IV, Conservation Practices of the Field Office Technical Guide under Woody Residue Treatment 384.

**CERTIFICATION:**

Reviewed and determined adequate without need of revision.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**/s/ Mary Webb-Marek**  
(Zone Specialist)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**1/11/2013**  
(Date)