

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
VIRGINIA CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

FOREST TRAILS AND LANDINGS

(Ac.)

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 Virginia Conservation Practice Standard 560 (*Access Roads*), 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.

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

Trails and landings shall be placed outside the streamside management zone to the extent practical.

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.

Trails and landings shall be revegetated to control erosion as needed. Refer to Virginia Conservation Practice Standard 342 (*Critical Area Planting*). Locally invasive and noxious plants will not be used for revegetation.

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 Virginia Conservation Practice Standard 595 (*Pest Management*).

Forest trails and landings construction shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

CONSIDERATIONS

Assure safe ingress and egress to site.

Reduce unwanted travel by gating and locking access.

Follow the contour as much as possible.

A preharvest plan should be developed showing approximate locations of harvest trails, landings, stream crossings, etc.

Forest trails and landings can be installed and stabilized well in advance of planned harvest or management activities.

Avoid stream crossings to the extent possible. If stream crossings are necessary, the trail should be at right angles and will not impede fish passage.

Locate landings as high on slopes as practical and use a fan pattern of skid trails to disperse water runoff.

Locate landings and trails to preserve aesthetic qualities.

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. Refer to Virginia Conservation Practice Standard 394 (*Firebreak*).

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

Periodic inspections of landings and trails will be conducted and maintained as necessary, especially near streams and other sensitive areas.

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

Water erosion will be controlled by use of water bars, vegetative measures (see Plant Establishment Guide for VA) or other forestry Best Management Practices.

Landings and trails shall be closed when and where needed for erosion control, safety and liability, and reduced maintenance costs. Refer to Virginia Conservation Practice Standard 472 (*Use Exclusion*).

Maintain trail drainage system.

Landings and trails no longer needed, and not used as a firebreak, can be retired. They shall be sufficiently revegetated as needed. Remove high maintenance structures such as temporary culverts and bridges.

REFERENCES

Section IV of Virginia NRCS FOTG.

Virginia's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality, fourth edition, July 2002.

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