

Permanent Forest Openings for Wildlife

Job Sheet

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

WHY DEVELOP FOREST OPENINGS FOR WILDLIFE?

PURPOSE: Forest openings are areas within a stand of timber that are left in natural, early successional herbaceous vegetation or occasionally planted in annuals or perennials. These openings serve as a valuable source of food for wildlife especially compensating for seasonal fluctuations in mast production. Creating forest openings also improves habitat for forest edge species.



SPECIFICATIONS:

- Openings should be between one to three acres.
- Woodland sites less than 40 acres will generally not benefit from the creation of openings.
- A number of well-scattered openings are more beneficial than a single large opening of comparable size. **This site should have** _____.
- South facing slopes are preferred.
- Areas should be cleared of all woody vegetation. Trees and trimmings can be used to construct brushpiles.
- Irregular shaped openings are preferred and provide great edge.
- Openings should be at least 30 feet wide.
- Manage for plant diversity.

MAINTENANCE:

- If trees and shrubs comprise 10 percent of the opening, the woody material needs to be controlled to help maintain desired vegetative components.
- Openings should be kept on a disturbance schedule to encourage new growth of desired vegetation. A three-year cycle is good.
- Light disking is a cost-effective method to encourage the desired plant community.
- Consider prescribed burning to help encourage herbaceous plant growth. Burn only under an approved burn plan from NRCS or MDC.

PRIMARY HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provide nesting and brood habitat for quail, turkey and other ground nesting wildlife.
- Provide natural food and cover for rabbits, deer, quail, and turkeys.

Consult with NRCS or MDC wildlife biologists and private land conservationists, or University Extension for additional recommendations.

SITE SPECIFIC COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Multiple horizontal lines for site-specific comments and recommendations.

LANDOWNER _____ Field No. _____ Farm No. _____ Tract No. _____

CONTACT:

Two horizontal lines for contact information.



DATE:

Horizontal line for date.



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