

# 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

<b>For:</b>	<b>County:</b>
<b>Field(s):</b>	<b>Farm #:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tract #:</b>
<b>Designed By:</b>	<b>Contact Information:</b>

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 fire, invasive species, and conversion to agriculture use. Where fire has been eliminated, invasion of dense shrubs and trees has occurred, most notably 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) will help restore these declining communities.



#### SPECIFICATIONS:

- Where practical, only use chainsaws or other hand methods (hatchet, basal spraying, etc...) to remove unwanted woody vegetation. Refer to IS-MO666cut, Controlling Undesirable Trees and Shrubs Information Sheet. Avoid using heavy machinery (clipper or bulldozers) on these sensitive natural communities.
- Woody vegetation may be cut down or girdled and left standing. Eastern red cedar should be cut down. Treat all stumps and cuts with the appropriate herbicide to prevent re-sprouting. Where possible, cut stumps at ground level.
- Any woody material not marketable or used as firewood should be left to burn. 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 (ex. cedar trees) from within 50 feet of a firebreak.
- If conducting a prescribed burn is not possible, the remaining woody material may be stacked in piles and burned. 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.

- The remaining canopy trees should consist primarily of characteristic species for the community being restored.
- Leave scattered shrub islands for additional diversity and cover.

**MAINTENANCE:**

- In general, after the initial WCC operation, adequate control of woody component in prairie, glade, savanna and open woodland communities are best managed by the use of prescribed fire.
- Controlled burns once ever 1-3 years during the initial stages of the habitat restoration may be recommended to maintain control of woody invasion. Burn frequency and timing of the burns should be based on a recommendation from a resource agency representative. Refer to the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 643, Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats, for additional management recommendations.
- Additional woody cover control may be necessary during the restoration process as the canopy matures.

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

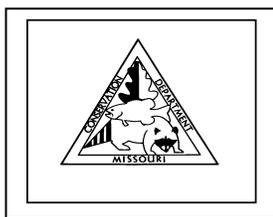
Habitat	Remaining canopy cover	Characteristic species	Comment
Glade	Less than 30%	Oak and hickory. Occasionally cedar, shortleaf pine, dwarf hackberry and woolly buckthorn.	Thin the heaviest on the glade and less as you move into the surrounding wooded community.
Savanna	10 to 30%	Oak, hickory and persimmon. 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'	Oak and shrubs.	Will depend on site conditions. Few trees should remain. Generally, trees and shrubs would have been scattered along streams.

**PRIMARY HABITAT CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Restoration and management of declining habitats.
- 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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