

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
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 the standard Access Roads, 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.

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

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 the standard Critical Area Planting, 342. 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 the Standard Pest Management, 595.

Comply with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations during the installation, operation and maintenance of this practice.

Design of trails and landings shall be in accordance with any existing forest management plan and with any Forest Cutting Plan (Ch. 132) currently in effect for the property.

Refer to:

- Massachusetts' Forest Cutting Practices Act (MGL c. 132, §40-46);
- DCR, Division of Forest and Parks Forest Cutting Practices Regulations (304 CMR 11.00);
- Massachusetts Forestry Best Management Practices Manual;
- Massachusetts' Forest Tax Law, M.G.L. c. 61;
- An Act Relative to the Handling of Slash, M.G.L. c. 48, §§16-20;

- [DEP Wetlands Protection Regulations for forestry activities \(310 CMR 10.00\)](#); and
- [The Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, M.G.L. c. 131A, and State-Listed Rare Plant and Animal Species regulations at 321 CMR 10.00 et. seq.](#)

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

Assure safe ingress and egress to site.

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.

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 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.

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 standard Use Exclusion, 472.

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

## **REFERENCES**

[Hartung, Robert E., and James M. Kress. 1977. Woodlands of the Northeast: Erosion & Sediment Control Guides. USDA-Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service. Broomall, PA.](#)

[Kittredge, David B., Jr., and Michael Parker. 2000. Massachusetts Forestry Best Management Practices Manual. Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and US Environmental Protection Agency: Boston, MA.](#)

[Wenger, K. F. editor. Forestry Handbook. Second Edition. 1984. Society of American Foresters.](#)

[Wiest, Richard L. 1998. A Landowner's Guide to Building Forest Access Roads. Forest service Booklet NA-TP-06-98.](#)