

Early Successional Habitat Development and Management - Light Disking

Massachusetts Conservation Practice Job Sheet MA-647

Client Name:	Farm #:	Tract #:
Field(s):	Total Acres:	
Planned By:	Date:	

Definition

Create or manage early plant succession to benefit desired wildlife or natural communities

Purpose

Dense sod or vegetation is detrimental to wildlife feeding and movement and can be improved by light disking. Light disking enhances habitat quality by releasing sod-bound grasses, reducing residue, creating bare ground, and stimulating growth of annuals which are prolific seed producers (providing seed-eating birds and mammals with abundant food resources). Annual plant communities also support an abundant and diverse insect community, which provides a good protein source for growing nestlings and chicks.



Specifications

Frequency

To maintain annual plant communities, disking should be conducted on a 2-3 year rotation, meaning 1/2 to 1/3 of the field is disked each year in a strip pattern. Strip disking creates a mosaic of plant communities from 1 to 3 years old, depending on the rotation. Do not perform light disking on sites where invasive plant species are present, or prominent in the adjacent landscape, unless invasive species are controlled prior to disking.

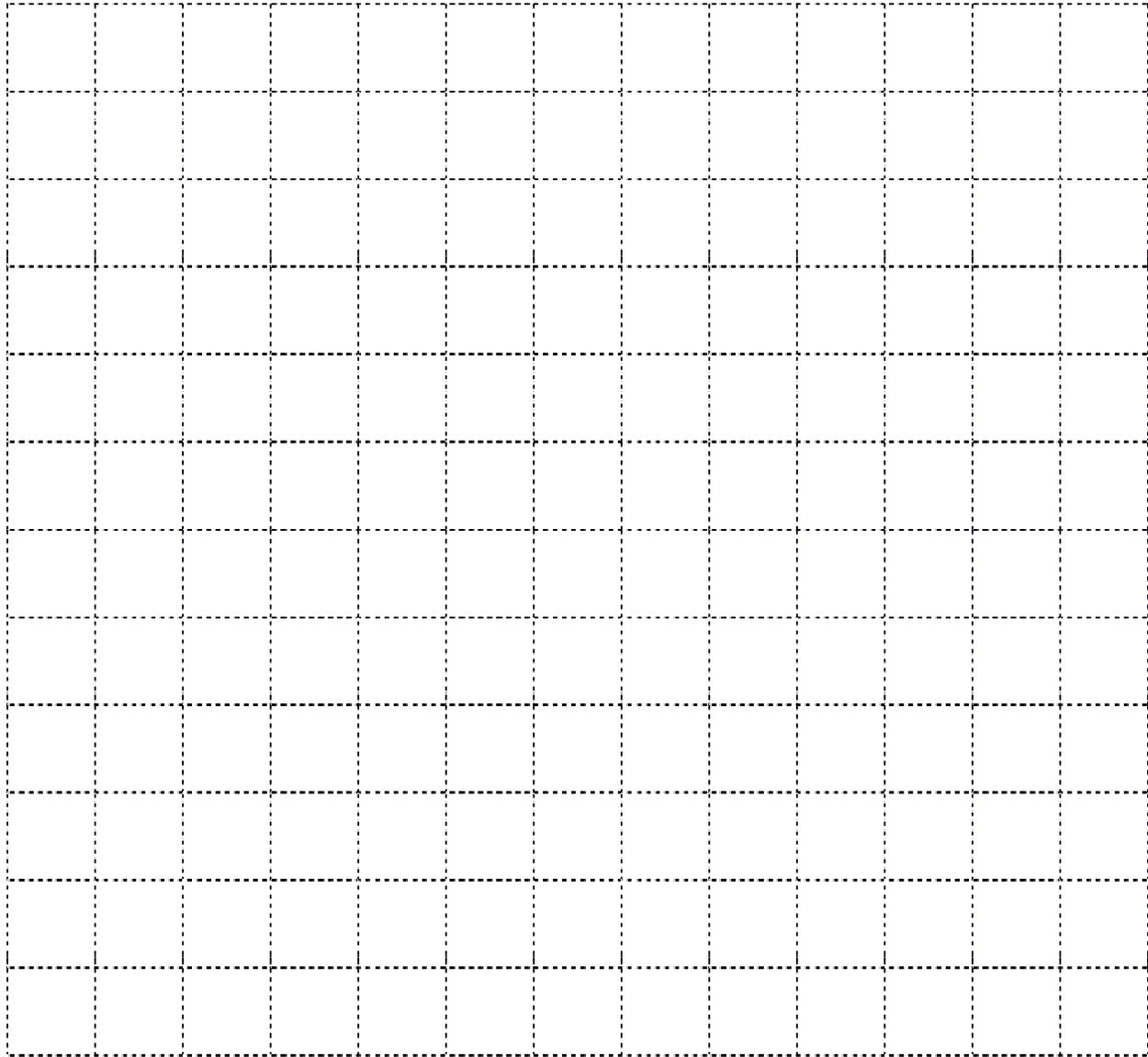
2-year rotation:

Divide the field into strips from 30 to 75 feet wide. In the first year, disk every other strip. Disked strips will be separated from each other by an area of undisturbed vegetation of equal width as the disked strip. In the second year, disk the undisturbed strips from the previous year, leaving the first strips untouched. In the third year, disk the strips that were done in year 1, and leave the strips that were disked in year 2, undisturbed. Continue this rotation treatment.

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Provide a map (may be attached) showing the location of the proposed practice and practice components.

Scale 1"= _____ ft. (NA indicates sketch not to scale: grid size=1/2" by 1/2")

A large grid of dashed lines, intended for drawing a map. The grid consists of 12 columns and 12 rows of squares, with dashed lines forming the boundaries of each square.

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