

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

EARLY SUCCESSIONAL HABITAT DEVELOPMENT/MANAGEMENT

(acre)
CODE 647

DEFINITION

Manage early plant succession to benefit desired wildlife or natural communities.

PURPOSE

- Increase plant community diversity.
- Provide wildlife or aquatic habitat for early successional species.
- Provide habitat for declining species.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On all lands that are suitable for the kinds of wildlife and plant species that are desired.

CRITERIA

- Early successional management will be designed to achieve the desired plant community in density, vertical and horizontal structure, and plant species diversity.
- Methods used will be designed to maintain soil erosion quality criteria.
- Vegetative manipulation to maximize plant and animal diversity can be accomplished by disturbance practices including; prescribed burning, light disking, mowing, grazing, or a combination of the above.
- This practice should be applied periodically to maintain the desired early successional plant community.
- Native adapted plant materials will be used whenever possible, but introduced species may be appropriate depending upon objectives.

- Management practices and activities are not to disturb cover during the primary nesting period for grassland species. Exceptions will be allowed for periodic burning or mowing when necessary to maintain the health of the plant community. Mowing may be needed during the plant establishment period to control weeds.
- Measures must be provided to control severe outbreaks of noxious weeds and other invasive species in order to comply with state noxious weed laws.
- To benefit insect food sources for grassland nesting birds, spraying or other control of noxious weeds will be done on a "spot" basis to protect forbs and legumes that benefit native pollinators and other wildlife.

CONSIDERATIONS

All habitat manipulations will be planned and managed according to soil capabilities and recommendations for management will avoid excessive soil loss.

Early successional treatments should be rotated throughout the managed area.

Treatment shall be accomplished whenever succession has gone past the desired stages.

Managing for early successional plant communities is beneficial if not essential for less mobile animal species. The less mobile the species, the more important to provide all the habitat requirements in a small area.

Design and install the treatment layout to best facilitate operation of all machinery used on the strips or to make easily controlled burning boundaries. Whenever possible, lay out strips to

have some multiple or full width passes by all farm implements.

Grazing may be used as a management tool to achieve the intended purpose of this practice. A grazing plan is required.

This practice may be used to promote the conservation of declining species, including threatened and endangered (plant, wildlife or aquatic) species.

ENDANGERED SPECIES CONSIDERATIONS

Determine if installation of this practice with any others proposed will have any effect on any federal or state listed Rare, Threatened or Endangered species or their habitat. NRCS's objective is to benefit these species and others of concern or at least not have any adverse effect on a listed species. If the Environmental Evaluation indicates the action may adversely affect a listed species or result in adverse modification of habitat of listed species which has been determined to be critical habitat, NRCS will advise the land user of the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and recommend alternative conservation treatments that avoid the adverse effects. Further assistance will be provided only if the landowner selects one of the alternative conservation treatments for installation; or at the request of the landowners, NRCS may initiate consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and/or California Department of Fish and Game. If the Environmental Evaluation indicates the action will not affect a listed species or result in adverse modification of critical habitat, consultation generally will not apply and usually would not be initiated. Document any special considerations for

endangered species in the Practice Requirements Worksheet.

Some species are year-round residents in some streams, such as, freshwater shrimp. Other species, such as steelhead and salmon, utilize streams during various seasons. Be aware that critical periods, such as spawning, eggs in gravels, and rearing of young may preclude activities in the stream that may directly affect the stream habitat during those periods. For example there should be no disturbance of stream gravel beds that may have eggs in them. That could include any equipment in the stream or even walking in the stream or work upstream that may result in sediment depositing in the gravel beds. Document any special considerations for endangered species in the Practice Requirements Worksheet.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for this practice shall be prepared for each site. Specifications shall be recorded using approved specifications sheets, job sheets, narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The following actions shall be carried out to insure that this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life. These actions include normal repetitive activities in the application and use of the practice (operation), and repair and upkeep of the practice (maintenance).

Any use of fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals to assure early successional management shall not compromise the intended purpose.