NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

FOREST TRAILS AND LANDINGS

Conservation Practice Job Sheet *ME-655*

Eroding forest trails reduce site productivity and cause water quality problems

Definition

Forest trails and landings are temporary or infrequently used routes, travel ways, or cleared areas within a forest. They are often steeper than permanent access roads and traffic may be limited or eliminated upon completion of logging or other use.

Purpose

Forest trails and landings are used to:

- Provide infrequent access to forest stands for management activities including fire suppression.
- Provide periodic access for removal and collection of forest products.

Use

Forest trails are used on forested areas where permanent access roads are not needed. They are not appropriate within streamside filter strips or immediately adjacent to water bodies except where needed for crossing. Landings are used for temporary storage of forest products until they are removed from the site.

Wildlife Considerations

Abandoned trails and landings offer an opportunity to provide additional wildlife food plots, bugging areas for birds, and shrubs for food and nesting cover. Areas selected for wildlife plantings include log landings, and gently sloping sections of trails where the soil is suitable for establishing vegetation with normal farming practices.

Criteria

Forest trails and landings usually require structural measures to manage runoff and vegetative treatment to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation. Water flows must be controlled using techniques such as out-sloping, broad-based dips, water bars, and rock plunge pools. Refer to the Stream Crossing Practice Standard and Specifications (578) for installing or repairing water course crossings. Cut and fill slopes and the travel surface must be stabilized with appropriate vegetation or material. Trails that do not concentrate water and have adequate cover usually do not require treatment. New plantings must be protected from traffic with some form of use exclusion.

Water Bars

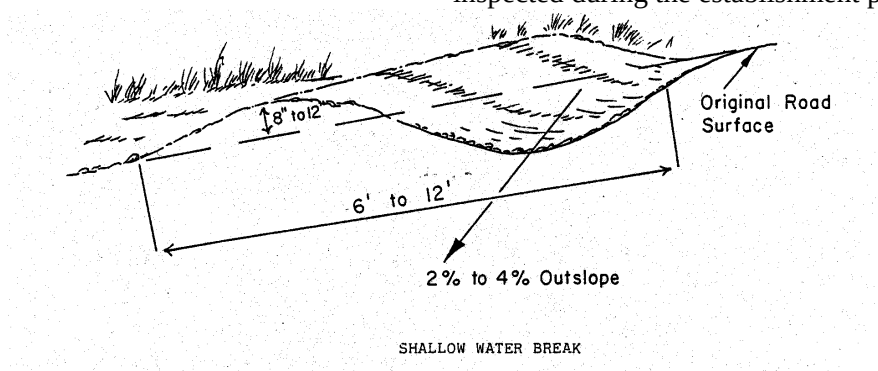
Water bars can be used on trails up to 25 percent grade and should be installed at a down-slope angle of 30 degrees or less depending on the grade of the trail. Steeper trail grades require less down-slope angle. The outlet of the water break should be open to prevent water from accumulating, and be protected by a buffer or filter zone of undisturbed forest floor to clean the sediment out of the water and prevent erosion. When the site does not provide adequate outlet protection, additional practices such as plunge pools will need to be considered. Water bars should be spaced according to the following table as outlet conditions allow.

Percent (%)	Feet
1 - 2	250 – 400
3 - 5	135 - 250
6 - 10	80 - 135
11 -15	60 – 80
16 - 20	45 – 80
21+	<45

Note: The steeper the slope, the closer together the water bars should be.

Operation and Maintenance

Upon completion of logging, temporary measures should be eliminated or replaced with permanent bars, trails properly graded and out-sloped if needed, and the entire disturbed area seeded following the recommendations on the attached specifications sheet. Trails should be inspected during the establishment period to ensure that drainage systems and structures for water control are properly functioning and that vegetation has attained full coverage.



SHALLOW WATER BREAK

Forest Trails and Landings - Job Sheet

Name:	***County:*** ***Town:***
Field(s):	***Farm#:*** ***Tract #:***
Designed By:	***Approved By:*** ***Signature:***
Date:	***Date:***

Purpose	
☐ Forest Management ☐ Logging	☐ Wildlife Habitat ☐ Erosion Control

Layout and Dimensions (Refer to 655 Specification Guide Sheets to complete)		
Water Bars: No: Spacing:		
Stream Crossings (from practice Code 578): No: Type & Size:		
Cross Culverts (> 15" and <24"): No: Type & Size: Spacing:		
Outlet Protection Structures: No: Type & Size:		
Landing/Trail - Cut Slope	Landing/ Trail - Surface	Landing/Trail - Fill Slope
Width (Height): Length:	Width: Length:	Width: Length:
Total Length (ft):	Average Width (ft.):	Total area (ac) or 1000Ft.^{2}
Erosion Control Measures:		
Use Exclusion required: No: ☐ Yes: ☐ Type:		
Additional location and layout requirements:		
If Permit or Review is required, has it been obtained? Y or N _____ Permit No.		

Questions regarding forest trails and landings should be directed to [name of technical specialist], at [phone number].

Plant Materials Information (Refer to ME Standard 342 for appropriate species)

Species	Seed lbs./ac. or lbs./ 1000Ft.^{2}	Lime Lbs./ac. or lbs./ 1000Ft.^{2}	Fertilizer lbs./ac. or lbs./1000Ft.^{2}	Mulch lbs./ac. or lbs./1000Ft.^{2}	Planting Dates
Erosion Control					
Wildlife					

NEPA requirements met, including cultural resource assessment?_____ Permits required?_____Permit No._____ (if Yes)

Site Preparation

Planting Method (s)
Broadcast_____ Drilled_____

Maintenance Requirements – Check as Appropriate
Water Bars Functioning_____ Trails Outsloped_____ Inspect Periodically_____ Trails Properly Graded_____ Vegetation Established_____ Access Limited_____

COMPLETION/CHECKOUT CERTIFICATION

I have job approval authority and certify this practice has been applied and meets design specifications:

NRCS Representative name and title (type or print):		
NRCS Representative Signature:		Date:
As-Built Notes (include date completed by client, treated acres and describe any changes to original design):		

Forest Trails and Landings – Job Sketch

If needed, an aerial view or a side view of the trails and landings, including location of water control structures, a direction arrow and other relevant information and complementary practices may also be included.

Scale 1” = _____ft. (NA indicates sketch not to scale: grid size ½” by ½”)

Additional Specifications and Notes:

All NRCS staff must be notified of the updated text, which must be used in public notification requirements. In accordance with Departmental Regulation 4300-003, *Equal Opportunity Public Notification Policy*, the appropriate nondiscrimination statement must appear on all USDA/NRCS materials produced by USDA, NRCS, or recipients of USDA or NRCS program assistance for public information, public education, or public distribution including, but not limited to program information, district newsletters, agency letterhead, fact sheets, publications, etc.

Forest Trails and Landings – Job Sketch

LANDOWNER/OPERATOR ACKNOWLEDGES:

a. They have received a copy of the specifications and understand the contents including the scope and location of the practice.
b. They have obtained all necessary permits and/or rights in advance of practice application, and will comply with all ordinances and laws pertaining to the application of this practice.
c. No changes will be made in the installation of the job without prior concurrence of the NRCS.
d. Maintenance of the installed work is necessary for proper performance during the life of the practice. The practice life is _____.

I have reviewed all specifications and agree to install as specified:

Landowner/operator name and title (type or print):		
Landowner/operator Signature:		Date: