



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Clearing and Snagging of Storm Debris from Streams

Alabama NRCS Job Sheet No. AL326



Definition

The work consists of clearing and snagging new storm related debris from stream channels and stream banks.

General Information

Clearing and snagging activities will only take place in stream channels and adjacent stream banks damaged by a significant storm event – such as a tornado, hurricane, or wind burst. Storm debris in the adjacent flood plain area that could easily migrate to the stream channel will also be removed.

Methods to remove flow obstructions include, sawing, cabling, winching, lifting, or dragging. No equipment will be permitted within the stream. All equipment will operate from beyond the top of the stream banks. Equipment should also avoid wetlands during the operation.

Do not remove trees from the stream channel that were deposited prior to the storm event and are in an advance stage of decay. Only tree stumps completely uprooted by the storm event are to be removed. Snags are to be cut off at stump level and removed. Stumps from snags will remain in place.

Equipment with excessive oil and/or fluid leaks will not be allowed to be used for the clearing and snagging.

Where the impacted creek or stream serves as the

property boundary or is near an adjoining property line, written permission must be obtained from the adjoining property owner prior to clearing and snagging operations.

Method of Operation

The following guidelines will be used to determine which trees, stumps, and brush to remove. The final determination will be made by NRCS.

- a. All storm event related foreign debris, downed trees (except for intact stumps/root wads), brush, limbs, tops, vines, and other washed-in woody vegetative materials lying completely or partially within the stream banks should be removed. Under no circumstances shall any old (pre-storm event) natural debris be removed.
- b. Undermined or storm damaged trees within or outside the banks which are still standing but likely to fall into the stream should be removed. Root wads attached to the bank should be left in place, with the tree sawn off.
- c. On a case-by-case basis, logs that can be positioned to aid in stream bank stability can remain.
- d. Debris removal at springheads warrant close review/on-site approval by NRCS.

Disposal

Debris may be disposed of by stacking in windrows on land owner's property, burned and buried or hauled to an approved disposal location. Do not place debris in tributaries, side ditches, nor other defined water entrances to the watercourse being cleaned. No debris will be disposed in a wetland or within the 100-year floodplain.

Land owner is responsible for obtaining all permits necessary for burning debris

All foreign debris such as building materials, manufactured items and other non-vegetation will be disposed of according to ADEM requirements.

Operation and Maintenance

The land owner should take reasonable precautions to prevent further damage to the streams and its environment to include streambanks, fishery resources, and undamaged trees.

Reseed and mulch all disturbed areas. Maintain grassed and mulched areas until native vegetation is reestablished to prevent erosion.

References

Alabama NRCS Conservation Practice Standards:

[326 – Clearing and Snagging](#)

[342 – Critical Area Planting](#)

Clearing and Snagging Worksheet

Land User: _____ County: _____ Date: _____

Farm No.: _____ Tract No.: _____ Assisted By: _____

Creek or Stream Name: _____

Length of Stream Reach to be Cleared and Snagged: _____ ft.

Method of Disposal stacked burned buried hauled