United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Fuel Break (383)

A fuel break is strip or block of land on which the vegetation, debris, and detritus have been reduced and/or modified to control or diminish the risk of the spread of fire crossing the strip or block of land.

Practice Information

Fuel breaks are planned and located at strategic locations on the landscape for a land unit having a risk of wildfire. A fuel break is typically an easily accessible strip of land of varying width (depending on fuel and terrain). They break up large, continuous tracts of dense, natural fuels, thus reducing the risk of wildfire.

Fuel breaks need to be treated or grazed to avoid a build up of excess litter, and to control noxious and invasive plants.

Fuel breaks must be inspected periodically and woody materials such as dead limbs or blown-down trees removed or treated to maintain the diminished risk of fire spread.

Common Associated Practices

Fuel Break (383) is commonly associated with the conservation practices such as Firebreak (394), Access Road (560), Forest Trails and

Landings (655), and Forest Slash Treatment (384)

For areas with erosion potential after a fuel break is installed, the following practices may be used: Critical Area Planting (342), Sediment Basin (350), Structure for Water Control (587), and Access Control (472).

Where grazing or wildlife objectives/ concerns exist, Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) and Prescribed Grazing (338) may be applicable.

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.