

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD
UPLAND WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT

(Ac.)

CODE 645

DEFINITION

Provide and manage upland habitats and connectivity within the landscape for wildlife.

PURPOSE

Treating upland wildlife habitat concerns identified during the conservation planning process that enable movement, or provide shelter, cover, food in proper amounts, locations, and times to sustain wild animals that inhabit uplands during a portion of their life cycle.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

Land where the decision maker has identified an objective for conserving a wild animal species, guild, suite or ecosystem.

Land within the range of targeted wildlife species and capable of supporting the desired habitat.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to all Purposes

A habitat evaluation or appraisal, approved by the NRCS state office, shall be used to identify habitat-limiting factors in the planning area.

Application of this practice shall remove or reduce limiting factor(s) in their order of significance, as indicated by results of the habitat evaluation.

Application of this practice alone, or in combination with other supporting and facilitating practices, shall result in a conservation system that will enable the planning area to meet or exceed the minimum quality criteria for wildlife habitat established in Section III of the FOTG.

Establish additional criteria for components of this practice including, but not limited to:

- vegetation establishment for shelter, food and to enable movement;
- structural measures to provide shelter, food or enable movement; and
- manipulation of vegetation to sustain desirable habitat conditions over time.

Plant material specifications shall include only those found in the California Vegetation Guide specific to that MLRA for the site. Exceptions can be made with the concurrence of the District Conservationists and appropriate discipline specialist.

Native plants will be used wherever and whenever available and feasible.

Site preparation, planting dates, and planting methods shall optimize vegetation survival and growth.

Equipment travel, grazing, haying and other disturbance to habitat shall be restricted during critical periods such as nesting, brood rearing, fawning or calving seasons. States may establish exceptions when certain disturbance causing activities are necessary to maintain the health of the plant community and control noxious weeds.

Control of regulated noxious weeds and invasive plants shall be specified.

CONSIDERATIONS

While intending to enhance conditions for the target species, consider there is potential to indirectly have adverse impacts to targeted and non-targeted species. Consider the indirect impacts or effects of the practice on species with declining populations.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service [State Office](#) or visit the [Field Office Technical Guide](#).

NRCS, CA
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Managing populations of nuisance wildlife species may be necessary to protect and maintain certain habitats. This is a responsibility of the landowner. State and federal regulations may apply to population control methods.

Implementation and management activities will be planned and scheduled to preserve suitable and sufficient undisturbed areas to support resident disturbance-intolerant animals and plants.

Other conservation practices that may be utilized in conjunction with this practice to create a wildlife management plan include:

Access Control (472)

Forage & Biomass Planting (512)

Wildlife Watering Facility (648)

Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647)

Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats (643)

Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)

Range Planting (550)

Prescribed Grazing (528)

Prescribed Burning (338)

Forage Harvest Management (511)

Forest Stand Improvement (666)

Riparian Forest Buffer (391)

Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

NRCS shall ensure that plans and specifications for this practice are prepared by persons with adequate training in the fields of wildlife management, biology or ecology.

Written specifications, schedules and maps shall be prepared for each planning area and each habitat type.

Specifications shall:

- Identify the amounts and kinds of habitat elements, locations and management

actions necessary to achieve the client's management objectives.

- Describe the appropriate method, timing and intensity of management needed to produce the desired habitat conditions and sustain them over time.

Describe how the existing invasive plant species shall be controlled on the site.

Specifications shall be transmitted to clients using NRCS approved specifications sheets, job sheets, or customized narrative statements included in the conservation plan.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

The following actions shall be carried out to ensure that this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life:

- Evaluate habitat conditions on a regular basis in order to assess if the planning objectives have been met, and when necessary modify the conservation plan to incorporate needed treatments
- Annually inspect and repair structural or vegetative components of this practice.

REFERENCES

Bolen, Eric and William Robinson. 2002. *Wildlife Ecology and Management 5th Edition*. Prentice Hall, 656 pp.

Bookhout, T.A. (ed.). 1996. *Research and Management Techniques for Wildlife and Habitats, 5th Ed.* Wildlife Society, 740 pp

Rayne, Neil F. and Fred C. Bryant. 1994. *Techniques for Wildlife Habitat Management of Uplands*. McGraw-Hill, Inc., 841 pp.

United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. *National Biology Manual*. Title 190, Washington, DC.

United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2004. *National Biology Handbook*. Washington, DC.