

Forest Openings for Wildlife Habitat-job sheet 647-460

Purpose: **Forest openings** are created by removing trees and stumps or left unplanted at the time of tree establishment. The openings are managed to native or traditional planted food plot species of annuals and perennials. These openings serve as a valuable source of food for wildlife, especially to compensate for seasonal fluctuations in mast production.

Requirements:

• **Openings should be:**

• **between ½-to 5-acres** in size, with **1-3 acres** being optimum. **For CRP only**, forest stands less than .5 acres, the opening will be 10% of the field. i.e. a 3 acre forest stand will have at least a .3 acre opening.

• **irregularly shaped**

• **minimum of 50-feet wide**

• not located beside well traveled roads but can be located in a forest stand that can be widened and used as an opening. Also not immediately adjacent to road (50-100ft) to 40-50 basal area per acre light.

• managed for plant **diversity** with native species OR traditional food plot species that are annually planted with summer and/or winter food species.

• **for example:** opening(s) could be kept in 1 to 3-year-old early successional native vegetation (weeds) using a 3-year disking or burning rotation, OR planted to re-seeding annuals or annual crops like corn, soybeans, millet, or a grain sorghum, OR planted to a mixture of Native Warm Season Grasses (NWSG) and forbs.

Do not create openings in areas that are subject to erosion. If parts of fields are susceptible to erosion, maintain these areas in permanent native vegetation.

Maintenance:

- Maintain native vegetation or planted NWSG/forbs by disking 1/3 of the area each year or the entire site every 3 years. Disk between the months of Nov-Feb.
- OR Maintain native vegetation or planted NWSG/forbs by prescribe fire every 3 years. Prescribe burn between the months of Nov-Feb.
- OR openings planted to re-seeding annuals or annual crops species should be replanted as needed. Fertilize and lime based on soil tests.

Primary Habitat Consideration:

- Provide nesting and brood habitat for quail, turkeys, and other ground nesting birds
- Provide natural food and cover for rabbits, deer, quail, and turkeys



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Site Specific Comments and Recommendations:

<u>Job Sheet Certification</u>		
Prepared by: _____	Title _____	Date _____
Approved by: _____	Title _____	Date _____
<u>Installation Meets NRCS Standards and Specifications?</u>	YES	NO
Certified by: _____	Date: _____	

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