

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

FOREST TRAILS AND LANDINGS

(Ft.)

CODE 655

DEFINITION

A temporary or infrequently used route, path, or cleared area.

PURPOSE

- Provide routes for temporary or infrequent travel by people or equipment for management activities
- Provide periodic access for removal and collection of forest products

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

Trails and landings, including skid trails, are applicable on forest land. They typically connect to an access road. Refer to Conservation Practice 560, Access Road.

CRITERIA

Trails and landings will be of a size, gradient, number, and location to accomplish the intended purpose.

Avoid locating trails and landings on poorly suited soils of low-bearing strength and sites such as wetlands, riparian areas, critical wildlife habitat, or other environmentally sensitive areas. Locate trails on the contour to the greatest extent possible and incorporate breaks in grade (rolling dips or rolled grades) for trails on slopes. Skid logs uphill (with front ends off the ground) as practicable to minimize mechanical displacement of soil. Trails and landings will be set back from water bodies and water courses. Stream crossings, if necessary, will be minimized in size and number.

They shall be located and minimize in number and size to reduce adverse onsite and off-site impacts such as accelerated erosion, slope failure, water quality, riparian area degradation, stream channel and streambank damage, hydrologic modification, aesthetics or

unacceptable damage to advance regeneration or residual growing stock, or fragmentation of wildlife habitat.

Timing and use of equipment shall be appropriate with site and soil conditions to maintain site productivity and minimize soil rutting, erosion, displacement, and compaction.

Slash, debris, and vegetative material left on the site after use will not present an unacceptable fire or pest hazard or interfere with the intended purpose.

Drainage and erosion control measures shall be integrated with trails and landings and located to minimize detrimental effects of concentrated flow, erosion, and sedimentation rates both during and after trail/landing use. After usage, stream crossings will be restored and stabilized. Refer to Conservation Practices 342, Critical Area Planting; 587, Structure for Water Control; 578, Stream Crossing; and 484, Mulching.

Measures, including the use and treatment of equipment, will be used to control or protect against locally invasive species. If pesticides are used, refer to Conservation Practice 315, Herbaceous Weed Control.

Trails and landings intended or anticipated for management activities in subsequent years shall be designated for reuse to minimize the need for new trails and landings and associated site impacts.

Assure safe ingress and egress from trails and landings to junctions with access roads. Refer to Conservation Practice 560, Access Road.

Comply with applicable laws and regulations.

CONSIDERATIONS

Locate landings and trails to preserve aesthetic qualities.

Consider impacts to wildlife from increased fragmentation of the forest stand. Creation of openings can benefit some wildlife species (e.g., early successional and edge species) yet be detrimental to others (e.g., forest interior species).

Trails and landings, particularly after usage, may be used for wildlife food and cover plantings. Refer to Conservation Practices 645, Upland Wildlife Habitat Development; and 647, Early Successional Habitat Development.

Properly located trails and landings of sufficient width and location may be utilized and managed as firebreaks.

Consider cultural resources and environmental concerns such as threatened and endangered species of plants and animals, natural areas, and wetlands.

Favor native species for revegetating trails and landings. Measures will be used to protect against invasive species.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan or other acceptable documentation.

Specifications for revegetation of landings and trails should include species, timing and method of application, and required maintenance to ensure successful establishment.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Regular and timely inspections for adverse effects will be conducted with trails and landings and associated measures maintained or restored as necessary.

Trails and landings utilized and managed as firebreaks will be properly maintained to accomplish this purpose while maintaining acceptable mitigation of other concerns.

Access to trails and landings and trails shall be controlled when and where needed for erosion abatement, safety and liability, and reduced maintenance costs. Refer to Conservation Practice 472, Access Control.

Trails and landings no longer needed may be decommissioned and shall be sufficiently revegetated as needed.

Noxious plants will be controlled in accordance with state law.

REFERENCES

Garland, John. 1997 Designated Skid Trails Minimize Soil Compaction. Woodland Workbook, Oregon State University Extension Service, EC1110.

University of Minnesota. 2002. Broad-Based Dips. Forest Management Practices Fact Sheet #6, Managing Water Series.