

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**  
**CONSERVATION PRACTICE SPECIFICATION GUIDE SHEET**  
**ROAD/TRAIL/LANDING CLOSURE AND TREATMENT**  
**(ACRE)**  
**CODE 654**

**DEFINITION**

The closure, decommissioning, or abandonment of roads, trails, and/or landings and associated treatment to achieve conservation objectives.

**PURPOSE**

To minimize various resource concerns associated with existing roads, trails, and/or landings by closing them and treating to a level where one or more the following objectives are achieved:

- Controlling erosion (road, sheet and rill, gully, wind), chemical residues and off-site movement, sediment deposition and damage, accentuated storm runoff, and particulate matter generation;
- Restoring land to a productive state by reestablishing adapted plants and habitat (wildlife food, cover, and shelter), reconnecting wildlife habitat and migration corridors including streams and riparian areas, and controlling noxious and invasive species;
- Reestablishing drainage patterns that existed prior to construction of the road, trail, or landing to restore the form and integrity of associated hill slopes, channels and floodplains and their related hydrologic and geomorphic processes;
- Minimizing human impacts to the closure area to meet safety, aesthetic, sensitive area protection, or wildlife habitat requirements.

Specifications are divided into the following categories indicated in italics:

*Road/Trail/Landing*

*Abandonment/Rehabilitation (Light)*

*Road/Trail/Landing*

*Abandonment/Rehabilitation, <35% slope (Heavy)*

**Documentation**

All categories require the following design information.

1. Landowner and Design Preparer name and address.
2. Property Location, including town and county, and NRCS Field Office.
3. Practice name, code, justification, extent, estimated cost, and time schedule.
4. Description of layout and rehabilitation methods to be performed and its location and size, as well as written instructions for contractor and /or owner.
5. Maps of property and practice locations, including a lat/long for boundary corners and practices.
6. Specifications for the protection of other natural resources including but not limited to water, soil, and wildlife and non-target plants.
7. The design shall also identify where and if recommended treatments necessitate application for permits or variances from local,

state or federal regulations. Please reference Maine Revised Statute Title 12, Chapter 807: Forest Fire Control- 12 §9602. Obstruction of Discontinued Woods Roads Prohibited.

8. All deviation from the specification guide must have written justification and be mutually agreed upon by an NRCS approved Technical Service Provider Forester and NRCS Field Office.

### **Considerations**

Most erosion and sedimentation happens within two years of a forestry operation. Road/Trail/Landing closeout measures are best implemented before an operation is completed.

Close out unused or un-needed sections of road/trail or landings as the job progresses.

Install diversions such as water bars on road/trail/landings before leaving a site.

Smooth ruts on trails and landing to prevent channels from forming, and to divert runoff directly into filter areas.

The work will be supervised by a consultant forester, land manager, or other resource professional.

### **Road/Trail/Landing Abandonment/Rehabilitation (Light)**

The intent is to rehabilitate to natural conditions. The treatment will prohibit future access for period of 10 years.

This practice addresses one or more resource concerns: Excessive sediment in surface waters, habitat degradation, impaired hydrologic function, and concentrated flow erosion. Since not all segments of the road/trail/landing may require this level of treatment, this scenario applies only to those segments that are causing resource concerns.

This scenario includes use of light equipment such as a backhoe, to rehabilitate to natural conditions and for the installation of water control devices such as water bars, rolling dips, and controlling access, on road/trail/ landings <35% slopes.

Natural vegetation will be restored using the appropriate NRCS conservation practice (e.g., tree and shrub establishment, code 612, wetland restoration, code 657, critical area planting, code 342, conservation cover, 327).Some light hand work may be needed to clear site for the equipment.

### **Road/Trail/Landing Abandonment/Rehabilitation, <35% slope (Heavy)**

The intent is to rehabilitate to natural conditions. The treatment will prohibit future access for period of 10 years.

This practice addresses one or more resource concerns: Excessive sediment in surface waters, habitat degradation, impaired hydrologic function, and concentrated flow erosion. Since not all segments of the road/trail/landing may require this level of treatment, this scenario applies only to those segments that are causing resource concerns.

This scenario includes decommissioning road/trail/landings <35% slopes, using heavy equipment such as a bulldozer or similar equipment (excavator or road grader with ripper) to re-shape and obliterate the road base and landings in order to re-establish native vegetation.

It also includes restoring hydrology by the removal of culverts and drainage fills. Erosion control measures such as water bars, rolling dips, and controlling access.

Some hand-work may be necessary to clear the site for the equipment.