



Helping People Help the Land

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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**TECHNICAL GUIDE
NOTICE #231 (electronic)**

Purpose: To transmit information regarding the electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG) for NRCS-Michigan.

Effective Date: This notice is effective upon receipt.

Notice of Changes

SECTION I: General Resource References

Michigan Technical Notes

Grazing Technical Note #7, Grazing Management for Biological Control of Brush and Herbaceous Weeds

This technical note provides information for the planner on using livestock for brush reduction or to sustain brush levels in pastures. Specifications for animal types and numbers are given to assist in the development of the Prescribed Grazing plan to complement the Brush Management plan. Strategies for grazing management to control herbaceous weeds are given. The technical note has a link to 'Targeted Grazing: A Natural Approach to Vegetation Management and Landscape Enhancement', where more information on grazing management may be found.

Technical questions should be addressed to Betsy Dierberger, Grassland/Forage Specialist, at (517) 324-5265.

SECTION II: Soil and Site Information

Forestry Information

A **Forest Inventory Tool** has been developed. This excel spreadsheet-based tool is used to quickly summarize data collected from a point sampling (variable radius) forest inventory. The tool will generate summary tables and graphs to display diameter distribution by species, and rough estimates of timber volume.

Technical questions should be directed to Andy Henriksen, State Forester, at (517) 324-5234.

- More -

DIST: All Holders of the Field Office Technical Guide

SECTION IV: Practice Standards and Specifications

Conservation Practices

DELETED MICHIGAN PRACTICE STANDARD

Invasive Plant Species Control in Natural Areas (797)

The Michigan interim conservation practice standard Invasive Plant Species Control in Natural Areas (797) has been removed from the Michigan Field Office Technical Guide, and archived.

The revised Brush Management (314) and new Herbaceous Weed Control (315) practice standards replace this interim practice standard. **Planners will no longer use Invasive Plant Species Control in Natural Areas (797) in any future planning or contracts.**

Questions on this change should be directed to Betsy Dierberger, Grassland/Forage Specialist, at (517) 324-5265.

NEWLY ADOPTED NATIONAL STANDARD

Herbaceous Weed Control (315)

This is a new standard to provide for herbaceous weed control on lands **not** actively in crop production. Requirements are included for biological, chemical and mechanical control. Biological treatment is by Prescribed Grazing (528) only. Chemical treatment requires evaluation of herbicides with WIN-PST and discussion with the client.

A **Herbaceous Weed Control (315) Conservation Sheet** is available as a fillable Word document. The chemical, mechanical and biological treatment options are listed with corresponding criteria and specifications. Monitoring by record keeping and photo-point before and after treatment pictures is included. (Photo point monitoring involves establishing permanent photo locations and returning annually to take photographs at these locations. Photo point monitoring provides a visual record of changes. Over time, these images will show a trend in resource conditions that can be used to guide management decisions.) The conservation sheet also provides a section for documenting practice certification and checkout.

Technical questions should be directed to Betsy Dierberger, Grassland/Forage Specialist, at (517) 324-5265.

UPDATED STANDARDS

The following standards have been updated to address changes in the national conservation practice standards.

Brush Management (314)

Substantial changes have been made to this practice standard. Prescribed Burning is removed as a brush management treatment. This purpose is covered in the Prescribed

Burning (338) standard. Only chemical, mechanical and biological treatments are included. Biological treatment is by Prescribed Grazing (528) only. Chemical treatment requires evaluation of products using WIN-PST and discussion with the client. Ecological Site has been added as a Criteria Requirement. Also in the Criteria section, wildlife concerns are addressed. The Plans and Specifications section includes requirements for monitoring.

A **Brush Management Conservation Sheet** is available as a fillable Word document. The chemical, mechanical and biological treatment options are listed with corresponding criteria and specifications. Monitoring by record keeping and photo-point before and after treatment pictures is included. (Photo point monitoring involves establishing permanent photo locations and returning annually to take photographs at these locations. Photo point monitoring provides a visual record of changes. Over time, these images will show a trend in resource conditions that can be used to guide management decisions.) The conservation sheet also provides a section for documenting practice certification and checkoff.

Technical questions regarding this conservation practice standard should be addressed to Betsy Dierberger, Grassland/Forage Specialist, at (517) 324-5265.

Cover Crops (340)

- New Purposes were added to the practice including:
 - Increase soil organic matter
 - Minimize or reduce soil compaction
 - Reduce pest pressure
 - Encourage pollination
- Seed mixture tables were added to assist with developing custom cover crop mixtures.
- New MSU bulletins were added to the References section.
- The **Conservation Sheet** was updated.

Technical questions regarding this conservation practice standard should be addressed to Jerry Grigar, State Agronomist, at (517) 324-5250.

Alley Cropping (311)

- Updated Definition, Purposes and Condition Where Practice Applies, to be consistent with the National Practice Standard.
- Updated References to other applicable Conservation Practice Standards.
- Additional criteria for Carbon Storage and Air Quality purposes added.
- Tree Species tables removed from standard.
- **New Conservation Design Sheet** was developed consistent with the Practice Standard.
- Statement of Work was reviewed and remains unchanged.

Forest Trails and Landings (655) (formerly Forest Harvest Trails and Landings)

- Updated Definition, Purposes and Condition Where Practice Applies to be consistent with the National Practice Standard.

- Updated References to other applicable Conservation Practice Standards.
- Criteria to meet applicable sections of the “Sustainable Soil and Water Practices on Forest Land” (MI DNR/DEQ) added.
- Seeding Mixture tables removed from practice standard.
- **New Conservation Design Sheet** was developed consistent with the Practice Standard. This supersedes Conservation Sheet #655: “Establishing Forest Harvest Trails and Landings” (August 2003).
- Statement of Work was reviewed and remains unchanged.

Prescribed Burning (338)

- Prescribed Burning now permitted on forest land.
- Additional General Criteria added for forest land burns.
- Smoke management emphasised in General Criteria.
- Wind speed parameters (in Considerations) adjusted.
- Minimum required documentation in burn plan expanded.
- Operation and Maintenance requirements added.
- A **new Design and Certification Sheet** has been created.
- The Statement of Work was updated to include current internet links for references.

Riparian Forest Buffer (391)

- Three zone system no longer used.
- Overall minimum widths for all purposes listed as 35 feet. Additional wider widths given for certain purposes.
- For wildlife purposes, snag retention/creation was created.
- Minimum density for carbon storage purpose added.
- Reference to MI DNR/DEQ “Sustainable Soil and Water Quality Practices on Forest Land” included in Considerations.
- Plant list removed from standard.
- Several Figures removed from standard.
- **New Conservation Design Sheet** was developed consistent with the Practice Standard. This replaces the previously used “Riparian Forest Buffer Michigan Conservation Practice Job Sheet #391”.

Tree/Shrub Pruning (660)

- Definition, Purpose and Condition Where Practice applies updated to meet the National Practice Standard.
- Calendar year restrictions added to General Criteria for oak and elm species to reduce risk of disease.
- Limits on acceptable pruning height added to General Criteria.
- Pruning methods and diagrams removed from standard.
- Additional information on Christmas tree shearing, and preferred limb size added to Considerations.
- Plans and Specifications updated to more clearly detail required elements..
- References updated.

- A new Conservation Design Sheet was developed with a fillable specifications section. This replaces the Tree and Shrub Pruning Conservation Information Sheet (660) (May 2001).

Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation (650)

- Updated Definition, Purposes and Condition Where Practice Applies to be consistent with National Practice Standard.
- Updated References to other applicable Conservation Practice Standards.
- Removed Root Pruning criteria.
- Removed list of shade-tolerant trees/shrubs.
- New **Conservation Design Sheet** was developed consistent with the Practice Standard.

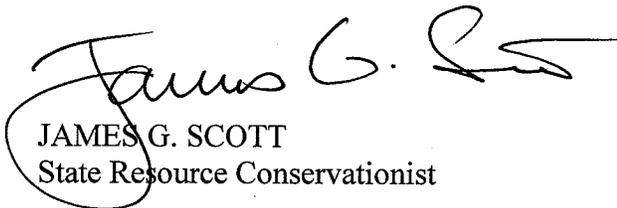
Technical questions regarding the following **Forestry Conservation Practice Standards** and supporting documents should be addressed to Andy Henriksen, State Forester at (517) 324-5234.

Michigan Conservation Sheets

A **Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)** conservation design sheet has been developed. This can be used to specify site preparation activities for several tree/shrub establishment conservation practices, such as Tree/Shrub Establishment (612), Riparian Forest Buffer (391), Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380), and others.

Technical questions regarding this conservation design sheet should be directed to Andy Henriksen, State Forester, at (517) 324-5234.

Content management questions regarding eFOTG should be directed to Ruth Shaffer, Water Quality Specialist, at (517) 324-5239.



JAMES G. SCOTT
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