



Landowner _____

Purpose

A firebreak is a low growing strip of vegetation placed strategically to reduce the risk of a potential wildfire causing damage and to contain prescribed burns.



- Use barriers such as streams, lakes, ponds, rock cliffs, roads, field borders, drainage ditches and other areas as existing firebreaks when possible.

Criteria for Firebreaks

Refer to Table 1 for a list of suitable species when it is desirable to incorporate permanent firebreaks into initial grass planting designs.

Maintain existing natural or planted herbaceous vegetation as a firebreak by mowing strips 3 - 8 times the height of the adjacent vegetation, with a minimum width of 15 feet. A minimum firebreak of 50 feet should be used to protect buildings (existing lawn should be accounted for). Woody plants should be controlled by clearing, cutting or application of approved herbicide.

Conditions Where Practice Applies

The use of carefully designed and installed firebreaks to protect high risk areas and building sites, and to contain managed prescribed burns.

(See NRCS Field Office Technical Guide [FOTG], Standard 394, Firebreak.)

Criteria

- Firebreaks will be of sufficient width and length to contain the fire.
- Firebreaks shall be located to minimize risk to the resources being protected.
- Erosion control measures shall prevent sediment from leaving the site.
- Locate firebreaks on the contour where possible to minimize risk of soil erosion.
- Attempt to locate firebreaks near ridge crests and valley bottoms. If winds are predictable, firebreaks should be located perpendicular to the wind and on the windward side of the area to be protected.

Operation and Maintenance

- Mow permanent vegetative firebreaks annually outside of the primary nesting season to avoid a build-up of litter, protect nesting wildlife and to control weeds. Use a rotary or flail mower to evenly distribute grass clippings. Do not swath, windrows may smother seeding. Clippings may also be baled, removed and destroyed.
- Firebreaks associated with a management prescribed burn, will be mowed in the fall or spring immediately prior to the burn.
- Inspect all firebreaks for woody materials such as dead limbs or blown down trees and remove them from the firebreak.
- Repair erosion control measures as necessary to ensure proper function.
- Access by vehicles or people will be controlled to prevent damage to the firebreak.
- Consider cultural resources and environmental concerns such as threatened and endangered species of plants and animals, natural areas, and wetlands.

Table 1: Suitable Species for Use in Perennial Firebreaks

Introduced Cool Season Grasses/Legume		Native Warm Season Grasses		Native Cool Season Grasses	
Grass Species	Full Seeding Drill Rate lb/ac	Grass Species	Full Seeding Drill Rate lb/ac	Grass Species	Full Seeding Drill Rate lb/ac
Orchardgrass	8.0	Blue Grama	5.0	Western Wheatgrass	12.0
Timothy	4.0	Sideoats Grama	15.0	Canada Wildrye	12.0
Legumes (Optional)					
Alfalfa	12.0				
Alsike Clover	2.0				
White Clover	3.0				

- *Designed firebreak seed mixtures shall be selected from one of the categories above; Introduced Cool Season or Native Warm Season or Native Cool Season. Legumes may be added to Introduced Cool Season Grasses.*
- *Seed individual species at the full seeding rate, or in a mixture of equal percentages of the full seeding rate.*
- *No More than 50% of the mix shall be legumes.*

Example 1- Introduced Cool Season

Species	Full Rate lb/ac	Percent	Mixture lb/ac
Orchardgrass	8.0	25	2.0
Timothy	4.0	25	1.0
Alfalfa	12.0	25	3.0
White Clover	3.0	25	.75

Example 2 – Native Cool Season

Species	Full Rate lb/ac	Percent	Mixture lb/ac
Western Wheatgrass	12.0	50	6.0
Canada Wildrye	12.0	50	6.0

Scheduled planting date: _____

Total length in feet to be planted: _____

Width of break: _____

****Include location on conservation plan map. This job sheet must be a part of the CRP CPO when firebreaks are planned.***

Additional Specifications and Notes:

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Practice Specifications Approval and Completion Certification

LANDOWNER/OPERATOR ACKNOWLEDGES:

- a. They have received a copy of the specifications and understand the contents including the scope and location of the practice.
- b. They have obtained all necessary permits and/or rights in advance of practice application, and will comply with all ordinances and laws pertaining to the application of this practice.
- c. No changes will be made in the installation of the job without prior concurrence of the NRCS.
- d. Maintenance of the installed work is necessary for proper performance during the life of the practice. The practice life is _____.

I have reviewed all specifications and agree to install as specified:

Landowner/operator name and title (type or print):		
Landowner/operator Signature:		Date:
Landowner/operator name and title (type or print):		
Landowner/operator Signature:		Date:

NRCS Review Only

DESIGN INSTALLATION AND LAYOUT APPROVAL:

Designed By:	Date:	Job Approval Authority (JAA):
Approved By:	Date:	Job Approval Authority (JAA):

RECORD OF COMPLETION AND CHECK OUT CERTIFICATION:

Treated Acres:	Date Completed by Client:	Date Certified:

Certification Statement:

I certify that implementation of this conservation practice is complete, meets criteria for the stated purpose(s), and meets the NRCS conservation practice standard and specifications.

NRCS Signature:	Date:	Job Approval Authority (JAA):