

# Permanent Forest Openings for Wildlife

## Job Sheet

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)  
University of Missouri Extension – The School of Natural Resources

<b>Landowner:</b>	<b>Farm #:</b>
<b>Field(s):</b>	<b>Tract #:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>County:</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	

### WHY DEVELOP FOREST OPENINGS FOR WILDLIFE?

**PURPOSE:** Forest openings are areas within a stand of timber that are left in natural, early successional herbaceous vegetation or occasionally planted in annuals or perennials. These openings serve as a valuable source of food for wildlife especially compensating for seasonal fluctuations in mast production. Creating forest openings also improves habitat for forest edge species.



### SPECIFICATIONS:

- Openings should be between one to three acres.
- Woodland sites less than 40 acres will generally not benefit from the creation of openings.
- A number of well-scattered openings are more beneficial than a single large opening of comparable size. **This site should have** \_\_\_\_\_.
- South facing slopes are preferred.
- Areas should be cleared of all woody vegetation. Trees and trimmings can be used to construct brushpiles.
- Irregular shaped openings are preferred and provide great edge.
- Openings should be at least 30 feet wide.
- Manage for plant diversity.

### MAINTENANCE:

- If trees and shrubs comprise 10 percent of the opening, the woody material needs to be controlled to help maintain desired vegetative components.
- Openings should be kept on a disturbance schedule to encourage new growth of desired vegetation. A three-year cycle is good.
- Light disking is a cost-effective method to encourage the desired plant community.
- Consider prescribed burning to help encourage herbaceous plant growth. Burn only under an approved burn plan from NRCS or MDC.

