

**Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Conservation Practice Standard**

**FOREST SITE PREPARATION  
(Ac.)  
CODE 490**

**DEFINITION**

Treating areas to encourage natural seeding of desirable trees or to permit reforestation by planting or direct seeding.

**PURPOSE**

To prepare land for establishing a stand of trees to conserve soil and water, to improve watershed, or to produce wood crops.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

In understocked areas or in areas of undesired vegetation where the soils are suited to growing trees for wood crops.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Water quantity

- Effects on the water budget components.

Water quality

- Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff.
- Effects of pesticides on surface and ground water quality.
- Effects on the movement of dissolved substances to ground water.

**PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Site Preparation for Natural Regeneration or Direct Seeding. Site preparation exposes the mineral soil to the pine seed for prompt and maximum germination of seed, and a high degree of establishment and early survival of

seedlings. Site preparation may be done by prescribed burning, chemical application, chopping, disking or any combination of these or any method which removes litter, grass, or brush and exposes the mineral soil. Logging operations alone frequently create a good, receptive seedbed for natural regeneration or direct seeding. See Tree/Shrub Establishment, Code 612.

Site Preparation for Planting Seedlings. Site preparation may be done by prescribed burning, chemical application, chopping, disking, or any method which removes competing vegetation. Where mechanical site preparation is done with heavy equipment, care must be taken to avoid accelerating soil erosion.

The following specifications apply to special situations or problem areas that may be encountered:

In gullied areas, brush dams should be built to collect eroding material for planting sites. Dams are built with brush, 12 to 18 inches high, with slight depressions near the center for storm overflow. Lovegrass may be seeded at the time of construction or after sediment has collected. Small dams that will collect enough sediment to support one or two seedlings are most effective.

A chemical application should be used to kill heavy sod or other heavy vegetation.

Site preparation should be tailored to the site. Heavy mechanical site prep would not be used on steep slopes because of potential erosion. Chemicals would not be used around certain sensitive areas. Soil erosion ratings from soil surveys should be used as a guide for site preparation recommendations.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.