NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

FOREST TRAILS AND LANDINGS

(Ft. and Ac.)

CODE 655

DEFINITION

A temporary or infrequently used route, path or cleared area.

PURPOSE

- Provide routes for temporary or infrequent travel by people or equipment for management activities.
- Provide periodic access for removal and collection of forest products.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

Trails and landings including skid trails are applicable on forest land. They typically connect to an Access Road-560.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable To All Purposes

Trails and landings will be of a size, gradient, number and location to accomplish the intended purpose. Avoid locating trails and landings on poorly suited soils of low-bearing strength and sites such as wetlands, riparian areas, critical wildlife habitat, or other environmentally sensitive areas. Locate trails on the contour to the greatest extent possible and incorporate breaks in grade (rolling dips or rolled grades) for trails on slopes. Skid logs uphill (with front ends off the ground) as practicable to minimize mechanical displacement of soil. Trails and landings will be set back from water bodies and water courses. Stream Crossings, if necessary, will be minimized in size and number.

Assure safe ingress and egress from trails and landings to junctions with access roads. Refer to the practice standard Access Road-560, for travel-ways including logging spur roads needing construction design and possibly surfacing to accommodate frequent, intensive, or repeated vehicular traffic.

Trails and landings shall be located and minimized in number and size to reduce adverse onsite and off-site impacts such as accelerated erosion, slope failure, water quality and riparian area degradation, stream channel and streambank damage, hydrologic modification, aesthetics, unacceptable damage to advance regeneration or residual growing stock, or fragmentation of wildlife habitat.

Those trails and landings intended or anticipated for management activities in subsequent years shall be designated for reuse to minimize the need for new trails and landings and associated site impacts.

Timing and use of equipment shall be appropriate for site and soil conditions to maintain site productivity and minimize soil rutting, erosion, displacement and compaction.

Drainage and erosion control measures shall be integrated with trails and landings and located to minimize detrimental effects of concentrated flow, erosion and sedimentation rates both during and after trail/landing use. After usage, stream crossings will be restored and stabilized. Refer to applicable drainage and erosion-sedimentation prediction technology and practice standards such as Critical Area Planting-342, Structure for Water Control (587), Stream Crossing (578) and Mulching (484), as well as state forestry Best Management Practices. Refer to Maryland Best Management Practices for Forest Harvest available on the internet at: http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/landplanning/bmp.html

CONSIDERATIONS

Consider impacts to wildlife from increased fragmentation of the forest stand. Creation of openings can benefit some wildlife species (e.g., early successional and edge species) yet be detrimental to others (e.g., forest interior species).

Trails and landings, particularly after usage, may be utilized and managed for wildlife food and cover plantings. Refer to appropriate wildlife habitat practice standards, e.g., Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645), and Early Successional Habitat Development/ Management (647).

Properly located trails and landings of sufficient width and location may be utilized and managed as firebreaks.

Favor native species for revegetating trails and landings. Measures will be used to protect against invasive species.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Regular and timely inspections for adverse effects will be conducted with trails and landings and associated measures maintained or restored as necessary.

Trails and landings utilized and managed as firebreaks will be properly maintained to accomplish this purpose while maintaining acceptable mitigation of other concerns.

Access to trails and landings shall be controlled when and where needed for erosion abatement, safety and liability, and reduced maintenance costs. Refer to the practice standard Access Control (472) as needed.

Trails and landings no longer needed may be decommissioned. Refer to the practice standard Road/Trail/Landing Closure and Treatment (654) as needed.

REFERENCES

Garland, John. 1997. Designated Skid Trails Minimize Soil Compaction. Woodland Workbook, Oregon State University Extension Service, EC1110.

University of Minnesota. 2002. Broad-Based Dips. Forest Management Practices Fact Sheet #6, Managing Water Series.

Keys, Jonathon. Developing a Forest Management Plan: The Key to Forest Stewardship. Fact Sheet 625. University of Maryland Extension.
Available at:
http://extension.umd.edu/learn/developing-forest-stewardship-plan-key-forest-management

University of Maryland Extension.
Woodland Stewardship Education
https://extension.umd.edu/woodland