

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
NEW JERSEY
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

TREE/SHRUB SITE PREPARATION

(Ac.)

CODE 490

DEFINITION

Treatment of areas to improve site conditions for establishing trees and/or shrubs.

PURPOSE

- Encourage natural regeneration of desirable woody plants.
- Permit artificial establishment of woody plants.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On all lands needing treatment to establish trees and/or shrubs.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Streamside Management Zones (SMZ) shall be protected through all site preparation activities. SMZ are defined in the New Jersey Forestry and Wetlands Best Management Practices Manual, as referenced.

The method, intensity and timing of site preparation will match the limitations of the site, equipment, and the requirements for establishing the desired woody species. Refer to Tree/Shrub Establishment (612) for specific guidance.

An appropriate site preparation method will be chosen to achieve the intended purpose and to protect desirable vegetation, water and soil conditions. Other complementary practices and measures will be used as necessary to control erosion, runoff, compaction and soil displacement to acceptable levels.

Mechanical activities shall be performed on the contour whenever possible.

Site preparation shall not be done when soils are saturated beyond field capacity, to reduce likelihood of compaction.

Surface tillage shall be limited to only that which is necessary to provide proper soil conditions for the tree species being established.

Soil organic matter in the surface layer shall be conserved as much as possible.

Slash and debris shall be managed as appropriate. Remaining slash and debris shall not create habitat for or harbor harmful levels of pests.

Remaining slash and debris shall not hinder needed equipment operations or create an undue fire or safety hazard. Refer to the standard Prescribed Burning (338) for slash and debris that will be burned.

Measures, including the use of equipment, will be implemented to control or protect against locally invasive and noxious species that may arise from site preparation activities. If pesticides are used, refer to the standard Pest Management (595).

CONSIDERATIONS

Impacts on wildlife species, habitat and aesthetics should be considered when selecting site preparation methods.

Consider soil series and characteristics when planning and implementing site preparation activities. Prevent soil compaction and maintain pre-disturbance soil hydrologic characteristics.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service [State Office](#) or visit the [electronic Field Office Technical Guide](#) at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/>

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Particulates, smoke, and other air pollutants generated by site preparation may have on-site and off-site effects on air quality.

Consider strip site preparation and contour slash windrowing when working on slopes steeper than 20%.

Slash piles should be kept out of the 50 year stream floodplain whenever practical.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

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

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Maintain erosion control measures as necessary.

Stabilize areas as needed after operations following the standard Critical Area Planting (342) or Conservation Cover (327).

Control locally invasive and noxious plants as necessary. If pesticides are used, refer to the standard Pest Management, (595).

Access by vehicles or equipment during or after site preparation shall be controlled to minimize erosion, compaction and other site impacts. Refer to the standard Use Exclusion, (472).

REFERENCES

New Jersey Bureau of Forest Management, New Jersey Forestry and Wetlands Best Management Practices Manual. Trenton, NJ 1995.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry. Wisconsin Forest Management Guidelines. Madison, WI 2003.