

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**FOREST STAND IMPROVEMENT**

(Acre)  
Code 666

**DEFINITION**

To manipulate species composition and stocking by cutting or killing selected trees and understory vegetation.

**PURPOSES**

- To improve or sustain timber production.
- Improve understory forage production, aesthetics, wildlife habitat, recreation, hydrologic conditions.
- To harvest forest products.
- To initiate forest stand regeneration.
- To achieve a combination of purposes.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

On forestland where competing vegetation hinders development and stocking of preferred tree and understory species or where some or all of the stand will be cut or killed for intended purposes.

**CRITERIA**

Preferred tree and understory species are identified and retained to achieve the intended purpose.

Spacing, density and amounts of preferred trees and understory species to be retained will follow established guidelines in the Puerto Rico Guide for Reforestation and U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture, for the intended purposes.

The method, felling direction and timing of tree cutting for harvesting shall facilitate efficient and safe tree removal and protect riparian zones, unique areas, and structures.

Methods of removal may include but are not limited to: axe, machete, chopper, bulldozer hoe or chain saw.

Soil erosion, displacement and compaction, hydrologic impact and damage to remaining vegetation will not exceed acceptable levels.

Slash, debris and vegetative material left on the site after treatment will not present an unacceptable fire or pest hazard or interfere with the intended purpose.

The extent, size of treatment area or intensity of the practice shall not exceed acceptable levels for the intended purpose and cumulative ecosystem effects.

Comply with applicable laws and regulations, including the state's Best Management Practices (BMPs).

**ADDITIONAL CRITERIA**

The selection of trees to release is based on the owner's objectives, species and vigor of individual trees.

To maximize wildlife benefits, stoking rates must be adjusted according to tree species and wildlife species of concern.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Timing of treatment and retaining dead or dying trees will minimize impacts on nesting wildlife.

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

Wildlife food and cover can be retained by minimal modifications to composition and spacing regardless of the purpose for treatment. Forested wildlife corridors can minimize fragmentation effects.

### **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

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

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Operation and maintenance requirements are not applicable for this practice.