

**Plant Enhancement Activity – PLT27 – Create small openings in pine stands to improve wildlife habitat or to prepare the area for natural regeneration**



**Enhancement Description**

This enhancement is to create small openings in pine stands (i.e., one-half (0.5) to three (3) acres in size). The cleared area will have the vegetation removed through harvesting, mulching, or means compatible with the site.

**Land Use Applicability**

Forestland

**Benefits**

The creation of small openings in a conifer forest has multiple positive effects. Small openings provide a diverse habitat for wildlife and the areas receive sunlight favoring the natural regeneration of pine species. Natural regeneration provides a low initial cost method to establish the future forest.

**Conditions Where Enhancement Applies**

This enhancement applies to conifer and mixed forest land use acres.

This enhancement is not for normal thinning or other forest stand improvement activities conducted on non-degraded sites.

**Criteria**

Implement the following:

1. Apply to sites which have a closed canopy and little beneficial plants in the understory.
2. Develop a forest management plan in consultation with NRCS personnel and a professional forester, wildlife biologist or consultant.
3. Create the forest opening by the third fiscal year of the contract.
4. Select sites with an “acceptable growing stock” level of 50 basal area or higher and the site condition must be of medium or higher quality.
5. Selected sites must contain regenerative pine species included on the NRCS state list. Pine species on this list were selected based on their abilities to regenerate from seed.
6. Create openings to have varying sizes. Sizes shall be between one-half (0.5) to three (3) acres, be distributed throughout the forest and be within the range of 10 percent to not total more than 50 percent of the land use acres.
7. Minimize damage to residual trees when the openings are being created and prepared.
8. Slash and cull trees must be managed to allow for natural regeneration to occur. This can be accomplished by:
  - a. Windrowing
  - b. Wildlife piles



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- c. Chipping
- d. Cutting for firewood
- e. Mowing
- f. Spraying herbicides to control less desirable plant species

Note: Burning of slash must be accomplished by a certified prescribed burner following a burn plan.

Note: Trees removed for this activities' purpose having marketable quality can be sold.

### **Adoption Requirements**

The enhancement is considered adopted when forest openings have been created that meet the above criteria on the land use acre.

### **Documentation Requirements**

1. Site suitability (from WebSoil Survey) and acceptable growing stock evaluation for each path (from a field inventory)
2. Map delineating the treated areas, dates completed and their size
3. The method utilized
4. Evidence to support the treatment activities were completed, including representative photos, receipt from contractor etc. Location of representative photos must be indicated on the map required in #2.

### **References**

Baker, J.B., M.D. Cain, J.M. Guldin, P.A. Murphy, and M.G. Shelton. 1996. Uneven-aged Silviculture for the Loblolly and Shortleaf Pine Forest Cover Types. Gen. Tech. Rep. SO-118. USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Asheville, NC. 75p.

Kushla, J. Natural Regeneration of Southern Pines. Mississippi State Extension Service (MSUcares), Starkville, MS. 28 p.

Moorhead, D.J. 1999. Regenerating Southern Pine in Georgia. University of Georgia School of Forest Resources Extension Circular 0775. Athens, GA.



All enhancements will be implemented in accordance with the Conference Report for the Natural Resources Conservation Service - Sage-Grouse Initiative.

**Operations & Maintenance, Conservation Measures, and Client Acknowledgement**

<b>Operation and Maintenance</b>	
Operation:	
Maintenance:	
<b>Conservation Measures</b>	
Actions that must be implemented by the landowner/manager during enhancement implementation:	
<b>Client's Acknowledgement Statement</b>	
The Client acknowledges that:	
a. They have received a copy of the enhancement and understand the contents and requirements.	
b. It shall be the responsibility of the client to obtain all necessary permits and/or rights, and to comply with all ordinances and laws pertaining to the application of this enhancement.	
<b>Planner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
_____	_____
<b>Client:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
_____	_____