

# Brush Management

## Vermont Conservation Practice Job Sheet

**314**



*Photograph shows a typical completed brush management practice where some clumps of shrubs and trees were retained to provide for wildlife habitat.*

### SPECIFICATIONS

Site-specific requirements are listed on the following page(s) of this job sheet. Specifications are prepared in accordance with the Brush Management 314 practice standard found in the Vermont NRCS Field Office Technical Guide. Information contained in this document is considered part of the conservation plan.

### Brush Management Definition:

Removal, reduction or manipulation of non-herbaceous plants.

Client Name:		Town:	
Farm:		Tract:	
Designed By:		Planned Acres:	
Designed Date:		Program:	
Field(s) Planned:			

Purpose: This practice will implemented in order to: <i>Check all that apply</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Restore natural plant community balance,	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain or enhance wildlife habitat including that associated with threatened and endangered species,
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create the desired plant community,	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improve forage accessibility, quality and quantity for livestock,
<input type="checkbox"/>	Restore desired vegetative cover to protect soils, control erosion, reduce sediment, improve water quality and enhance stream flow,	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: (Describe)

### CRITERIA:

Brush management will be designed to achieve the desired plant community in woody plant density, canopy cover or height.

Brush Management will be applied in a manner to achieve the desired control of the target woody species and protection of desired species. Methods used to accomplish control of the target species will include mechanical, chemical, biological, prescribed burning or a combination of these methods.

Typically, this practice is used to reduce the amount (% cover) of woody species in pastures to improve and increase the amount of herbaceous forage for livestock. This can have a desirable effect of improving forage

in appropriate upland areas while reducing or eliminating grazing pressure in potentially more sensitive areas such as wetlands. It is often used to facilitate the transition of conventional farming to an organic system which requires additional pasture land to support a grass-based system. If applied correctly, the practice can also benefit shrubland songbirds which include many species of concern in the Northeast which are experiencing population declines (e.g. field sparrow and Eastern towhee). Applied incorrectly, the practice can be a detriment to shrubland birds by eliminating woody cover and important breeding habitat. Invasive plants may be managed through this practice. Understand that in some cases the invasive shrubs such as honeysuckle and autumn olive may be providing some habitat benefits in the form of food and cover where native species are limited. Consider managing the field to favor native species while managing against the non-native invasive species.

Prescribed Grazing shall be applied to ensure that the desired response from the brush management treatment is not diminished. This may include maintenance of specific percent woody cover.

### **Additional Criteria for Improving Wildlife Habitat**

Shrubby and rough pastures can provide good habitat for shrubland songbirds that nest above the ground in low shrubs and trees, and various other types of wildlife such as snakes, rabbits and deer. Better still, shrubby pastures with un-grazed grass and forbs can also provide nesting areas for shrubland species that nest on the ground in herbaceous vegetation. The key to maintaining habitat is to retain woody cover in the form of small trees, shrubs and vines. In general, trees as tall as or taller than the apple trees can be taken out and shrubs and smaller saplings 10 feet or less should be maintained. At least half of the retained woody vegetation should be in clumps or shrub islands to provide optimum cover. Shrub islands should be at least 100 square feet. The minimum % aerial cover of short woody vegetation to retain is 5-10% of the pasture land unit (see estimation chart at the end of this job sheet). Beneficial wildlife trees such as cavity trees and snags will be maintained unless they pose a safety hazard or detract from the success of the practice.

**For more information on habitat management for shrubland species see:**

***'Early Successional Habitat Management - Old Field Job Sheet'***

[http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/VT/JS647VT\\_OldField\\_FillableForm.pdf](http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/VT/JS647VT_OldField_FillableForm.pdf)

### **OPERATION / MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE:**

**The following O&M activities will be planned and applied as needed:**

1. Brush management operations will comply with all local, state, and federal laws and ordinances.
2. Evaluate re-growth of target species after sufficient time has passed to monitor the situation and gather reliable data to determine need for additional treatment. Following the initial treatment, some re-growth, re-sprouting, or reoccurrence of brush should be expected but may be beneficial. Spot treatment of individual plants or areas needing retreatment should be done as needed.

**Brush Management – 314** **Specifications**

Describe the plants to be controlled and the amount to be controlled per acre:			
Describe the % woody cover and type to be maintained:			
<b>Treatment Method(s) Planned:</b>	<b>Mechanical</b>		<b>Chemical*</b>
Scheduled date of treatment:	Specify treatment (hand cutting, herbicide name, type of animals, etc):		
Techniques and procedures to be followed, including recommended equipment:	If herbicides are used, follow all label requirements		
Precautions or requirements to maintain habitat/sensitive areas, limit impacts to non-target plants and wildlife, and mitigate risk associated with pesticides (where WIN-PST “Extra High”, “High” or “Intermediate” pesticide risk):			
<b>Additional Notes or Instructions:</b>			

\* Where chemical treatment is used, be sure to evaluate pesticide risk with WIN-PST and attach documentation.

**Maps**

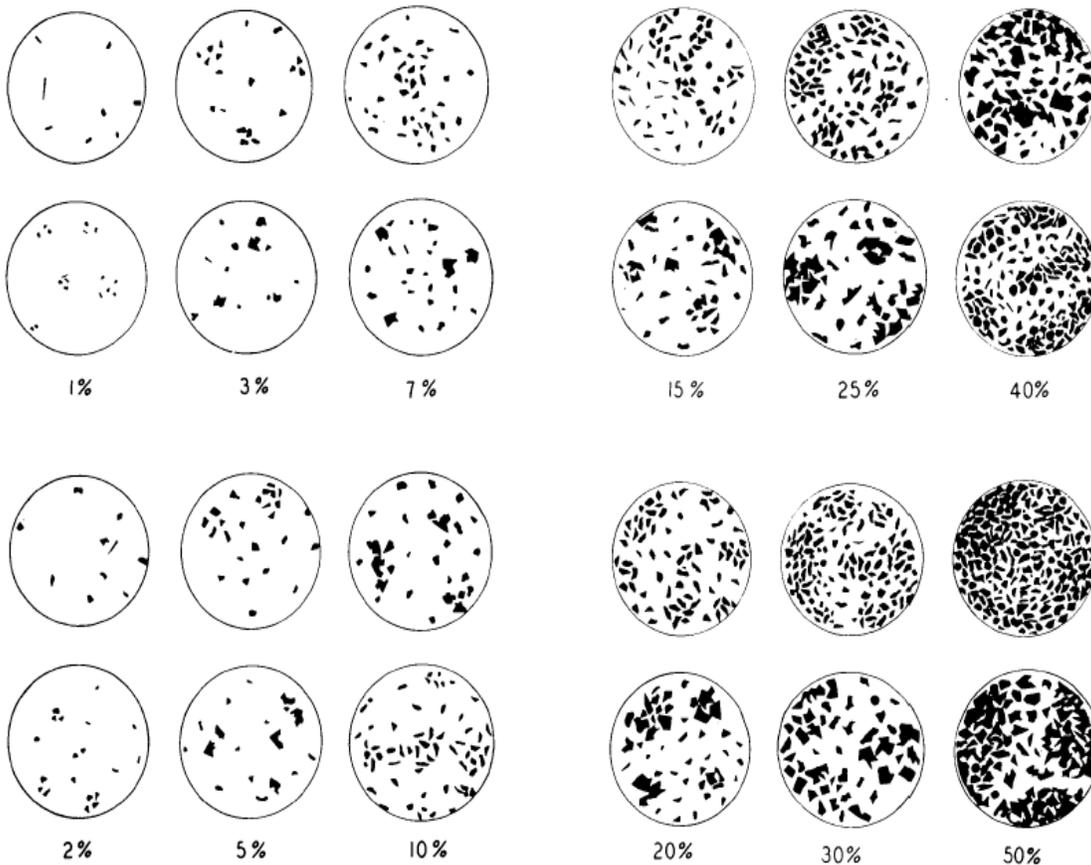
Attach an aerial photograph based map of the brush management area. Clearly define the management area on a map and flag it out on the ground so that it is clear to the landowner or contractors. Other relevant information, complementary practices and measures, and additional specifications may be included. Note: The Conservation Plan Map may be sufficient depending upon the level of map detail of the pasture area.

Questions regarding the specifications of this brush management practice may be directed to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
NRCS Planner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

## COMPARISON CHARTS FOR VISUAL ESTIMATION OF FOLIAGE COVER 1/



1/ Developed by Richard D. Terry and George V. Chilingar. Published by the Society of Economic Paleontologist and Minerologist in its Journal of Sedimentary Petrology 25 (3): 229-234, September 1955.

*The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability political beliefs and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA Office of Communications (202) 720-2791. To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer*