

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Forest management is manipulation of the forest stand with specific actions to meet specific goals. Mid-contract management activities in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are required to ensure that plant diversity and wildlife benefits are enhanced throughout the contract period while maintaining soil and water resources.



REQUIREMENTS

Required CRP forest management mid-contract activities are eligible for cost share with the following practices: CP3, CP3A CP22 and CP31. If devoted to woodland, CP23, CP23A and CP27/28 are also covered by this document. The planned management activities are part of the CRP contract; refer to your conservation plan for practice schedules regarding these activities.

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Young stands are easily and quickly overtopped by undesirable woody vegetation. Established stands shade the understory reducing the population of beneficial herbaceous plants and changing plant species mix thereby reducing wildlife habitats. The land may no longer meet the objectives of the producer or the practice.

Forest Stand Improvement

Forest stand improvement is the manipulation of the forest to meet the objectives of the producer. Thinning, release and pruning are common

methods of forest management that can be used to enhance plant diversity and wildlife habitats.

A thinning operation removes trees that are overcrowded, suppressed, slow-growing, damaged or diseased. A release removes competition from undesirable woody vegetation allowing the desirable trees more light, space, water and nutrients. Pruning not only opens the canopy so light can reach the forest floor, it also improves the health of the stand by removing damaged branches and eliminating double leaders. Herbaceous species beneficial to wildlife thrive in the opened canopy. Each of these activities improves the health and vigor of the forest resulting in a stand of trees that meets the objective of the producer.

Scheduled forest management activities should follow the specifications in the MN NRCS Field Office Tech Guide Practice Standard Forest Stand Improvement, Code 666 or Tree/Shrub Pruning, Code 660A. Further specifications are found in the standards for specific practices such as MN NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Establishment, Code 612; Riparian Forest Buffer, Code 391, Upland Wildlife Habitat Establishment, Code 645 and Wetland Wildlife Habitat Establishment, Code 644.

FREQUENCY

For tree/shrub planting practices in a 10-year contract schedule a release operation in years 5 or 6. This release is separate from the weed control maintenance activity required as part of the CRP contract. On 15-year contracts, schedule a thinning or a release operation in years 7-9 of the contract period to encourage tree growth, enhance crown development or maintain the herbaceous cover. Substitute pruning if herbaceous cover for wildlife habitat is more important than thinning or release.

COST SHARE

The cost share rate for mid-management practices is 50% of eligible costs up to \$50 per acre per year, **not to exceed**

- \$100/ac for 10-yr contracts
- \$125/ac for 10+yr contracts

