ATTACHMENT TO 666 FOREST STAND IMPROVEMENT JOB SHEET

EQIP 643-Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats PRACTICE GUIDELINES

EQIP FY 2009 Scenario: Convert cutover to Bottomland-Wetland Community
Practice Life: 15 years

Participant: _____
EQIP Contract Number: _____

Purposes of Cost Share Practice

- Restore specific forested land community/habitat degraded by human activity
- Increase native plant community diversity
- Management of unique or declining native habitats
- Provide habitat for rare and declining wildlife species by restoring and conserving native plant communities

Conditions for Practice Eligibility

- The landowner must participate in the EQIP application and contract; and, must meet all EQIP requirements including private nonindustrial forestland owner criteria. Other participants are subject to EQIP eligibility requirements.
- Practice scenario must be determined needed and feasible by a government agency wildlife biologist. Approval of restoration/management activities by a wildlife biologist is required. Tree establishment specifications will be prepared by a registered forester.

- CERTIFICATION by Applicant/Participant(s)

I understand that this scenario involves ecological restoration; and that,

---during the life of this practice, timber, pine straw, other forest product harvest and management activities MUST be recommended by a biologist to enhance restoration or further achieve the declining habitat community.

---all management activities MUST be approved by NRCS

---restored areas MUST be protected from destructive fire and domestic livestock grazing

---tree community restoration requires extensive management and a longer rotation cycle to approach native conditions

_____

Participant – Landowner Date

- Site must be existing cutover forestland SUITED to a riverine bottomland/wetland or non-riverine wetland forest community that is considered to be declining locally or statewide. These sites are generally predominantly hydric or floodplain soils. Refer to Schafle communities, NC Natural Heritage Program. Planting southern yellow pine (SYP) is not allowed...natural regeneration is allowed from coppice/seed if there is reasonable expectation that with management the expected tree species will populate the site.
- There is expectation that the 'restored' community could have been native or capable of being supported on the site (related to above).
- This scenario cannot be used to replant a treatment area that is currently under EQIP contract for a 643-Restoration scenario. In event of a planting/establishment failure, the 643 area under contract is eligible for reestablishment at existing EQIP payment rates for the most appropriate 490 - Tree Shrub Site Preparation and 612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment scenarios. *A 643 payment rate is not authorized for replanting trees that failed to establish.*

Minimum Practice Requirements (EQIP payment rate includes all practice requirements)

- Site preparation and tree planting plan to initiate restoration must be prepared by a registered forester. Tree planting/establishment rate must be <450 trees per acre unless >50% mortality is expected for the site.
- The payment rate for this practice covers any and all site materials and labor for site preparation and establishing the specified trees for the treatment area. No payments under 490 and 612 are authorized (except in the case of a planting failure that is being replanted).
- Site preparation and tree planting operations must comply with NC Forest Practice Guidelines and NC Forestry Best Management Practices Manual recommendations.
- Practice must be part of a contract that obligates at least $1000

Additional conservation planning criteria:

Practice 490-Tree/Shrub Site Preparation and 612-Tree/Shrub Establishment must be included in the conservation plan to document specifications for preparing and planting trees. Other conservation practices deemed required for management or protection of the restored areas MUST be included in the conservation plan and appropriate practice scenarios MAY be included in the EQIP contract. Expected recurring management practices required for restoration MUST be included in the conservation plan. Operation and maintenance should specify inspection intervals and that management must be approved by a wildlife biologist.

Considerations

- Application of this practice scenario should 'begin' the community type restoration. The applicant must be prepared to apply management/improvement activities in addition to initial establishment over an extended period of time (usually longer than the practice life). Land 'restored' under this EQIP practice and is eligible (not guaranteed) for future program cost share to continue manage for the selected declining community/habitat.
- Select pesticides that will preserve existing grass/forbs that are important to the declining habitat
- Active management of woodland for commercial forest products is required to maintain use-value property taxation in North Carolina. Though forest production is not the primary purpose of this scenario; valuable, high quality, commercial forest products should result over a long rotation cycle.
- When possible, time forest stand improvement to minimize disturbance of seasonal wildlife activities.
- Written contracts with a service provider or vendor are recommended. Contracts should cover things like: type, extent, timing or work, participant and vendor responsibilities, and payment provisions.
- Inspect stand regularly with a wildlife biologist/forester for future restoration management needs. Forest Stand Improvement will likely be needed to control woody competition in the restoration area.

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EQIP Practice Eligibility Checklist

The participant CANNOT participate in EQIP for this practice if any of the eligibility certifications are marked 'no'. No EQIP application should be pre-approved in PROTRACTS; no EQIP contract prepared; no EQIP payment authorized!

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** Participant is a private non industrial forest land owner (PNIF); or, landowner meets PNIF and is a party to the EQIP contract.

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** Stand meets scenario conditions for restoration. A biologist has visited the site and approved the planned restoration activities (see Minimum Practice Requirements above). Documentation should include site condition, type of community to be restored, recommended method and specifications for site preparation and tree planting. A registered forester has prepared a tree planting plan to start the restoration process.

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** This is not a replant for a failed 643 planting currently under EQIP contract.

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** Participant understands that this is an ecological restoration scenario and has signed the certification above (see Minimum Practice Requirements above).

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** Participant understands that treatment payment for this scenario covers all costs related to site preparation and tree planting.

Comments:

EQIP Practice Certification Checklist

Outcome/Result

EQIP payment for this practice scenario IS NOT AUTHORIZED if any of the eligibility certifications are marked 'no'

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** All minimum requirements to begin restoration are met (see Minimum Practice Requirements above). Site preparation and tree planting have been completed according to plan prepared by a registered forester.

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** Any completed forestry operations (site prep., planting, other) are in compliance with federal, state and local laws, regulations and ordinances.

Comments:

Follow-up Recommendations: Visit site or with participant the second year after treatment to review need for other restoration management if required.

Certification

Trees have been planted and initial conversation of cutover forestland to an appropriate bottomland-wetland tree community has been completed on _____ acres (area nearest 0.1 acre) per these practice guidelines and NC NRCS 643-Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats.

_____

Designated Conservationist Date