EQIP 666-Forest Stand Improvement PRACTICE GUIDELINES

EQIP FY 2009 Scenario: Establish forest openings for wildlife
Practice Life: 10 years

Participant: _____
EQIP Contract Number: _____

Purposes of Cost Share Practice

- To improve wildlife habitat

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 must be determined recommended, needed and feasible by an authorized wildlife biologist*. A wildlife management plan or other approval by a wildlife biologist is required.
  * authorized biologists include – NRCS, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, US Fish and Wildlife and Wildlife Society Certified biologists
- A wetland determination is required to insure compliance with USDA swamp buster provisions.

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

- North Carolina Practice Standard for Forest Stand Improvement (666), Additional Criteria to Improve Wildlife Habitat-Creating Forest Openings for Wildlife will be used to size forest openings. Individual openings cannot exceed 5 acres in size.
- Practice must be part of a contract that obligates at least $1000.
- Slash must be removed from openings (piled/burned, pushed and spread, etc). Clearing/stumping is not required.
- Openings must be actively managed for targeted wildlife for the life of the practice. Usually openings would be managed for early successional vegetation (through intermittent burning, light disking, etc.). Plantings, if used, must be specified for the targeted wildlife species or regime. Written specifications for managing openings must be prepared.

Additional conservation planning criteria:

The appropriate Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) or Early Successional Habitat Development and Management (647) are required in the conservation plan to document management of the openings.

Considerations

- Remove trees for specified openings during final or interim harvest, non-commercial thinning, or other forest stand improvement operations.
- Utilize logging decks and adjacent areas in stands > 15 years old for opening areas.
- Utilize logging decks and main haul roads and adjacent areas in younger stands (< 4" DBH) for opening areas.
- Utilize areas of low stem count/basal area due to mortality for opening areas.
- Removal/felling of dominant/codominant trees > 5 inch DBH should only be done if an existing, adjacent, open area needs to be enlarged to meet the wildlife opening criteria.

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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** Forest openings are determined recommended, needed and feasible by a wildlife biologist; and documented appropriately (see Minimum Practice Requirements above).

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** Planned forest opening areas are in compliance with USDA swamp buster provisions.

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** Established forest openings meet size requirements in NC Practice Standard 666; and, individual openings do not exceed 5 acres.

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** Slash has been removed from openings and openings are in a condition that planned management activities can be performed.

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** Written specifications for opening management has been prepared and provided to the participant…recurring activities should be specified for the life of the practice.

Comments:

Follow-up Recommendations: Visit site with participant the first and second year after forest openings are installed to check that openings are being actively managed as specified.

Certification

Forest Openings for Wildlife have been established on _____ acres (area nearest 0.1 acre) per these practice guidelines and NC NRCS 666-Timber Stand Improvement standard; and, that the participant understands and agrees to the management activities and management time frame specified for said forest openings.

_____

Designated Conservationist Date