EQIP 666-Forest Stand Improvement PRACTICE GUIDELINES

EQIP FY 2009 Scenario: Thinning pine stand for tree productivity and wildlife
Practice Life: 10 years

Participant: _____
EQIP Contract Number: _____

Purposes of Cost Share Practice

- To improve wildlife habitat; **and,**

to provide for one or more of the forestry purposes below

- Increase the quantity and quality of forest products
- Achieve a desired level of crop tree stocking, quality and quantity
- Improve forest health – reducing potential of damage from pests and moisture stress

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.
- Treatment area must be an overstocked or adequately stocked stand of Southern Yellow Pine (SYP) that can be commercially thinned. Documentation of stocking (and suitability for prescribed burning if applicable) must be included in a forest management, stewardship, practice or wildlife management plan written or approved by a registered forester or authorized wildlife biologist*.

  * authorized biologists include – NRCS, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, US Fish and Wildlife and Wildlife Society Certified biologists

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

- SYP stand must be thinned to a basal area that is 70-75% of the site index (D50) for the dominant SYP species. Site index (D50) may be calculated or estimated from soil survey tables by a forester.
- Commercial thinning operations must comply with the NC Forest Practice Guidelines and utilize appropriate NC Forestry Best Management Practices Manual recommendations related to this practice scenario.
- If a substantial hardwood component exists in the midstory or understory, then 666-Forest Stand Improvement, midstory-understory control MUST be planned and scheduled during the contract life.
- One of the following MUST be planned and scheduled during the contract life:

  338-Prescribed Burning on the area thinned

  666-Forest Stand Improvement-Forest openings for wildlife, on >5% of the area thinned
- Practice must be part of a contract that obligates at least $1000.

Additional conservation planning criteria:

Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) may be appropriate in the conservation plan especially if the participant plans to utilize prescribed burns in treated forestland at intervals of 5 years or less…to document targeted wildlife species or regimes and planned manipulation of the forest understory.

Considerations

- Recurring fire is important; implementing prescribed burning on a recurring basis is highly recommended to achieve the best wildlife benefits with this forest stand improvement scenario.
- Having and actively following a forest management plan is required to maintain forestland use-value for property taxation in North Carolina. EQIP forest stand improvement practices should qualify as active management of forest land. Contact the local county tax office for details on present use value rules.

- Market conditions and weather can delay implementation of this practice.
- Use of a registered consulting forester is recommended for commercial forest product sales.
- The SYP thinning level in this scenario is somewhat heavier (more open) than would be prescribed for intensive forest timber management which presents some risk. There is greater potential for wind throw and ice damage for a period of time after thinning...thinning early in the spring can help prevent these kinds of losses. Modeling indicates potential for reducing final harvest yields with this thinning regime but this generally only occurs when compared to very intensive forest management levels, which many private forest owners never achieve.

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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** Treatment area is a SYP stand that is overstocked or adequately stocked and capable of being commercially thinned. Thinning is determined feasible by a registered forester or authorized wildlife biologist; and documented appropriately (see Minimum Practice Requirements above). Documentation should include site index information, thinning method recommendations, suitability for prescribed burning; and if needed, recommendations for midstory/understory control.

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** If a substantial hardwood component exists in the midstory or understory, the participant has agreed to plan and schedule 666-Forest Stand Improvement, midstory-understory control during the contract life.

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** SYP stand is thinned to a basal area that is 70-75% of the site index (D50) for the dominant SYP species. Site Index _____ BA after thinning _____

☐ **yes** ☐ **no** The complete thinning operation is in compliance with all state and local laws, regulations and ordinances.

Comments:

Follow-up Recommendations: Visit site or with participant the first and second year after thinning to review need for midstory/understory control if required; and, discuss prescribed fire, if the site is capable of being burned.

Certification

Thinning SYP for Tree Productivity and Wildlife had been completed on _____ acres (area nearest 0.1 acre) per these practice guidelines and NC NRCS 666-Forest Stand Improvement standard.

_____

Designated Conservationist Date