NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE SPECIFICATION

FOREST TRAILS AND LANDINGS

(Acre)
CODE 655

GENERAL SPECIFICATION

Procedures, technical details and other information listed below provide additional guidance for carrying out selected components. This material supplements the criteria and considerations listed in the conservation practice standard.

Planning Considerations

On forest and woodlands in New Mexico the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides technical assistance through the local service foresters. A landowner harvesting over 25 acres per year must obtain a state permit from the service forester and have a regeneration plan. The local service forester can produce the regeneration plan or a consultant can do the work. The local service forester maintains a list of state certified consultant foresters. Forest trails and landings are usually an integral component of a forest and woodland management plan. Always check with the local service forester when making site-specific specifications on forest and woodlands.

DEFINITION

A route, travel-way or cleared area within a forest or woodland.

PURPOSES

- To provide access to forest stands for management.
- Provide access for collection and removal of forest products.
- Provide access to forested areas for recreation.
- Minimize on-site and off-site damage to resources during periods of access.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On forested areas.

CRITERIA

Trails and landings will be of a size, gradient, number and location to accomplish removal and collection of forest products while minimizing adverse on-site and off-site impacts. Adverse impacts include, but are not limited to, accelerated erosion, riparian zone degradation, stream channel and streambank damage, other water resource damage, or unacceptable damage to vegetation or habitat.

Timing and use of equipment will be commensurate with site and soil conditions to maintain site productivity and minimize soil erosion, displacement and compaction, and protect cultural resources.

Slash, debris and vegetative material left on the site after construction will not present an unacceptable fire or pest hazard or interfere with the intended purpose.

Water bars, rolling dips and other drainage management measures for trails and landings shall be of sufficient size, intervals and gradient for adequate drainage and erosion control.

Comply with applicable laws and regulations, including New Mexico Best Management Practices (BMPs).

CONSIDERATIONS

Assure safe ingress and egress to site.

Locate landings and trails to preserve landscape aesthetics.

Trails and landings should be sufficiently revegetated and or mulched following periods of peak use to control erosion.

Landings and trails may be closed for erosion control, safety and liability reasons, and to reduced maintenance costs.

Landing and trails may be used for wildlife food and cover plantings.

Landings and trails may be utilized as firebreaks.

Landings and trails should minimize habitat fragmentation and not adversely impact wildlife movement and critical habitat.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans will address proper design of trails and landings.

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan or other acceptable documentation.

Specifications for revegetation of landings and trails should include selection of non-invasive species (preferably native adapted genotypes), timing, and method of application.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Periodic inspections of landings and trails will be conducted and necessary repairs applied to assure proper function of the practice. Examples of items that must be repaired include, but are not limited to, ruts, erosion areas, and depressions created by equipment movement or stored forest products.

Landings and trails utilized as firebreaks will be properly maintained to accomplish this purpose.

Detailed operation and maintenance requirements are addressed in the site specific specification for this practice.

Periodic inspections during treatment activities are necessary to ensure that objectives are achieved and resource damage is minimized. Contact the local NRCS conservationist immediately when unexpected problems, questions arise during practice installation.

References:

Adams Paul W., Soil Compaction on Woodland properties, Oregon State University Extension Circular 1109 Dated 09/1997

Garland, John J., Designated Skid Trails Minimize Compaction, Oregon State University Extension Circular 1110 Dated 09/1997

U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Region 3 FSH2509.22 - Soil and Water Conservation Practices Handbook, Dated 12/03/1990

Brozka, Robert J., New Mexico Natural Resources Department, Forestry Division, Water Quality Protection Guidelines for Forestry Operations in New Mexico Dated 03/1983

New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Forestry and Resources Conservation Division New Mexico Forest Practices Guidelines Dated 10/1990

New Mexico Natural Resources Department, Soil and Water Conservation Division, Reducing Erosion from Unpaved Rural Roads in New Mexico Dated 11/1983

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