Small Woodlot Improvement

Small Scale Solutions for your Farm

NRCS
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Do You Have Problems with Unproductive/ Overcrowded Woodlands?

Small woodlot improvement includes cutting or killing selected trees to encourage the growth of desirable trees.

Seeking the advice of a professional forester is also highly recommended. The state division of forestry or similar agency(s) may also provide assistance.

Purposes and Benefits of Small Woodlot Improvement:

- Improvements are easy to conduct.
- Trees usually respond rapidly to management.
- Wood removed can be used to supplement income or can be used as a source of heat energy for the home or farm.
- Wildlife benefits by providing more open areas and sunlight for small plants.
- Wildfire hazards are reduced.

Wood can be used as a source of firewood, fence posts, or lumber for the home or farm.

Costs and Benefits:

This practice is relatively inexpensive to perform. Landowners can usually do the cutting/removal themselves or contract the services.

Costs may or may not include hauling wood which can be offset if wood is sold as firewood.

Energy needs can be supplemented by using excess wood on the farm or home.

Small Woodlot Improvement

The following describes the types of practices that may be needed depending on the current conditions of the woodlot and the objectives the landowner.

Thinning is needed where the stand of desirable and undesirable trees are overstocked.

The material removed from thinning is generally too small for sawtimber, but can have value as firewood, fence posts and other specialty uses.

Cull tree removal is the practice of cutting down or killing non saleable trees, including wolf trees, deformed trees, and weed trees for the purpose of providing room for the main crop trees to increase their development in the main stand.

If you are contacted to sell your trees to a logger, always seek professional advice in order to protect the forest resource and to insure you get the true value for your trees.

Implementation of forest practices to enhance the immediate regeneration of new trees is the most significant difference between good forest management and unethical logging.

Intermediate cutting removes trees from a stand between establishment and the final harvest cutting providing space for growth of the better trees that will yield the greatest return in the future. Start thinning at the earliest age that the cutting will provide sufficient wood products to make a profitable operation.

Harvest cutting is made in a stand at or near the end of a selected rotation age and done in such a way as to insure regeneration of a new stand of trees.
Perform a harvest cut after the majority of the trees in the stand have reached harvest size.

Maintenance

Very little maintenance is required for this practice. A series of progressive improvements may be needed over the life of the tree stand to maintain healthy tree growth. Insects and fire should be managed to prevent destruction or loss of the desired tree species.

How To Install The Practice:
Crop tree release focuses on releasing and increasing the growth rate of individual trees that have been selected to accomplish specific landowner objectives.

For all tree species, crop trees should generally meet the following selection criteria to meet the indicated objective:

Wildlife:
- large healthy crown in full sun
- favor fruit and nut trees
- cavity trees with longevity >10 years

Timber:
- large healthy crown in full sun
- no low forks or large branches
- high value commercial species expected longevity> 20 years

Aesthetics:
- attractive flowers and/or foliage
- expected longevity> 20 years
- unusual species and/or tree form visible from house, road or trail

Other Benefits from Improvements:

- provide a source of added income
- provide energy for farm or home use
- improve the health and production of the woodland
- remove undesired or dead trees
- reduce risks to fire hazard

Enhancing the forest resource can provide additional environmental benefits such as:
- carbon sequestration (capture)
- enhanced wildlife resources
- fence posts
- aesthetic and recreational benefits
- wood can be sold as firewood or utilized to provide energy for use in the home or on the farm

Help is Available

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

SMALL SCALE SOLUTIONS FOR YOUR FARM

Technical Help Is Available

Your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office has experienced conservationists that can assist you with a plan to improve your small woodlot. They can also help you develop a Conservation Plan to solve other problems you have identified on your farm.

There is no charge for our assistance. Simply call your local office at the number listed below to set up an appointment and we will come to your farm.

You may also be eligible to receive financial assistance, through a state or federal program. Your NRCS office will explain any programs that are available so you can make the best decision for your operation. All NRCS programs and services are voluntary.

Helping People Help the Land

For More Information Contact the:

Natural Resources Conservation Service

60 Quaker Lane, Suite 46
Warwick, RI 02886
(401) 828-1300
Web Address: www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov
E-mail Address: NRCSInfo@ri.usda.gov

NRCS accepts applications on a continuous basis throughout the year.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basic of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-9410, or call (202) 720-5964 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

January 2009