EQIP PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645): Forest Land RMS Criteria Met
Practice Life: 3 years

Participant: _____
EQIP Contract Number: _____

Purposes of Cost Share Practice: This practice scenario is designed to improve the overall habitat suitability of forested land. To accomplish this objective, a Conservation Plan will be planned and implemented that meets or exceeds NRCS Resource Management System (RMS) level quality criteria. A Wildlife RMS is implemented by planning and applying conservation practices that remove habitat limiting conditions consistent with landowner objectives and NRCS inventory tools.

Conditions for Practice Eligibility: Participant must meet all EQIP requirements to be eligible for financial assistance. The planned land unit must be owned by participant or the owner must adequately designate that participant has control of the land for the life of the contract. Forest land is the only land use to be considered for eligibility.

Minimum Practice Requirements: In order for practice to be certified, the following requirements must be met:

- Contract duration shall be a minimum of four (4) years, with practice scheduled and cost-shared for three (3) consecutive years.
- Planned land unit must be a minimum of 50 acres OR there must be adjacent land with a current or planned condition producing a suitability of 0.50 or greater totaling 50 acres.
  (*Example: 50 acre forested tract OR 25 acres forest and 25 acres crop with suitability score >0.50*)
  Note: Forested acres are the only acres eligible for cost share assistance under this practice scenario.
- The NRCS Wildlife Habitat Suitability Index (WHSI) found in the NC-FOTG-Section III will be utilized to document benchmark and planned conditions.
- Conservation Plan and WHSI must be approved by NRCS biologist, state or federal agency biologist or Certified Wildlife Biologist.
- The WHSI must indicate a PLANNED CONDITION with a habitat index of **0.50** or greater AND indicate that the net effect results in a habitat condition improvement greater than **0.30**. Cost share assistance is broken into two categories; $\geq$0.30 improvement and $\geq$0.50 improvement.

Measurement for payment and certification will be rounded to the nearest whole acre. Practice must be part of a contract that obligates at least $1000.

Considerations

- Active management of woodland is required to maintain use-value property taxation in North Carolina. A forest management plan developed to maintain use-value property tax should include EQIP forest stand improvement practices.
- When possible, time management practices to minimize disturbance of seasonal wildlife activities.
- Utilization of this practice scenario DOES NOT restrict the use of other EQIP/WHIP practices that support the objectives of the Conservation Plan.
- Inspect stand regularly for future habitat needs.
- Prescribed burning is highly recommended in areas that are capable of being burned.

EQIP Practice Eligibility Checklist

☐ yes ☐ no Participant meets all EQIP requirements and is eligible to receive financial assistance.

☐ yes ☐ no The WHSI has been correctly prepared and indicates that the PLANNED CONDITION will produce a habitat index of 0.50 or greater.

☐ yes ☐ no The WHSI demonstrates that the PLANNED CONDITION will produce a net effect improvement of habitat condition by: ☐ ≥ 0.30 over benchmark condition.
☐ ≥ 0.50 over benchmark condition.

☐ yes ☐ no Location is clearly identified on the contract plan map and acreage to the nearest acre has been determined for treatment area.

Comments:

EQIP Practice Certification Checklist

☐ yes ☐ no Conservation practices have been installed to NRCS specifications producing the expected results as defined in the WHSI Planned Condition.

☐ yes ☐ no The completed upland wildlife management operation is in compliance with all state and local laws, regulations and ordinances.

Comments:

Certification
This practice has been installed according to NRCS specifications and meets the EQIP requirements and the Upland Wildlife Management Habitat (645) practice criteria.

The habitat suitability of _____ acres (to nearest acre) have been enhanced to the level described in this practice guideline document.

_____

Designated Conservationist Date

2nd and 3rd Operation and Maintenance Recordkeeping:

Date of Inspection	*Acres In Compliance*	*Participant initials*	*Designated Conservationist initials/comments*