

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
ILLINOIS CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

FOREST TRAILS AND LANDINGS

(Acre)

CODE 655

DEFINITION

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

PURPOSE

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

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On forested areas.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Trails and landings will be of a size, gradient, number and location to economically and efficiently accomplish the intended purpose and accommodate expected users and equipment. Trails and landings shall be configured to minimize adverse onsite and off-site impacts such as accelerated erosion, riparian zone degradation, stream channel and streambank damage, hydrologic modification, forest fragmentation, restricted wildlife movement, degraded aesthetics or unacceptable damage to advance regeneration, residual growing stock, or wildlife 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. Activities will be scheduled for times when soils are dry or frozen. Activities will be limited when soils are saturated.

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.

Trails and landings where appropriate will be sufficiently revegetated to control erosion. See practice standard CRITICAL AREA PLANTING (342). Noxious or invasive plants will not be used for revegetation.

Comply with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations during the installation, operation and maintenance of this practice. Appropriate cultural resources review will be conducted before beginning any practice that results in soil disturbance.

For haul road construction see practice standard ACCESS ROAD (560).

Landings and Yarding Areas

Locate landings or yarding areas before developing skid roads and trails. Preferred sites include ridgetops, well-drained areas, areas close to an all-weather road, and/or sites close to the stand being harvested. The areas should have some slope to facilitate drainage. Construct road approaches to the area at a slight grade to divert road drainage from the landing area.

Do not locate landings within 200 feet of streams, ponds, lakes or wetlands.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**NRCS, Illinois
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Revegetate abandoned landings and yarding areas. See practice standard CRITICAL AREA PLANTING (342).

Harvest Trails

Before installing or constructing a ford, culvert, or bridge across any intermittent or perennial stream contact the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Water Resources, or US Army Corps of Engineers regarding the possible need for a permit. See Protecting Illinois Waters in References.

Water bars, rolling dips, timber bridges, rock plunge pools, and other drainage measures for trails will be of sufficient size, interval and gradient for adequate drainage and erosion control. See Forestry Best Management Practices for Illinois in References.

Adjust spacing to place water bars at abrupt gradient changes. Protect the discharge area from water bars with stone, grass sod, brush, logs, or other materials that will reduce the velocity of the runoff and control scouring.

Revegetate abandoned harvest trails. See practice standard CRITICAL AREA PLANTING (342).

Additional Criteria for Off-Site Damage to Forest Resources

Simple, low-cost post structures (log weirs, non-living stockades, post, wire, and brush checks) can help arrest head cuts and minor headwaters gully formation. For addressing gully erosion in headwater areas of forestlands see Conservation Field Trials for Alternative Forest Land Erosion Control Practices in References.

CONSIDERATIONS

Refer to Forestland Interpretations in the county soil survey report for guidance in directing practice activities.

Assure safe ingress and egress to site.

If compacted soils exist, use deep plowing or subsoiling to improve soil texture before revegetating.

Locate landings and trails to preserve aesthetic qualities. See A Guide to Logging Aesthetics in References.

When harvesting has been completed, landings and trails may be used for wildlife food and cover plantings.

Landings and trails may be utilized as firebreaks.

Consider cultural resources and environmental concerns such as threatened and endangered species of plants and animals, natural areas and wetlands.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

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 species, timing and method of application.

For specifications regarding waterbars, culverts, broad-based dips, stream crossings, etc. see Forestry Best Management Practices for Illinois in References.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Periodic inspections of landings and trails will be conducted and where necessary repairs will be made.

Landings and trails utilized as firebreaks will be properly maintained to accomplish this purpose. See practice standard FIREBREAK (394)

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

Landings and trails no longer needed can be "put to bed" by removing high maintenance structures, such as culverts and bridges, and can be restored to a vegetative cover by planting and seeding. If compacted soils exist, use deep plowing or subsoiling to improve soil texture before revegetating

REFERENCES

A Guide to Logging Aesthetics: Practical Tips for Loggers, Foresters and Landowners. NE For. Res. Ext. Council pub. NRAES-60, 1993
<http://www.nraes.org/publications/nraes60.html>

A Landowners Guide to Building Forest Access Roads. Wiest, R.L., USDA-Forest Service, NE Area S&PF pub. NA-TP-06-98, 1998.
<http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/stewardship/accessroads/accessroads.htm>

Conservation Field Trials for Alternative Forest Land Erosion Control Practices. USDA-NRCS, Champaign, IL and Brown Co. SWCD, 1995

Forestry and Water Quality: Pollution Control Practices. Pope, P.E. Purdue Univ. pub. FNR-88. 1993
<http://www.agcom.purdue.edu/AgCom/Pubs/FNR/FNR-88.html>.

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<http://ilvirtualforest.nres.uiuc.edu/page56.html>

Forestry Handbook, Second Edition: Society of American Foresters. Ronald Press. 1984

Protecting Illinois Waters, IEPA ,IDNR, & USACE, 1995.
<http://dnr.state.il.us/waterresources/apform.htm>