

## CSP Job Sheet OH-EHM-11 Habitat Management Brush Piles

### BRUSH PILES - Habitat Management Enhancement #11

**DESCRIPTION** – This enhancement improves habitat through construction and maintenance of brush piles along field edges. These brush piles provide important cover from predators and the weather as well as additional food sources for a variety of wildlife.

### Enhancement Requirements

The producer will construct and maintain suitable brush piles adjacent to appropriate habitat. Up to 4 brush piles per acre of habitat may be constructed and no more than 6 acres of habitat per contract will be allowed for payment.



Brush piles should be placed at field edges near windbreaks, edges of woods or wetlands, field borders, food plots or vegetated ditch or stream banks. Brush piles can also be placed in or near large areas of grassy cover such as CRP land or pastures. Brush piles should be spaced at least 150 feet apart.

Brush piles should have a base that is at least 100 square feet. It is important to provide a solid, rot resistant base. The base can be constructed from large (over 5") logs and branches, large hardwood stumps or other large diameter material. If using large branches or logs, these may be laid side by side or they may be criss-crossed to provide den space at the bottom as well. An alternative method to providing den space at the bottom is to use several 6-8" clay or concrete tiles placed end to end. Smaller brush and branches are placed on top of the base to provide the open space which animals will use for nesting, roosting or cover. The smaller branches may be layered on top of the base to build a mounded structure or leaned up to provide a more teepee-like structure. Avoid using too much small diameter twigs or brush as this will decrease the amount of desirable open space within the brush pile. This very small brush may be placed on top to provide better cover for preventing excess snow or rain from getting onto the pile. Piles should be constructed at least 5'-6' high.

Brush piles do not need much care. Since the dead material will decay and the pile will shrink over time, it is a good idea to add some new brush every year or two. This will keep the structure large enough. The decaying branches will provide a good source of insects and other invertebrates as food for the animals using the brush pile. If the brush pile is in a grassy area, avoid mowing right up to the base of the pile. Do not burn the piles.

### Performance Requirements

Producer will certify annually the maintenance of the structures by signing the Ohio *Habitat Management Enhancement Summary Sheet*, and submit to the NRCS office servicing the contract. Payment will be per acre at rate of 4 brush piles per acre. Payment will be paid every year. The payment for this enhancement will commence with the next payment cycle after the enhancement is in place or with the first year contract payment if it is already in place.