

## **Brush Management**

(Acres) 314

### **Definition**

The management or removal of woody (non-herbaceous or succulent) plants including those that are invasive and noxious as listed by the MA Department of Agricultural Resources.

### **Condition Where Practice Applies**

On non-industrial forest land, pasture and lands dedicated to wildlife where the removal, reduction, or manipulation of woody (non-herbaceous or succulent) plants is desired. Cropland is not eligible.

### **Massachusetts Practice Intent**

This practice may be applied as part of a conservation management system to accomplish one or more of the following purposes:

- Improve forest regeneration or enhance a native community of desired species by controlling understory and over represented plants such as beech, hobble bush, moose maple and state listed invasive woody plants.
- Control invasive species to improve wildlife habitat forage, accessibility, quality and quantity, etc.
  - MA prohibited plants list: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/farm-products/plants/massachusetts-prohibited-plant-list.html>
- Improve forage, accessibility, quality and quantity for livestock on existing pasture.

### **NRCS Program Policy**

- A forest management plan is required on all forest land applications per EQIP policy (515.80(C))
  - For beech or other undesirable native regeneration control, the practice must be recommended in a DCR approved forest management plan. The plan must detail the location, method and intensity of treatment, i.e. percent of understory and/or mid-story to be treated.
  - For invasive species control, it is not required that the practice be recommended in the plan. The planners will inventory, document and recommend the practice in the conservation plan.
- Brush Management has a 10 year lifespan and per general EQIP policy (512.22(E) and 512.0(H) – land enrolled in USDA programs is ineligible to receive financial assistance or other benefits under EQIP for the same practice on the same land) can only be planned once in 10 years on a unit of land.

### **Program Payments are authorized for:**

- To manually or chemically control native and/or invasive woody species (see scenarios for eligible control methods).
- To remove undesired native understory species prior to or following a forest thinning, shelterwood or seed tree cut, or enhance wildlife habitat. (Forest management plan must prescribe the practice).
- For reclaiming field edges and fence rows.

### **Program Payments are not authorized for:**

- To create or expand cropland for agricultural production (i.e. brush clearing, invasive species control on crop or hay land)

## **Further Requirements Applicable to Specific Scenarios:**

### **Mechanical-Chemical**

- For treating dense, tall thickets of native or invasive woody plants where the plants are too tall for foliar spraying and too thick to even access the center of the thicket. An initial mowing with a fecon-type mower is needed to reduce the size of the plants. This scenario is not for low-growing plants that can easily be sprayed. The initial mechanical portion may also include physical removal of the plant and root system with a tractor or excavator. When sufficient leaf area has re-grown from the cut plants or severed roots, the plants are foliar-sprayed to complete the treatment. This may occur over two years. Payment is not made until after the foliar application is completed.

### **Chemical Moderate Control**

- For cut-stump, basal bark or foliar herbicide application of native or invasives with less than 75% coverage of the planned area. These are considered light to moderate infestations. Access is good.

### **Chemical Moderate & Follow-up**

- For two complete treatments, as described in the Chemical Moderate Control Scenario. The two treatments need to occur in different years. An inspection is made at the end of each treatment to ensure success. Payment is not made until the end of the second treatment.

### **Chemical Difficult Control**

- For cut-stump, basal bark or foliar herbicide application of native or invasives with more than 75% coverage of the planned area. These are considered heavy infestations.

### **Chemical Difficult Control & Follow-up**

- For two complete treatments, as described in the Chemical Difficult Scenario. The two treatments need to occur in different years. An inspection is made at the end of each treatment to ensure success. Payment is not made until the end of the second treatment.

### **Light Mechanical**

- For the physical removal of invasive plants, including roots, with a tractor or excavator. Plants are <2" DBH. This is NOT for mowing of invasive plants. This scenario is the alternative to the mechanical-chemical scenario for landowners who are not willing to treat re-sprouts and new seedlings with herbicide. Re-sprouts must be controlled via intensive livestock grazing or mowing.

### **Medium Mechanical**

- For the physical removal of invasive plants, including roots, with a tractor or excavator. Plants are 2" DBH or greater. This is NOT for mowing of invasive plants. This scenario is the alternative to the mechanical-chemical scenario for landowners who are not willing to treat re-sprouts and new seedlings with herbicide. Re-sprouts must be controlled via intensive livestock grazing or mowing.

### **Brush Hog**

- For the mowing of native woody vegetation. This is not for mowing invasive species.