

For: AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, TX, and VA State and County Offices

**Revised Understory Policy for Longleaf Pine Initiative**

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Farm Programs



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

On October 18, 2006, the Administrator announced that 250,000 acres have been made available for continuous enrollment in CRP to benefit longleaf pine.

**Note:** Notices CRP-541 and CRP-546 were issued to provide policy for the Longleaf Pine Initiative.

The Longleaf Pine Initiative is only applicable to portions of:

- Alabama
- Florida
- Georgia
- Louisiana
- Mississippi
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Texas
- Virginia.

**B Purpose**

This notice provides policy clarification for:

- understory regeneration
- prescribed burning.

<b>Disposal Date</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
May 1, 2007	Above State Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices, FS, and NRCS

## Notice CRP-554

### 2 Policy

#### A Understory Regeneration

Natural regeneration may be allowed if **all** the following are met.

- NRCS or the Technical Service Provider (TSP) determines both of the following:
  - an adequate seed source of approved understory species is present in the soil at the site
  - under normal conditions, the appropriate understory cover will be established within 2 years of CRP-1 effective date.
- Erosion and runoff will be controlled during the establishment period.
- Weeds, including noxious weeds, and other nonapproved plant species will be controlled during the establishment period.
- COC shall **not** approve CRP-1 until all of the requirements are met. COC shall ensure the producer is fully informed that:
  - no C/S will be paid for natural regeneration
  - if the approved cover is not established within 2 years of the CRP-1 effective date, the producer will be required to plant the approved cover with no C/S
  - as with all CRP contracts, the control of all weeds, including noxious weeds, insects, and pests is a CRP participant contracted obligation.
- The conservation plan signed by the producer requires all of the following:
  - the producer will plant the approved cover at no cost to FSA or CCC according to a revised conservation plan if the practice is not established through natural regeneration or planting within 2 years of CRP-1 effective date
  - NRCS or TSP shall spot check the site at the end of the 2nd year to determine whether the practice is established and meets the standards and specifications for NRCS conservation practice codes
  - weed control.

**Note:** FSA must immediately notify COC and the participant:

- of the result of the spot check
- that the participant must plant the approved cover with no C/S according to a revised conservation plan, if applicable.
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**2 Policy (Continued)**

**A Understory Regeneration (Continued)**

For understory vegetation, native cover established through natural regeneration may suffice for temporary cover. Technical determination on natural regeneration should be made by the technical agency responsible for development of the conservation plan, or if understory vegetation is to be enhanced, seeding commercially available native seed may supplement natural regeneration.

STC's must develop natural regeneration requirements in consultation with the State Technical Committee. STC's will work with the State Technical Committee to determine which native warm season grasses are appropriate for their State. If natural regeneration does not occur in the given 2-year time period, a producer will be required to establish native warm season grasses as specified by the State Technical Committee standards.

Wiregrass or other appropriate native warm season grasses providing similar benefits shall be established to provide:

- wildlife benefits
- fuel for prescribed burns.

**B Prescribed Burning**

The State Office shall consult with the State Technical Committee about options for required mid-contract management activities. If prescribed burning, selective herbicide application, and/or other measures are determined appropriate as mid-contract management, then cost share is authorized.

**3 Action**

**A State Office Action**

State Offices shall provide a copy of this notice to:

- County Offices and ensure that County Offices understand the provisions of this notice
- NRCS State Conservationist and State Forester
- notify NRCS, State Forester, and State wildlife agencies
- work with the State Technical Committee to develop specific recommendations on using natural regeneration.

**B County Office Action**

County Offices shall follow the provisions of this notice.