Practice Guidelines of the SPB Cost Share Program

Most Southern Pine Beetle (SPB) outbreaks are associated with pine stands that are stressed from being overly dense. The SPB Cost Share Program seeks to mitigate future loss from SPB by managing pine density through Prevention and Restoration practices. These practices ensure that a pine stand will be of merchantable size before the stress of being overly dense develops. Receiving income and maintaining vigorous growth are usually enough incentives for landowners to thin merchantable sized pine stands and, in return, reduce the potential loss from SPB.

In order for this program to be successful, guidelines are in place for both Prevention and Restoration practices. And to ensure these guidelines are followed by participating landowners, negative consequences for noncompliance are in place as well. **As a participating landowner, it is your responsibility to ensure the contractors follow the guidelines listed below so that you do not experience negative consequences from noncompliance.**

1. Prevention: Precommercial Thinning (PT)

A. Guidelines: An eligible stand will be planted or natural in origin, contain **≥700 pine stems per acre***, and be at least 4yrs of age. There is no maximum age; however, landowners with pine stands greater than 15yrs of age are encouraged to conduct a commercial thinning (stems removed and sold) first and a PT second if the stand still meets the density requirements after the commercial thinning. Only PT is eligible for cost share, and the required residual density is **545 pine stems per acre** (± 10%) or an average spacing of **9' X 9' or 8' X 10.'**

B. Compliance: Cost share rate will be 60% of costs up to $94/acre or whichever is less.

C. Noncompliance: Completed stands not within compliance may result in additional stems being removed before receiving funds, or a reduced cost share rate if additional stems are not removed. The reduced cost share rate will be 40% of costs up to $62/acre or whichever is less.

2. Restoration: Planting

A. Guidelines: For all selected species, a minimum of 300 stems per acre* must be present after the first growing season, and open land planting and the conversion of hardwood stands to pine are not allowed. Planting first and releasing with herbicides second is not allowed, and natural pine regeneration must be controlled prior to planting.

1) **Loblolly:** 484 stems per acre (± 10%) or 9' X 10' average spacing
2) **Longleaf:** 545 stems per acre (± 10%) or 8' X 10' average spacing
3) **Hardwood:** No maximum density requirements. However, planted stands must be of native species, at least 100' wide, and ≥1 contiguous acre.

B. Compliance: Cost share rates are based on 50% of the statewide average cost.

C. Noncompliance: Completed stands not within compliance will result in a total loss of funds- **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

For more information regarding guidelines under the SPB Cost share Program, please contact your SCFC County Project or SPB Forester or view the complete guidelines at the following address: http://www.state.sc.us/forest/spbguide.pdf

***Stems per Acre:** This is easily calculated by dividing the square feet of an acre (43,560ft^2) by the square feet of the average spacing, which is the average square feet per stem. Essentially, you are trying to figure out how many of those square feet sections (stems) you can place in an acre. Average spacing can be calculated by taking the square root of the result after dividing the square feet of an acre by the number of stems per acre.

Examples:

- **Stems per acre:** An average spacing of 8' X 8' will result in 680 stems per acre (43,560ft^2/acre ÷ 64ft^2/stem).
- **Spacing:** 680 stems per acre will result in an average spacing of 8' among stems (√ (43,560ft^2/acre ÷ 680 stems/acre))

Rev. 4/01/16