



TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE

Reforestation: Shearing for Site Preparation

Shearing is a method of mechanical site preparation used to gain planter access after a final harvest. This method can be used if there is not a large amount of debris or standing stems present on site. If too much debris exists, shearing and raking, mulching or some other site preparation method would be needed.

Description:

Shearing, also known as shear-only, is accomplished by using a dozer with a V-cutting blade to shear off remaining debris at the ground level. Most often the shearing is done on anticipated planting row centers. This could take one or two passes depending on the amount of debris present. During planting season seedlings can be planted in the middle of the sheared path by hand or wildland machine planters. The recommended time frame for shear only is from June through September.

Benefits:

Generally less soil is disturbed or moved by this method than by methods such as shear and rake only making this practice more suited to steeper slopes and deep sandy soil

types. Also, the shearing operation is less expensive than other site preparation methods and should allow access for a wildland machine planter resulting in a more uniform spacing, better survival, etc.

Other Recommendations:

Care should be taken to disturb as little soil as possible during this procedure by shearing vegetation off at or very near the ground line. As with most mechanical site preparation methods, shear only should be conducted along the contour of the land to help prevent soil erosion. The Streamside Management Zones (SMZs) along streams should be protected by planning the use of this equipment so as to minimize disturbance of these areas. Site preparation activities should skirt SMZs and stream channels. Any debris should be placed well above the ordinary high water mark of any stream, or body of open water. Many of the competing species on the site will likely resprout and the planting area will need to be broadcast, band, or spot treated with an acceptable herbicide mix to promote seedling growth and survival. Extra care should be taken to avoid soil compaction on clayey soils and on wet sites.

