

Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM 14 - Riparian forest buffer, terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat



Enhancement Description

The activity consists of the managing forested riparian zones to achieve stream side cover and vegetative diversity and structure to improve terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat.

Land Use Applicability

Cropland, pastureland, rangeland and forestland

Benefits

Targeted conservation measures are implemented to enhance habitat for aquatic species such as fish, turtles, frogs, salamanders, aquatic insects and other species of concern in

riparian zones of rivers or streams and their floodplains. These measures include re-location of equipment or forest management activities out of riparian zones and floodplains, and riparian forest stand management to increase tree canopy cover to streams or rivers and standing snags for riparian wildlife.

Criteria

This enhancement is implemented mainly by managing existing live trees and shrubs. The producer will apply and maintain management actions specifically for improving or protecting natural riparian zones and their functions associated with terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat. These actions include:

1. The width of forested riparian zones must be wider than the NRCS State standard width for Riparian Forest Buffers to a maximum width of 150 feet.
2. Manage the riparian area to maintain a diversity of non-invasive tree, shrub, and herbaceous species by techniques such as selective thinning, controlled grazing, prescribed burning, selective use of herbicides and/or the planting of native species.
3. Retain existing snags or create new snags by girdling live trees of at least one/acre.
4. Manage the riparian vegetation to provide tree canopy shade of the stream and good stream side cover.
5. Do not use heavy equipment such as bull dozers and tractors within the forested riparian zone to implement enhancement activities.

Documentation Requirements

Following implementation of this activity, the landowner must document:

1. Management activities conducted in the riparian zone for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat.
2. Delineations on a map or aerial photo indicating the stream channel length where the riparian zone has improved habitat.

Michigan Supplement

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To be eligible for this enhancement, the existing riparian buffer must meet or exceed the minimum widths listed in Table 1 of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Michigan conservation practice standard Riparian Forest Buffer (391) located in the electronic Field Office Guide (eFOTG), Section IV.

Further, enhancement activities must meet all other applicable NRCS Michigan conservation practice standards such as Forest Stand Improvement (666), Tree/Shrub Pruning (660), Herbaceous Weed Control (315), Brush Management (314), in the eFOTG, Section IV.

Select trees and shrubs that will provide habitat for the target wildlife species, improve diversity, and are suited to the soil as identified by the Soil Survey and/or Conservation Tree/Shrub Suitability Groups (CTSG) tool located in the eFOTG, Section II, Folder K.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Michigan:

- Do not remove timber from RFBs with slopes greater than 50%.
- Plan any tree harvesting or cutting to leave at least 60 sq. ft. of residual basal area.
- Do not cut any trees growing along the stream bank.
- Create or maintain 4 to 7 snags (standing dead trees) per acre.
 - With at least 1 snag per acre greater than 12” in diameter at breast height (measured 4.5 ft from the ground), if possible.