

**Water Quality Enhancement Activity – WQL23 – Protection of sensitive areas on winter grazing land**



**Enhancement Description**

This enhancement is for the protection of riparian and other identified sensitive areas that are susceptible to degradation when used for wind protection by livestock.

**Land Use Applicability**

Pastureland and rangeland

**Benefits**

Properly placing a wind shelter (away from riparian and sensitive areas) protects livestock

from the weather, while protecting water resources from degradation that results when livestock concentrate in an area. Alternative wind shelters minimize adverse impacts around riparian areas that offer natural protection by reducing the potential to concentrate nutrients around water sources, and reducing bank disturbance, soil compaction and excessive trampling of riparian or sensitive area vegetation. The proper placement of these alternative shelters results in improvements to water quality and animal health.

**Criteria**

1. Producers are required to use one type of alternative shelter to provide livestock with protection from wind
2. Alternative shelter design criteria and placement must follow state Land Grant University guidelines or NRCS design criteria
3. Fabricated shelter designs will meet the need of the entire herd
4. Supplemental feeding or mineral supplements will not be permitted within ¼ mile (1,320 ft) of riparian areas, water courses or water bodies

**Documentation Requirements**

1. A map showing the planned location(s) of fabricated shelter(s) in each pasture
2. An approved fabricated shelter design
3. Photographs showing shelters in the field



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**Reference:**

- **528 – Prescribed Grazing**
- **590 – Nutrient Management**

Every wintering site is unique and management practices should be selected specific to that site. A wintering site is the area where livestock are fed stockpiled forage and/or hay or other feeds during the winter months. Sensitive areas on wintering sites or winter grazing lands must be protected from degradation when used as wind shelter.

Sensitive Areas in Minnesota include riparian areas; floodplains that flood 50-100 times in 100 years; perennial streams; intermittent streams that flow continuously over extended periods; protected lakes and wetlands identified on Minnesota Department of Natural Resources protected waters and wetland maps; off field ditches; and areas upslope from sinkholes, wells, springs, open tile intakes and mines and quarries.

**Note:**

*Removal of woody vegetation on wetlands by livestock and deterioration of root systems over time to where cropping is possible may be a wetland violation.*

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