



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

## Water Quality and Wildlife Enhancement Activity –ANM04- Extend Existing Filter Strips for Water Quality Protection and Wildlife Habitat



### **Extend existing filter strips**

Where existing filter strips are utilized, extend them to gain more efficiency in intercepting overland flow and reducing the transport of nutrients, pesticides and agro-chemicals.

### **Land Use Applicability**

This enhancement is applicable on cropland and pasture land.

### **Benefits**

Widening existing conservation filter strips that currently meet NRCS conservation practice standard criteria can provide food and cover for native and game species as well as enhancing aquatic habitat. Additionally, these extended filter strips offer more surface area to filter out sediments and agro-chemicals.

Riparian habitats are important transition zones between terrestrial landscapes and aquatic zones. Wildlife species utilize these transition zones because they provide a unique combination of cover, access to water and often provide important travel corridors. Often times filter strips are adjacent to these riparian areas or are important for contributing clean water, and habitat areas near by. Extending existing filter strips not only enhances wildlife habitat but it increases the effectiveness of water quality protection they provide to the streams.

### **Criteria for Extending Existing Filter Strips**

Existing filter strips must meet minimum state requirements for width. Extend the existing filter strip for a total of 60 feet or more to enhance habitat and water quality functions.

The extended filter strip must be composed of at least 5 species of non-noxious, wildlife friendly grasses and/or perennial forbs best suited to site conditions. Include species that provide pollinator food and habitat where possible.

- All site preparation and plant establishment shall be accomplished according to the appropriate NRCS conservation practice standard criteria and specifications.
- Any use of the filter strip must not compromise its intended purpose.
- To the extent possible the filter strip areas and extended filter strip areas will be vegetated to increase overland flow interception and increase water quality values of the stream or water body.



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### **Operation and Maintenance:**

- Once established, filter strips must not be mowed, disked, grazed, or otherwise disturbed, until after the primary wildlife ground nesting period has ended.
- Filter strips will be regularly maintained for its intended purpose through the life of the contract. This includes any removal of vegetation, including grazing.
- Grazing is allowed if a grazing management plan is used that will maintain the integrity and diversity of vegetation and the filtering function of the vegetation.
- Filter strips will have a wildlife management plan to maintain established plant communities through the life of the contract. The wildlife plan will maintain the plant community and its structural diversity and provide habitat for intended species.

### **Documentation Requirements**

1. A map showing the location and size of enhanced filter strips.
2. Documentation of the type and rates of vegetation planted in the new filter strip areas.

**WATER QUALITY AND WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY**

**ANM04 – OR      Extend Existing Filter Strips for Water Quality  
Protection and Wildlife Habitat**

**Criteria**

- Minimum state requirement for existing filter strip width is 20 feet.
- Planting requirements: The Oregon & Washington Guide for Conservation Seedings and Plantings (2000) provides examples of typical seeding recommendations for various settings. Native species are preferred to maximize wildlife benefits. Include a diversity of perennial forbs where possible to provide food and cover for pollinators and other wildlife. Any species of perennial grasses or forbs that are considered non-noxious and adapted to the site may be used except those listed below.

Plantings may not include any of the following species:

Bentgrass (creeping, colonial, velvet)  
Bluegrass, Kentucky  
Brome, Smooth  
Canarygrass, Reed  
Cereal grains  
Fescue, Creeping Red  
Fescue, Tall  
Foxtail, Creeping/Meadow  
Quackgrass  
Ryegrass, Annual  
Ryegrass, Hybrid  
Ryegrass, Perennial  
Wheatgrass, Crested  
Wheatgrass, Intermediate/Pubescent  
Wildrye, Russian

**Operation and Maintenance**

- Primary wildlife ground nesting period is March 1 - July 15.

**References**

- Oregon & Washington Guide for Conservation Seedings and Plantings. 2000. USDA-NRCS.  
Online: <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/OR/Plants-Materials/OR%20WA%20seeding%20guide.pdf>