

**Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM04- Extend existing filter strips for water quality protection and wildlife habitat**



**Enhancement Description**

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**

Cropland and pastureland.

**Benefits**

Widening existing conservation filter strips that currently meet NRCS conservation practice standard water quality criteria can provide food and cover for native and game species as well as enhancing aquatic habitat. Extended filter strips offer more surface area to filter out sediments and agro-chemicals. Filter strips can also offer buffers to mitigate pesticide drift during

pesticide applications and pollen drift where the mixing of plant varieties is not desired.

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 nearby. Extending existing filter strips not only enhances wildlife habitat but it increases the effectiveness of water quality protection they provide to the streams.

**Criteria**

Existing filter strips must meet minimum state water quality 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.

1. All site preparation and plant establishment shall be accomplished according to the appropriate NRCS conservation practice standard criteria and specifications.
2. Any use of the filter strip must not compromise its intended purpose. Vegetation from filter strips can be harvested for bio-energy as long as the harvesting is done in accordance with a plan that does not compromise the water quality and wildlife benefits of the extended filter strip.
3. 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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4. The extension of filter strips can incorporate other buffer types (riparian herbaceous and riparian forest) where applicable to meet specific operator management goals.

#### **Operation and Maintenance**

1. Once established, filter strips must not be mowed, disked, grazed, or otherwise disturbed, until after the primary wildlife ground nesting period has ended.
2. Filter strips will be regularly maintained for its intended purpose through the life of the contract. This includes any removal of vegetation, including grazing.
3. 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.
4. 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.



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## IDAHO ADDENDUM 2011

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

#### **Additional guidance for extending existing filter strips:**

Existing filter strips must meet NRCS Practice Standard 393 minimum width requirement, which is **20 feet**, and will be extended to at least 60 feet wide.

#### **Wildlife Friendly Species**

Wildlife friendly grass and forb species include all native perennial plant species typically represented by a diverse mixture as described in the representative ecological site description. Native grass species typically include bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, Sandberg bluegrass, big bluegrass, Thurber needlegrass, slender wheatgrass, thickspike wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, and basin wildrye. On sandy sites, consider sand dropseed and Indian ricegrass. Consider native forbs and legumes such as western yarrow, arrowleaf balsamroot, buckwheat, flax, milkvetch, lupine, American vetch, penstemon and tapertip hawksbeard. Introduced grass species could include redtop, orchardgrass, meadow brome, creeping foxtail, meadow foxtail, intermediate wheatgrass, pubescent wheatgrass, tall wheatgrass, and Russian wildrye. Introduced forbs and legumes include alfalfa, small burnet, clover (multiple species), sainfoin, cicer mikvetch and yellow sweetclover. **Any use of the filter strip must not compromise its original intended purpose.**

For additional information, refer to the following documents:

Idaho NRCS Agronomy Technical Note 9, *Vegetative Filter or Buffer Strips*.  
[http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/ID/Agron\\_TN09.doc](http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/ID/Agron_TN09.doc)

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 24, *Grass, Grass-like, Forb, Legume and Woody Species for the Intermountain West*. [ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/tn24\\_seedspecies](ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/tn24_seedspecies)

Idaho NRCS Plant Material Technical Note 24 Supplement: *Intermountain Planting Guide*, USDA-ARS Forage and Range Research Lab/Utah State Extension, AG 510.  
<ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/tn24supplement>.

USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station. *Conservation Buffers: Design Guidelines for Buffers, Corridors and Greenways*. General Technical Report SRS-109. [http://www.unl.edu/nac/bufferguidelines/docs/conservation\\_buffers.pdf](http://www.unl.edu/nac/bufferguidelines/docs/conservation_buffers.pdf).

**Site preparation and plant establishment must meet NRCS Practice Standard 393 requirements. Note, however, that the extension of filter strips can incorporate other buffer types (riparian herbaceous and riparian forest) where applicable to meet specific operator management goals.**

**This activity may NOT be used with the following enhancements:  
ANM05, ANM06, ANM07, ANM08, ANM19, PLT01, PLT08, WQT06**

**Potential duplicate practices:  
393 – Filter strip**