



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM 14 - *Riparian Forest Buffer, Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Habitat*



Riparian Forest Buffer – Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Habitat

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

This enhancement is applicable to forested riparian areas on or adjacent to cropland, pasture land, range land and forest land.

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 for Riparian Forest Buffer – Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Habitat

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:

- The width of forested riparian zones must be at least 2.5 times the width of the stream channel.
- Manage the riparian area to maintain a diversity of non-invasive tree, shrub, and herbaceous species by techniques such as selective thinning, controlled grazing, managed burning, selective use of herbicides and/or the planting of native species.
- Retain existing snags or create new snags by girdling live trees of at least one/acre.
- Manage the riparian vegetation to provide tree canopy shade of the stream and good stream side cover.
- Do not use heavy equipment such as bull dozers and tractors within the forested riparian zone to implement enhancement activities.



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Documentation Requirements for Riparian Forest Buffer – Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife Habitat

Following implementation of this activity, the landowner must document:

- Documentation of the management activities in the riparian zone for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat.
- Delineations on a map or aerial photo indicating the stream channel length where the riparian zone has improved habitat.



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Additional guidance for managing riparian forest buffers for wildlife habitat:

Wildlife Friendly Species

Wildlife friendly grass, forb, shrub and tree 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 plant species that are known to favor the kinds of wildlife typically adapted to the site. Native grass species typically include streambank wheatgrass, thickspike wheatgrass, tufted hairgrass, mannagrass, western wheatgrass, prairie cordgrass, blue-joint reed grass and basin wildrye. Native forbs and legumes can include yarrow, globemallow species, flax, lupine, American vetch, and penstemon species. Introduced grass species that can be considered wildlife friendly include redtop, orchardgrass, regar brome, meadow foxtail, intermediate wheatgrass, pubescent wheatgrass, tall wheatgrass, and Russian wildrye. Introduced forbs and legumes include alfalfa, small burnet, clover sp., sainfoin and yellow sweetclover.

Native shrubs include chokecherry, golden current, shrubby cinquefoil, juniper, serviceberry, woods rose, silver buffaloberry, redosier dogwood, native willow sp. Native trees include cottonwood, water birch, quaking aspen, Douglas and black hawthorn and tree willows. Introduced woody species include Nanking cherry, cotoneaster and Siberian peashrub.

For additional information, refer to the following documents:

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 23, *How to Plant Willows and Cottonwood for Riparian Restoration*. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.gov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/planting_willowsa.pdf

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 24, *Grass, Grass-like, Forb, Legume and Woody Species for the Intermountain West*. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.gov.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.gov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/tn24supplement>.

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 32, *Native Shrubs and Trees for Riparian Areas*. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/riparian_woodys.pdf

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 38, *Wetland Species and Grasses for Riparian Areas*. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/herb_wetland_plants.pdf

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 43, *Tree Planting Care and Management*. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/treecare_1007.pdf

USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station. *Riparian Buffer Design Guidelines for Water Quality and Wildlife Habitat Functions on Agricultural Landscapes in the Intermountain west*. General Technical Report GTR-203. www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs/rmrs_gtr203.pdf

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.