

Animal Enhancement Activity –ANM19- Wildlife Corridors



Enhancement Description

Wildlife corridors are linear strips of vegetation that connect 2 or more patches of suitable wildlife habitat. Participants will establish vegetative corridors as described below.

Land Use Applicability: This enhancement is applicable to cropland, pastureland, rangeland and forest.

Benefits

Corridors connect habitats providing additional life requisites (e.g., feeding, nesting, roosting, escape cover, etc.) as well as interaction among local populations for reproduction or other social behaviors. Fragmentation of habitat with resultant loss of connectivity threatens the continued existence of fish and wildlife populations.

Criteria for Wildlife Corridors

Continuity –corridors must be uninterrupted strips (i.e., no roads, vegetative or physical barriers, etc.) connecting 2 or more patches of suitable habitat. Wildlife friendly fencing is not considered a barrier. Suitable habitat may consist of grasslands, rangelands, forests, wetlands, shrubby areas, or natural substrates suitable for use by wildlife species adapted to the landscape and site conditions and conforming to the composition and quality criteria below.

Composition - corridor vegetation must be suited to natural site conditions, consistent with the larger natural landscape context, and appropriate for the kinds of wildlife present, hence native vegetation is highly preferred. Vegetation in the “patches of suitable habitat” (above) must also meet these criteria.

Quality – invasive exotic vegetation must be controlled.

Dimension –the average width must be ≥ 30 feet with no section < 20 feet wide. Since context is so important no one size fits all conditions, however wider corridors are better and irregular boundaries (or borders) are preferred over straight.

Documentation Requirements for Wildlife Corridors

- Map showing location of wildlife corridors connecting suitable habitats with required dimensions.
- Brief descriptions of the habitats to be connected.
- Description of the vegetation composition.



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Additional guidance for wildlife corridors:

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 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. Native shrubs include chokecherry, golden current, shrubby cinquefoil, juniper, serviceberry, woods rose, silver buffaloberry, redosier dogwood, and native willows (multiple species). 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.

Wildlife Friendly Fence

Wildlife-friendly fence will have the following characteristics:

- Top wire/rail a maximum of 42” above ground.
- At least 12” between top two wires.
- Bottom wire/rail a minimum of 16” above ground.
- Smooth wire on the bottom.
- Posts at 16.5 foot intervals.
- No vertical stays.

For additional information (e.g., electric fences), refer to the following documents:

Idaho NRCS Biology Technical Note 3, *Building Wildlife Friendly Fences*.
http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/ID/BioTN3-wildlife_fence.doc

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 23, *How to Plant Willows and Cottonwood for Riparian Restoration*. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.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.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>.

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

NRCS National Range and Pasture Handbook, *Chapter 8 – Wildlife Management on Grazing Lands*. <http://www.glti.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/publications/nrph.html>

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.