

Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM07- Extending existing field borders for water quality protection and wildlife habitat



Enhancement Description

Where existing field borders are utilized, extend them to gain more efficiency in intercepting overland flow and reducing the transport of nutrients, pesticides and agro-chemicals, and for wildlife habitat.

Land Use Applicability

Cropland, Pastureland

Benefits

Widening existing field borders can provide food and cover for native and game species as well as enhancing wildlife habitat. Extended field borders offer more surface area to filter out sediments and agro-chemicals. Field borders can also offer buffers to mitigate pesticide drift during pesticide applications and pollen drift where the mixing of plant varieties is not desired.

Wildlife species utilize transition zones between agricultural fields because they provide a unique combination of cover and often provide important travel corridors. Often times field borders are adjacent to riparian areas and are important for contributing clean water, and habitat areas nearby. Extending existing field borders not only enhances wildlife habitat but it increases the effectiveness of water quality protection if the border is next to a stream.

Conditions Where Enhancement Applies

This enhancement only applies to acres of existing field borders on crop or pasture land uses.

Criteria

1. Extend the existing field border for a total of 60 feet or more to enhance habitat and water quality functions.
2. The extended field borders must be composed of at least 5 species of non-noxious, wildlife friendly grasses, perennial forbs and /or shrubs best suited to site conditions. Include species that provide pollinator food and habitat where possible.
3. All site preparation and plant establishment shall be accomplished according to the appropriate NRCS conservation practice standard criteria and specifications.
4. Any use of the field border must not compromise its intended purpose. Vegetation from field borders 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.
5. To the extent possible the field border areas and extended field border areas will be vegetated to increase overland flow interception and increase water quality values if they also border a stream or water body.



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6. The extension of field borders can incorporate other buffer types (filter strips, riparian herbaceous and riparian forest) where applicable to meet specific operator management goals.

Adoption Requirements

This enhancement is considered adopted when the field border has a total width of 60 feet or more for the selected land use.

Documentation Requirements

1. A map showing the location and size of enhanced field borders.
2. Documentation of the type and rates of vegetation planted in the new field borders.

References

Clark, W.R. and K.F. Reeder. 2005. Continuous Conservation Reserve Program: Factors Influencing the Value of Agricultural Buffers to Wildlife Conservation. Pages 93-113 *in* Fish and wildlife benefits of Farm Bill conservation programs: 2000-2005 update. Haufler, J. B., editor. The Wildlife Society Technical Review 05-2.
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs143_012882.pdf

USDA-NRCS. 2010. Grassland Bird Population Responses to Upland Habitat Buffer Establishment by L. Wes Burger, Jr., Philip J. Barbour, and Mark D. Smith. Wildlife Insight No. 86. Washington, DC.
<http://www.fwrc.msstate.edu/pubs/NRCSWildlifeInsight86.pdf>



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IDAHO ADDENDUM 2013

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Additional guidance for extending existing field borders:

Existing field borders must meet NRCS Practice Standard 386 minimum width, which is 12 feet to reduce wind and water erosion, and varies for other purposes. The field border 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 field border must not compromise its original intended purpose.**

For additional information, refer to the following documents:

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 2A, Plants for Pollinators in the Intermountain West. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/tn2a_pollinators_1011.pdf

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 2B, Plants for Pollinators in the Inland Northwest. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/tn2b_pollinators_1011.pdf

Idaho NRCS Plant Materials Technical Note 24, *Conservation Plant Species for the Intermountain West*. ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/tn24_seed_species_1011.pdf

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.pdf>

USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station. *Conservation Buffers: Design Guidelines for Buffers, Corridors and Greenways*. General Technical Report SRS-109. [http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/NE/Nebraska_Forestry_Tech_Note_74\(Conservation_Buffers\).pdf](http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/NE/Nebraska_Forestry_Tech_Note_74(Conservation_Buffers).pdf)

Site preparation and plant establishment must meet NRCS Practice Standard 386 requirements. Note, however, that the extension of field borders can incorporate other buffer types (filter strips, riparian herbaceous and riparian forest) where applicable to meet specific operator management goals.

**This activity may NOT be used with the following enhancements:
AIR08, ANM05, ANM32, ENR01, PLT15, PLT18, WQL05, WQL09**

**Potential duplicate practices:
386 – Field border, 612 – Tree and shrub establishment**