

Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM33- Riparian buffer, terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat



Enhancement Description

This activity consists of managing riparian zones by utilizing select conservation measures (such as re-locating equipment operations, trails, or livestock; establishing diverse native vegetation and controlling invasive species; fencing; and extending the width of the riparian zone to enhance wildlife habitat adjacent to riparian zones of streams, ponds, lakes, or wetlands) to achieve stream side cover and vegetative diversity and structure to improve

terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat.

Land Use Applicability

Cropland, Pastureland, Rangeland, Forestland

Benefits

Intact riparian zones with a natural and diverse mix of herbaceous and/or woody vegetation of different ages are important landscape features for sustaining fish and wildlife populations. Maintaining vigorous native or natural riparian vegetation of diverse age classes and species will benefit riparian and aquatic fauna by providing: (a) thermal, nesting/fawning, and hiding cover in riparian zones, stream banks, and shorelines; (b) diverse food sources; (c) a steady source of leaves, brush, small woody material for aquatic food webs at and downstream of the site; (d) root systems to enhance bank stability, and (e) vegetative filters for surface water run-off.

Conditions Where Enhancement Applies

This enhancement only applies to existing acres of forested riparian zones on crop, pasture, range or forest land uses, *OR* existing acres of non-forested riparian zones on crop, pasture, or range land uses.

Criteria

For forested riparian zones:

1. The width of forested riparian zones must be wider than the NRCS State standard width for Riparian Forest Buffers to a maximum width of 150 feet.
2. Manage the riparian area to maintain a diversity of non-invasive tree, shrub, and herbaceous species by techniques such as selective thinning, controlled grazing, prescribed burning, selective use of herbicides, and/or the planting of native species.
3. Retain existing snags or create new snags by girdling live trees of at least one/acre.
4. Manage the riparian vegetation to provide tree canopy shade of the stream and good stream side cover.
5. Do not use heavy equipment such as bull dozers and tractors within the forested riparian zone to implement enhancement activities.



For non-forested riparian zones:

1. On streams, rivers, or floodplains adjacent to pastures, cropland, hayland, or rangeland:
 - a. Enhance and maintain a well-vegetated riparian zone that is 2.5 times the width of the stream channel or 35 feet, whichever is greater to a maximum width of 150 feet.
 - b. Improve the diversity of native or natural shrub and/or herbaceous plant species suitable for the site and appropriate for the riparian and aquatic species that inhabit the area by planting appropriate species.
 - c. Implement at least one of the management actions from #3 below.
2. On ponds, floodplain wetlands, or lakes adjacent to pastures, cropland, hayland or rangeland:
 - a. Enhance and maintain a well-vegetated riparian zone that is 35 feet wide or greater.
 - b. Improve the diversity of native or natural woody and/or herbaceous plant species suitable for the site and appropriate for the riparian and aquatic species that inhabit the area by planting appropriate species.
 - c. Implement at least one of the management actions from #3 below.
3. Additional management actions for enhancing non-wooded riparian zones:
 - a. Control invasive species through a grazing management plan or suitable pest management techniques.
 - b. Limit livestock use of riparian zone through a prescribed grazing management plan
 - c. Control access of people, machinery, and livestock to the riparian zone with fencing.
 - d. Provide off-site watering source(s) for livestock.

Adoption Requirements

This enhancement is considered adopted when the riparian zone(s) is within the range of a 150 foot maximum and either the NRCS State standard width for Riparian Forest Buffers, or for non-forested riparian zones, 2.5 times the width of the stream channel or 35 feet, whichever is greater.

Documentation Requirements

1. Delineations on a map or aerial photo indicating the stream channel length where the riparian zone has improved habitat.
2. Provide written documentation, on the delineation map, of all riparian zone activities implemented to meet the requirements of this enhancement.
3. List of maintenance activities carried out on riparian acres as prescribed under the practice used, and its specific fish and wildlife considerations.

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

Duehr, J., M. Siepker, C. Pierce and T.M. Isenhardt. 2007. Relation of riparian buffer strips to in-stream habitat, macroinvertebrates and fish in a small Iowa stream. *Journal of the Iowa Academy of Science* 113:49-55.
http://www.cfwrui.iastate.edu/unit_scientists/pierce/pierce2007_4.pdf



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

2013 Ranking Period 1

Fischer, J.R., Quist, M.C., Wigen, S.L., Schaefer, A.J., Stewart, T.W. and Isenhart, T.M. 2009. Assemblage and population-level responses of stream fish to riparian buffers at multiple spatial scales. *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 139:185-200. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1577/T09-050.1>



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IDAHO ADDENDUM 2013

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Additional guidance for managing riparian buffers for wildlife habitat:

For forest riparian buffers, widths must be wider than 35 feet, to a maximum of 150 feet. For non-forest riparian zones, widths must be at least 2½ times the stream width (for water quality concerns) or 35 feet for water bodies. Where riparian zones already exist at the minimum width, then no extension is required. Enhancement criteria must still be met.

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, reagr 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.egov.usda.gov/ID/programs/technotes/planting_willowsa.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>

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://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)

**This activity may NOT be used with the following enhancements:
ANM08, PLT06, PLT15, PLT18**

Potential Duplicate Practices:

393 - Filter Strip, 390 - Riparian Herbaceous Cover, 391 - Riparian Forest Buffer, 327 - Conservation Cover, 382 - Fence, 644 - Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management, 528 - Prescribed Grazing, 575 - Animal Trails and Walkways, 666- Forest Stand Improvement, 315 - Herbaceous Weed Control, 338 - Prescribed Burning, 595 – Integrated Pest Management