United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Trails and Walkways (575)

A trail is a constructed path with a vegetated or earthen surface. A walkway is a constructed path with an artificial surface. A trail/walkway is used to facilitate the movement of animals, people, or off-road vehicles.

Practice Information

This practice is used where there is a need to:

- Provide or improve animal access to forage, water, working/handling facilities, or shelter;
- Facilitate improved grazing efficiency and distribution;
- Protect ecologically sensitive, erosive, or potentially erosive sites;
- Provide pedestrian or off-road vehicle access to agricultural, construction, or maintenance operations; or
- Provide trails/walkways for recreational activities or access to recreation sites.

The trail or walkway will be designed to accommodate the expected frequency of use and the type of user. It will also have a surface that matches the usage. An infrequently used trail can be vegetated with grass. A walkway that is used daily would have a hardened surface. If it is necessary to locate the walkway in a wet area, an elevated boardwalk could be used.

This practice has a minimum expected life of 10 years. Maintenance of a trail or walkway can include periodic grading or reshaping to maintain the designed grade or dimensions, replacement of surface materials, reseeding damaged vegetation, and removal of manure accumulations.

Common Associated Practices

Trails and Walkways (575) is almost always installed in conjunction with conservation practice Fence (382) when used to facilitate livestock movement. It is often applied with Prescribed Grazing (528) to complement a rotational grazing system. Other commonly applied conservation practices are Critical Area Planting (342), Heavy Use Area Protection (561), and Stream Crossing (578).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.