

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

RECREATION TRAIL AND WALKWAY

(Ft.)
Code 568



DEFINITION

A pathway for pedestrian, equestrian, bicycle and other off-road modes of travel through or to recreation resources.

PURPOSES

- Provide or improve recreation access.
- Provide travelways for recreational activities such as walking, horseback riding, bicycling, cross country skiing, and hiking.
- Direct travel away from ecologically sensitive and/or erosion prone areas.
- Minimize on-site and off-site damage to resources during periods of access.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On land areas where prepared paths, trails and walkways are needed for effective and safe access to or through recreation resources.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable To All Purposes

Plan all work to comply with Federal, state, local and tribal laws and regulations.

Impact to cultural resources, wetlands and Federal and state protected species shall be evaluated and avoided or minimized to the extent practicable during planning, design and implementation of this conservation practice in accordance with established National and Florida policy, General Manual (GM) Title 420-Part 401; Title 450-Part 401, Title 190 Parts 410.22 and 410.26, National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH) Florida Supplements to Parts 6001 and 600.6, National Cultural Resources Procedures Handbook (NCRPH), national Food Security Act Manual (NFSAM), and the National Environmental compliance Handbook (NECH).

Evaluate plants, landscaping timbers, traffic control measures, wooden walkways, grades, etc. for effectiveness, aesthetics and accessibility.

Plan the trail or walkway to be conducive to the overall recreation area and aesthetically blend with the general landscape and surroundings.

Configure the trail or walkway to minimize adverse on-site and off-site impacts such as accelerated erosion, riparian zone degradation, stream channel and streambank damage, hydrology modification, other water resource damage, aesthetics or unacceptable damage to wildlife habitat, fragmentation, or restrict wildlife movement.

Grade. Determine grades by the intended use, location and topography.

Width. Design the minimum trail or walkway width to be 4 feet (1.2 m). The width for

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

pedestrian trails may be reduced to a minimum 3 feet (0.9 m) in areas where greater width would adversely affect environmentally sensitive areas.

Side slopes. Stabilize cut and fill slopes for the soil material.

Drainage. Design drainage measures to be of sufficient size, intervals and gradient to ensure adequate drainage.

Erosion control. Include in the plans provisions for control of erosion. Establish vegetation in disturbed areas as soon as practicable after construction. If soil or climatic conditions precludes the use of vegetation, and protection is needed, use non-vegetative means, such as mulches or gravel. Prescribe seedbed preparation, seeding, fertilizing, and mulching in accordance with Florida conservation practice standards Critical Area Planting, Code 342 and Mulching, Code 484. Use vegetation adapted to the site that will accomplish the desired purpose. Give preference to native plant species. If native plant materials are not adaptable or proven effective for the planned use, then use non-native species.

Bridges and Elevated Walkways. Design bridges and elevated walkways for the expected loading.

Surfacing. If surfacing is required for a firm, stable trail, use surfacing material that is appropriate for the anticipated traffic and operational conditions.

Safety. Incorporate safety of the users into the design. Place adequate directional and warning signs, handrails, bridges, and culvert as dictated by the site and intended use. Provide protection from slides and falling rocks, where needed.

CONSIDERATIONS

Assure safe ingress and egress to the trail or walkway.

Consider requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act, where appropriate.

Consider designing the pedestrian and equestrian trail and walkway grades generally not exceed 10 percent. Grades for other uses may be steeper such as hiking trails, which may be as steep as 20 percent.

Assure adequate parking for users and an operation and maintenance staging area.

Consider saving and maintaining key trees and other vegetation that have scenic value, provide shade, reduce erosion and runoff, provide habitat for wildlife, and/or add to the visual quality of the area.

Consider adjoining land uses and the proximity to residences, utilities, cultural resources, threatened and endangered species of plants and animals, wetlands, important farmlands, or other environmentally sensitive areas, and areas of special scenic value.

Consider potential ecological and human impacts when planning a trail for use by motorized vehicles.

If the purpose of the trail or walkway is improvement of water quality, consider (re)locating the trail or walkway as far away from the waterbody or watercourse as possible. Any work in and/or discharges near streams, wetlands or waterbodies may require a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Environmental Protection, water management district, or local authority.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for recreation land grading and shaping shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose. Plans and specifications shall include construction plans, drawings, job sheets, and other similar documents. The documents shall specify the requirements for installing the practice.

As a minimum, include, as applicable, the following items in the plans and specifications.

- location of area to be graded or shaped
- profile of trail or walkway
- typical cross section of trail or walkway
- type of surface
- type and location of signs
- as applicable, final grading
- location of drainage and erosion control structures

- design of drainage and erosion control structures
- vegetative requirements

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Prepare an Operation and Maintenance (O&M) plan for and reviewed with the landowner or operator. Specify in the plan the treated areas and associated practices to be inspected annually and after significant storm events to identify repair and maintenance needs.

REFERENCES

Florida NRCS Conservation Practice Standards
Critical Area Planting, Code 342
Mulching, Code 484
General Manual
Title 420-Part 401
Title 450-Part 401
Title 190-Parts 410.22 and 410.26
National Cultural Resources Procedures Handbook
National Environmental Compliance Handbook
National Food Security Act Manual
National Planning Procedures Handbook Florida Supplements to Parts 600.1 and 600.6