

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
MONTANA CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

RECREATION TRAIL AND WALKWAY (FEET)

CODE 568

DEFINITION

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

be evaluated for effectiveness, aesthetics and accessibility.

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

PURPOSE

This practice may be applied as part of a resource management system to support one or more of the following purposes:

- Provide or improve recreation access.
- Provide travel ways for recreational activities such as walking, horseback riding, **bird watching, sightseeing**, 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.

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

Grade. Grades shall be determined by the intended use, location and topography.

Width. The minimum trail or walkway width shall be 4 feet (1.2 m). The width for 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. Cut and fill slopes shall be stable for the soil material.

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.

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

Erosion control. Plans shall include provisions for control of erosion. Distributed areas shall be established to vegetation as soon as practicable after construction. If soil or climatic conditions precludes the use of vegetation, and protection is needed, non-vegetative means, such as mulches or gravel, may be used. Seedbed preparation, seeding, fertilizing, and mulching shall be according to the appropriate conservation practice standard in the local technical guide **such as the**

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

All planned work shall comply with federal, state, local and **tribal** laws and regulations.

Plants, landscaping timbers, traffic control measures, wooden walkways, grades, etc. shall

NRCS, MT
June 2006

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

NOTE: This type of font (**AaBbCcDdEe 123..**) indicates NRCS National Standards.
This type of font (**AaBbCcDdEe 123..**) indicates Montana Supplement.

Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section IV – Practice Standards and Specifications, for Critical Area Planting (Code 342). Use vegetation adapted to the site that will accomplish the desired purpose. Preference shall be given to native plant species. If native plant materials are not adaptable or proven effective for the planned use, then non-native species may be used.

Bridges and Elevated Walkways. Bridges and elevated walkways shall be designed for the expected loading.

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

Safety. Safety of the users shall be incorporated into the design. Adequate directional and warning signs, handrails, bridges, and culvert shall be placed as dictated by the site and intended use. Protection from slides and falling rocks shall be provided, where needed.

CONSIDERATIONS

Assure safe ingress and egress to the trail or walkway.

Consider requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act, where appropriate.

Pedestrian and equestrian trail and walkway grades should generally not exceed 10 percent. Grades for other uses may be steeper such as cross-country skiing, which may be as steep as 50 percent, for difficult trails and 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.

The effects of this practice on water quantity, water quality, and the environment should be considered during the planning process. Effects to be considered are:

- **Impact of impervious walkways and trails on increased surface runoff.**
- **Potential changes in erosion and sediment yield caused by increased runoff and temporary increases in erosion during construction.**
- **Effects of dissolved chemicals in runoff resulting from recreation activities.**

If the purpose of the trail or walkway is improvement of water quality, the trail or walkway should be (re) located as far away from the water body or watercourse as possible. Any work in and/or discharges near streams, wetlands or water bodies may require a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, state water quality (permitting) authority, or local authority.

Permits: One or more of various State and/or Local permits will likely be required.

Consult the web site:

http://dnrc.mt.gov/permits/stream_permitting/guide.asp for a list of permits required for various types of construction activities in Montana.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for recreation trails and walkways 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 or other similar documents. These documents shall specify the requirements for installing the practice, including the kind, amount and quality of materials to be used. **As required by the landowner to control noxious weeds and undesired vegetation, all construction equipment used in the installation of this practice shall be pre-washed and cleaned before mobilization to the construction site.**

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

An Operation and Maintenance (O&M) plan shall be prepared for and reviewed with the landowner or operator. The plan shall specify that the treated areas and associated practices are inspected annually and after significant storm events to identify repair and maintenance needs.

As

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