

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**ANIMAL TRAILS AND WALKWAYS**

(Ft.)

**CODE 575**

**DEFINITION**

Established lanes or travel ways that facilitate animal movement.

**PURPOSES**

- Provide or improve access to forage, water, working/handling facilities, and/or shelter,
- Improve grazing efficiency and distribution, and/or
- Protect ecologically sensitive, erosive and/or potentially erosive sites.

**CONDITIONS WHERE THIS PRACTICE APPLIES**

On lands where control of animal movement is needed to facilitate access, improve grazing, prevent erosion, and/or protect ecologically sensitive areas.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes**

All planned work shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws and permit conditions and requirements. The landowner shall obtain all necessary permits prior to construction or any land clearing activities.

Animal trails or walkways shall be constructed wide enough to accommodate movement of animals and access by operator for management and maintenance.

Trails or walkways shall be constructed in such a manner that accelerated erosion will not occur. Where necessary, water control measures with stable outlets will be provided.

Locate trails and walkways away from watercourses. A minimum of 25 feet of filter strip should be provided between the trail or walkway and the watercourse on level areas. Add two (2) additional feet of filter for each percent of increase in slope.

Sensitivity of the animal's feet, with respect to the intended purpose of the trail or walkway, will be included as a design parameter in selecting the surface material for trails or walkways.

Trails or walkways seeded or planted to vegetative cover will be protected from grazing until the vegetation is fully established and capable of withstanding grazing and/or trampling. Vegetative cover shall be established in accordance with Critical Area Planting, Code 342. Where maintaining vegetative cover is not possible, the criteria in Heavy Use Area Protection, Code 561 will be used to provide adequate surface protection.

Fence, Code 382, will be used when needed to keep animals confined to the trail or walkway until the desired destination is reached.

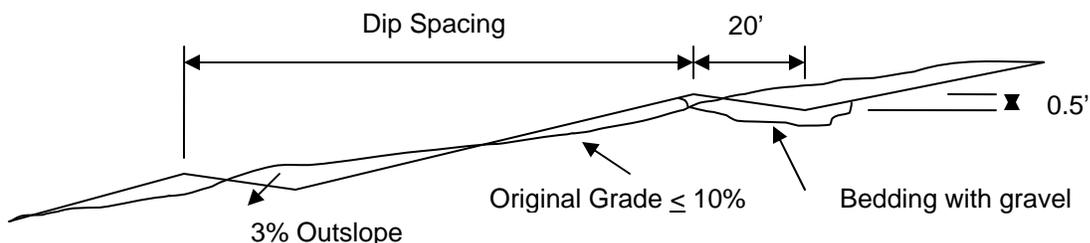
Broad-based drainage dips may be used for drainage of animal trails and walkways. Broad-based drainage dips are a dip and reverse slope in the trail surface with an outslope in the bottom to provide natural cross drainage. The purpose of the dip is to prevent build-up of excess surface runoff and subsequent erosion.

Because of construction characteristics, do not use dips on trails that have a grade greater than 10 percent. The dips should be installed during initial trail construction using the following criteria:

- (1) Construct a 20-foot long, 2.5 percent reverse grade in the trail by cutting from upgrade of the dip location and using the cut material for the opposite reverse slope.
- (2) Use the following formula for dip spacing:  
Spacing (ft.) = 400 ft / slope + 100 ft
- (3) The dip and reverse slope sections may require bedding with gravel for stability.
- (4) Install dips such that runoff water from the outslope will outlet on flatter areas.
- (5) See figure below for additional information.

Outsloping may be used to remove small quantities of water from animal trail and walkway surfaces. A trail that is properly outsloped slopes slightly from the cut bank to the outside edge of the trail. The outslope should be only enough to divert the water, normally 1/4 inch to 3/8 inch per foot of width. On fill slopes, where it is necessary to protect the fill from eroding, the trail should be insloped with cross drainage from the inside toe of slope to the downhill side.

For additional water or erosion control measures, the criteria in Access Road, Code 560, will be used.



BROAD BASED DRAINAGE DIP

**Additional Criteria Applicable to Providing or Improving Access to Forage, Water, Working/Handling Facilities and/or Shelter**

Trails and walkways will be designed and constructed of sufficient size to accommodate the expected frequency of use and animal type(s) planned for the operation.

When needed to facilitate movement of animals through a series of paddocks or pastures, gate openings and lane layouts shall allow for efficient flow of animals with the least amount of stress.

**Additional Criteria Applicable to Improving Grazing Efficiency and Distribution**

Fenced or unfenced animal trails or walkways will be used to facilitate the movement of animals from landscapes of higher use to landscapes of lesser use causing uneven grazing distribution and overgrazing or lounging.

**Additional Criteria Applicable to Protection of Ecologically Sensitive Areas.**

Cultural resources, threatened or endangered species, wetlands, streambanks, floodways or other ecologically sensitive areas, and areas of special scenic value will be protected through the proper design of trail(s) or walkway(s).

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Conservation Practice Standard 528, Prescribed Grazing, can be used to improve grazing distribution, forage utilization, animal handling behavior, and trafficking patterns.

Use this practice when it is necessary to stabilize an existing critically eroding area created by livestock traffic that cannot be solved through rearrangement of fencing, drinking water locations, rotational grazing, livestock exclusion, or other practices; OR when

concentrating animal trailways is required in order to protect sensitive resources such as wetlands, streams/creeks, or steep areas.

Other conservation practices, such as Use Exclusion, Code 472 can be used in conjunction with trails or walkways to minimize the impact on sensitive areas.

For areas of high livestock concentration, such as around ponds, watering facilities, or other feeding areas, use Heavy Use Area Protection, Code 561.

For travelways used by vehicles or equipment for purposes other than management and maintenance of animal trails or walkways, use Access Road, Code 560.

### **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Plans and specifications for installing animal trails or 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 location and the kind, amount, and quality of materials to be used.

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

The operation and maintenance (O&M) plan shall specify that the trails or walkways and associated practices be inspected annually and after significant storm events to identify repair and maintenance needs.

The O&M plan shall detail the level of repairs needed to maintain the effectiveness and useful life of the practice. These repairs should include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Periodic grading or re-shaping trails or walkways to maintain the designed grade, dimensions, and water movement,
- Periodic addition of surfacing materials,
- Re-seeding of areas where the vegetation has been thinned or destroyed, and/or
- Mending of fences and replacement of gates.

Periodic removal and management of manure accumulations will be addressed in the O&M plan.

For fields with multiple accesses, the O&M plan should provide guidance as to the rotation of walkways to allow for recovery of vegetation and for improvement of traffic -supporting conditions.