

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

ANIMAL TRAILS AND WALKWAYS

(Ft.)
CODE 575



DEFINITION

A travel facility for livestock and/or wildlife to provide movement through difficult or ecologically sensitive terrain.

PURPOSES

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

- Provide or improve access to forage, water and/or shelter.
- Improve grazing efficiency and distribution.
- Divert travel away from ecologically sensitive and/or erosive sites.

CONDITIONS WHERE THIS PRACTICE APPLIES

On grazing lands where animal movement is creating an unstable or erosive site or where animal movement is impeded or restricted such as, steep rough terrain, across rock outcrops, streams, through dense timber or brush, over lava beds, on marsh rangelands, and grazing lands susceptible to overflow by water. On confined operations where livestock are moved several times a day (e.g., dairies).

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable For All Purposes Stated Above.

Plans for animal trails and walkways shall comply with all Federal, state and local laws. The landowner shall obtain all necessary permits prior to construction or any land clearing activities.

Trails or walkways shall be constructed of sufficient width to accommodate movement of livestock and access by operator.

Trails or walkways shall be constructed in such a manner that accelerated erosion will not occur. Where necessary, diversions with a safe outlet will be provided.

Trails or walkways seeded or planted to vegetative cover will be protected from grazing until planting material is fully established and capable of withstanding grazing and/or trampling. Vegetative cover shall be established in accordance with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Critical Area Planting, Code 342.

Materials such as limestone and gravel will be used for trails or walkways constructed in areas where maintaining vegetative cover is not possible. Plans and designs for these areas shall meet NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Heavy Use Area Protection, Code 561.

Trails and walkways shall not be designed to accommodate frequent, heavy use by farm vehicles. Such areas shall be planned and designed according to NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Access Road Code 560.

Areas receiving runoff from trails or walkways will be vegetated in a manner that will provide nutrient uptake and prevent accelerated erosion. Plans and designs for these areas shall meet NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Critical Area Planting, Code 342.

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

Criteria Applicable to Walkways.

Walkways will be constructed to meet minimum height of 12 inches above the seasonal high water level.

The width of walkways shall be designed to accommodate efficient movement of animals in an orderly fashion. Walkways shall be a minimum of 10 feet in width.

During the construction process of walkways, borrow pits will be staggered so that access to grazing areas and back to walkway will be available from either side.

When necessary, structures will be installed to prevent interference with natural water movement or to control salt water intrusion.

CONSIDERATIONS

Other conservation practices that facilitate grazing distribution and proper intensity such as Prescribed Grazing, Code 528A, and Fence, Code 382 should be implemented along with this practice.

Permanent trails or walkways should be fenced on both sides with a permanent fence.

Temporary trails and walkways should be fenced with temporary fence of two (2) or more strands of energized fence.

Trails and Walkways intended for occasional use by farm vehicles should be designed and constructed in a manner that will prevent deterioration of the vegetation by vehicular traffic.

To reduce the potential for erosion, locate trails and walkways so they do not go directly up or down slopes.

To reduce impacts on wetlands, avoid locating trails and walkways through wetlands, streams and other low-lying areas.

Trails and walkways may increase runoff due to installation of a more impervious surface. Where needed, runoff from trails and walkways will need to be collected and disposed of safely.

Construction, operation and maintenance of trails and walkways may increase water quantity and water quality problems. To avoid impact, the following items should be considered in the planning process:

Water Quantity

1. Effects of grading on runoff and surface storage.
2. Effect on the amount and timing of infiltration.
3. Impacts of impervious trails or walkways on increased surface runoff.

Water Quality

1. Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment and soluble and sediment attached substances carried by runoff.
2. Effects of construction and re-vegetating the site on runoff and erosion.
3. Effects on wetlands and wildlife habitat.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Each trail or walkway shall have a site specific design based on the criteria in this standard and shall describe the requirement for properly installing the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Operation will consist of periodic grading or shaping on trails and walkways to maintain designed dimensions. Maintenance will consist of repair that may be needed following major storm events such as high runoff events, high tides or other occurrences that cause damage and interfere in the normal operation of this practice.

REFERENCES

- Section III, Field Office Technical Guide.
National Range and Pasture Handbook
600.0505 Conservation practices for pastures
NRCS Conservation Practice Standard
Access Road, Code 560
Critical Area Planting, Code 342
Fence, Code 382
Heavy Use Protection Area, Code 561
Prescribed Grazing, Code 528A