

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

ANIMAL TRAILS AND WALKWAYS

(Ft.)
Code 575



DEFINITION

Established lanes or travel ways that facilitate animal movement.

PURPOSE

This practice is applied as part of a conservation management system to achieve one or more of the following:

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

CONDITIONS WHERE 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 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 of sufficient width 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, diversions with a stable outlet will be provided.

Surface material for trails and walkways shall be selected based on the intended purpose and the sensitivity of the animal's feet.

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 conservation practice standard Critical Area Planting, Code 342. Where maintaining vegetative cover is necessary but not possible, conservation practice standard Heavy Use Area Protection, Code 561 will be used to provide adequate surface protection.

Trails and walkways are 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.

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

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

Additional Criteria Applicable to Provide or Improve 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.

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.

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 Improve Grazing Efficiency and Distribution.

Fenced or unfenced animal trails or walkways will be used to distribute grazing to overcome terrain features causing uneven grazing distribution and pressure.

Additional Criteria Applicable to Protect Ecologically Sensitive, Erosive and/or Potentially Erosive Sites

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 Prescribed Grazing, Code 528A can be used to further improve grazing distribution and pressure.

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, tanks, troughs, or other feeding areas, use Heavy Use Area Protection, Code 561.

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

When planning walkways for lactating dairy herds, consider placing watering facilities every 300 – 500 feet to help prevent reduction in milk production.

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

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 and dimensions.
- Periodic addition of surfacing materials where used.
- Re-seeding of areas in which the vegetation has been damaged or destroyed.
- Mending of fences and replacement of gates.

REFERENCES

NRCS Conservation Practice Standards
Access Road, Code 560
Critical Area Planting, Code 342
Fence, Code 382
Heavy Use Area Protection, Code 561
Prescribed Grazing, Code 528A
Use Exclusion, Code 472

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