

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**USE EXCLUSION**

**(Acre)  
CODE 472**

**DEFINITION**

Excluding animals, people or vehicles from an area.

**PURPOSES**

To protect, maintain, or improve the quantity and quality of the plant, animal, soil, air, water, and aesthetics resources and human health and safety.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

In areas where vegetative establishment and maintenance, soil condition, water or air quality, wildlife or aesthetic values are in need of protection. This practice is also applicable in areas where human and animal health and safety hazards are present.

**CRITERIA**

Barriers must be adequate to prevent use by vehicles, animals or people.

Barrier life expectancy must be adequate for the intended purpose.

Timing and exclusion periods must be described to accomplish intended purposes.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

All areas should consider existing or potential liability to the planning agency or the landuser based on safety, health and public relations.

Barriers may consist of both natural and artificial structures such as logs, vegetation, earth fill, boulders, fences, gates or signs.

**Planning Considerations**

Exclusions should be located to provide additional benefits where applicable.

Aesthetics shall be a consideration in the placement of barriers.

The exclusions should be maintained to provide protection as long as needed to achieve the desired

results in the area. Use exclusion may be applied with Prescribed Grazing (Practice Standard 528) to meet stated objectives. In wooded areas, fencing should be inspected for damage periodically and repaired as needed.

Exclude livestock from:

1. In newly seeded, planted or naturally restocked woodland or forest land, the exclusion will be maintained until the plantings have grown sufficiently that grazing will not be harmful. It is generally considered that three feet in height is sufficient to protect trees from sheep, and six feet from cattle.
2. Areas abused by overgrazing and/or soil compaction for several years, in order to promote an increase in understory vegetation, and reduce soil compaction.
3. Wet areas, and areas made up of soils susceptible to critical erosion.
4. Watersheds used for municipal and domestic water supply where grazing will be detrimental.
5. Recreation areas where use by livestock would be detrimental to environmental, aesthetic or recreation goals.
6. Critical habitat for endangered plants or animals and other wildlife where grazing will be detrimental.
7. Stockwater storage facilities.

## Endangered Species Considerations

Determine if installation of this practice with any others proposed will have any effect on any federal or state listed Rare, Threatened or Endangered species or their habitat. NRCS's objective is to benefit these species and others of concern or at least not have any adverse effect on a listed species. If the Environmental Evaluation indicates the action may adversely affect a listed species or result in adverse modification of habitat of listed species which has been determined to be critical habitat, NRCS will advise the land user of the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and recommend alternative conservation treatments that avoid the adverse effects. Further assistance will be provided only if the landowner selects one of the alternative conservation treatments for installation; or at the request of the landowners, NRCS may initiate consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and/or California Department of Fish and Game. If the Environmental Evaluation indicates the action will not affect a listed species or result in adverse modification of critical habitat, consultation generally will not apply and usually would not be initiated. Document any special considerations for endangered species in the Practice Requirements Worksheet.

Some species are year-round residents in some streams, such as, freshwater shrimp. Other species, such as steelhead and salmon, utilize streams during various seasons. Be aware that during critical periods, such as spawning, eggs in gravel's, and rearing of young may preclude activities in the stream that may directly affect the stream habitat during those periods. For example there should be no disturbance of stream gravel beds that may have eggs in them. That could include any equipment in the stream or even walking in the stream or work upstream that may result in sediment depositing in the gravel beds. Document any special considerations for endangered species in the Practice Requirements Worksheet.

## Water Quantity

This practice has no effect on the quantity of ground and surface water.

1. Effects on the water budget, especially on runoff, infiltration, transpiration, deep percolation, and ground water recharge.
2. Effects of changes in vegetative growth on soil moisture.
3. Effects of the changes in organic matter on the soil water holding capacity.

4. Effects on the downstream flow from the area.
5. Effects on the interflow conditions.

## Water Quality

Livestock exclusion may improve water quality by preventing livestock from being in the water or walking down the banks, and by preventing manure deposition in the stream. The amount of sediment and manure may be reduced in the surface water. This practice prevents compaction of the soil by livestock and prevents losses of vegetation and undergrowth. This may maintain or increase evapotranspiration. Increased permeability may reduce erosion and lower sediment and substance transportation to the surface waters. Shading along streams and channels resulting from the application of this practice may reduce surface water temperature.

1. Effects of vegetation on the movement of sediment and dissolved and sediment-attached substances.
2. Effects of growing and decaying vegetation on the nutrient budget.
3. Effects on erosion, sediment, pathogens, soluble and sediment-attached materials.
4. Effects on the visual quality of downstream water resources.
5. Short-term and construction-related effects on the surface and ground water.
6. Effects on wetlands and water-related wildlife habitats.

## PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

### Specifications guide

Specifications will include what is to be excluded, period of exclusion, what are the primary purposes of the exclusion and what methods are to be used.

Areas selected for exclusion may require fencing, and if so, the fencing should be planned and installed to conform to Practice Standard 382-Fence.

## OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Barriers will be periodically inspected and repairs performed as needed.