

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

RECREATION TRAIL AND WALKWAY

(feet)
CODE 568

DEFINITION

A pathway prepared especially for pedestrian, equestrian, and cycle travel.

Scope

This standard applies to walkways and trails constructed in recreation and scenic areas.

PURPOSES

To provide users of recreation areas with travel routed for activities such as walking, sightseeing, horseback riding, and bicycling; to prevent erosion; and to preserve and protect soil, plant, animal, and visual resources.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies to lands where prepared paths, trails, and walkways are needed for effective and safe use of the recreation resources.

CRITERIA

Visual resources

Special attention shall be given to saving and maintaining key trees and other vegetation that have scenic value, provide shade, reduce erosion and runoff, provide den and food for wildlife, or add to the visual quality of the area.

Grade

Sustained grades shall be dictated by good judgment for the purpose intended, considering the topography, and shall not exceed 10 percent.

Width

Generally the minimum treat width shall be 4 ft. The width in cuts for pedestrian trails on sidehill sections may be reduced to 3 ft if greater width would increase

the cost materially or adversely affect the visual resources.

Side slopes

Cut and fill slopes shall be stable for the soil or soil material.

Drainage

Adequate drainage shall be provided. A raised or elevated trail or walkway may be required for wet sites that cannot be drained.

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 comply with recommendations in technical guides.

Bridges

Bridges shall be designed for the maximum expected loading with an adequate factor of safety.

Surfacing

If surfacing is required for a firm trail, the surfacing material may be pit or creek-run gravel, concrete, asphalt, or other material that can withstand the traffic and the elements at the site.

Safety

Due consideration shall be given to safety. Protection from slides and falling rocks shall be provided, if needed. Adequate directional and warning signs, handrails, bridges, and culvert shall be placed as dictated by the site and intended use.

General

Equestrian and pedestrian trails may vary from specific grades, widths, and clearing requirements if so dictated by location and topography.

CONSIDERATIONS**Water Quantity**

1. Impacts of impervious walkways and trails on increased surface runoff.
2. Changes in deep percolation with increased surface runoff. Consider evaporation losses before infiltration, evapotranspiration changes with decreased infiltration, and average changes in root zone storage.

Water Quality

1. Change in ground water quality caused by decreased dissolved chemical infiltration.
2. Potential changes in erosion and sediment yield caused by increase runoff and temporary increases in erosion during construction.
3. Effects of dissolved chemicals in runoff resulting from recreation activities.

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.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for constructing 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.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Provisions shall be made for maintaining all wearing surfaces, signs, and drainage structures.