

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Conservation Practice Standard**

**RECREATION TRAIL AND WALKWAY
(Ft.)
CODE 568**

DEFINITION

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

PURPOSE

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

General

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.

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

Design

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, nonvegetative 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,

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bridges, and culvert shall be placed as dictated by the site and intended use.

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

CONSIDERATIONS

Water quantity

- Impacts of impervious walkways and trails on increased surface runoff.
- 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

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

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.