

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**Animal Trails and Walkways
(FT)
No. 575**

Definition

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

Purpose

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 Practice Applies

On grazing lands where animal movement is impeded or restricted such as, steep rough terrain, across rock outcrops, through dense timber or brush, over lava beds, on marsh rangelands, and grazing lands susceptible to overflow by water.

Federal, State, and Local Laws¹

Design and construction activities shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations governing pollution abatement, health, and safety. The owner or operator shall be responsible for securing all required permits or approvals and for performing in accordance with such laws and regulations. NRCS employees are not to assume responsibility for procuring these permits, rights, or approvals, or for enforcing laws and regulations. NRCS may provide the landowner or operator with technical

information needed to obtain the required rights or approvals to construct, operate, and maintain the practice.

Permits may be required from the following agencies:

- 1. West Virginia Department of Health***
- 2. West Virginia Department of Agriculture***

Planning Considerations

Water Quantity

- 1. Effects on the water budget, especially on localized rates and volumes of runoff.***
- 2. Where applicable, consider the effects of snowcatch and melt on the water budget.***

Water Quality

Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff.

Design Criteria

Trails or walkways shall be constructed wide enough 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.

Criteria Applicable for Trails.

Trails shall not be constructed where water would concentrate and flow in the trail.

Erosion and sediment control features will be designed to protect the trail.

Trails shall be protected from livestock traffic until vegetation is established, where vegetation is the planned surface protection for the trail.

Criteria Applicable for Walkways.

Walkways will be constructed to meet minimum height requirements above normal high water.

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

Additional forage to be made available shall justify the expense of developing the trail or walkway; other practices that facilitate grazing distribution shall be installed; potential erosion problems created by construction of a stock trail or walkway must be resolved.

Stream crossings shall be designed in accordance with NRCS WV practice standard No. 232 "Stream Crossing or Access".

Plans and Specifications

Each trail or walkway shall have a site specific design, based on the criteria in this standard, ***that describes the requirements for applying the practice to achieve the 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.

¹Bold italics is information added to the National standard by West Virginia.