

Vermont State Supplement, Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM19 - Wildlife Corridors
Vermont Supplemental Information in Blue Font

Enhancement Description

Wildlife corridors are linear strips of vegetation that connect two or more patches of suitable wildlife habitat. Participants will establish vegetative corridors as described below.

Land Use Applicability

Cropland, pastureland, rangeland and forestland

Benefits

Corridors connect habitats providing additional life requisites (e.g., feeding, nesting, roosting, escape cover, etc.) as well as interaction among local populations for reproduction or other social behaviors. Fragmentation of habitat with resultant loss of connectivity threatens the continued existence of fish and wildlife populations.

Criteria

1. **Continuity** –corridors must be uninterrupted strips (i.e., no roads, vegetative or physical barriers, etc.) connecting 2 or more patches of suitable habitat. Wildlife friendly fencing is not considered a barrier¹. Suitable habitat may consist of grasslands, rangelands, forests, wetlands, shrubby areas, or natural substrates suitable for use by wildlife species adapted to the landscape and site conditions and conforming to the composition and quality criteria below.
2. **Composition** - corridor vegetation must be suited to natural site conditions, consistent with the larger natural landscape context, and appropriate for the kinds of wildlife present, hence native vegetation is highly preferred. Vegetation in the “patches of suitable habitat” (above) must also meet these criteria.
3. **Quality** – invasive exotic vegetation must be controlled.
4. **Dimension** –the average width must be ≥ 30 feet with no section < 20 feet wide. Since context is so important no one size fits all conditions, however wider corridors are better and irregular boundaries (or borders) are preferred over straight.

¹Wildlife Friendly Fencing

Wildlife Friendly fence should allow free passage and be easy to jump over, crawl under and be easy to see. Using smooth wire for the top and bottom strands will prevent snagging and injuries. See ‘A Landowner’s Guide to Wildlife Friendly Fences: How to Build Fence with Wildlife in Mind’ for more in depth information and ideas for better fence design to limit wildlife injuries. <http://fwp.mt.gov/content/getItem.aspx?id=34461>



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- Fences should be low enough for adult animals to jump, preferably 40-42” or less, and the top two wires should be no less than 12” apart. Deer easily tangle their back legs if the top wires are closer together.
- The bottom wire or rail should be high enough for fawns to crawl under, at least 18” from the ground.
- Increasing visibility by using flagging, markers or high visibility wire will help ungulates (deer and moose) and large birds (hawks and owls) navigate around the fence.
- Barbed wire can be wildlife friendly if the guidelines are followed.
 - For cattle, use a wire spacing of 18–22–28–40/42 inches. The top wire should be at 40” to 42” or less. Allow 12” between the top two wires and 18” between the bottom wire and the ground. Use a smooth bottom wire if possible.
- Page or woven wire fence would not be considered wildlife friendly
- Refer to the landowner guide for situations not covered in this supplement.

Operation and Maintenance

Management activities must be conducted as necessary to ensure the corridor functions as the planned habitat.

Documentation Requirements

1. Map showing location of wildlife corridors connecting suitable habitats with required dimensions.
2. Brief descriptions of the habitats to be connected.
3. Description of the vegetation composition.