

**Animal Enhancement Activity - ANM07- Extending existing field borders for water quality protection and wildlife habitat**



**Enhancement Description**

Where existing field borders are utilized, extend them to gain more efficiency in intercepting overland flow and reducing the transport of nutrients, pesticides and agro-chemicals.

**Land Use Applicability**

Cropland and pastureland.

**Benefits**

Widening existing field borders that currently meet NRCS conservation practice standard criteria can provide food and cover for native and game species as well as enhancing wildlife habitat. Extended field borders offer more surface area to filter out sediments and agro-chemicals. Field borders can also offer buffers to mitigate pesticide drift during pesticide applications and pollen drift where the mixing of plant varieties is not desired.

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Wildlife species utilize transition zones between agricultural fields because they provide a unique combination of cover and often provide important travel corridors. Often times field borders are adjacent to riparian areas and are important for contributing clean water, and habitat areas nearby. Extending existing field borders not only enhances wildlife habitat but it increases the effectiveness of water quality protection if the border is next to a stream.

**Criteria for Extending Existing Field Borders**

Existing field borders must meet minimum state requirements for width. Extend the existing field border for a total of 60 feet or more to enhance habitat and water quality functions.

The extended field borders must be composed of at least 5 species of non-noxious, wildlife friendly grasses, perennial forbs and /or shrubs best suited to site conditions. Include species that provide pollinator food and habitat where possible.

1. All site preparation and plant establishment shall be accomplished according to the appropriate NRCS conservation practice standard criteria and specifications.
2. Any use of the field border must not compromise its intended purpose. Vegetation from field borders can be harvested for bio-energy as long as the harvesting is done in accordance with a plan that does not compromise the water quality and wildlife benefits of the extended filter strip.
3. To the extent possible the field border areas and extended field border areas will be vegetated to increase overland flow interception and increase water quality values if they also border a stream or water body.



4. The extension of field borders can incorporate other buffer types (filter strips, riparian herbaceous and riparian forest) where applicable to meet specific operator management goals.

#### **Operation and Maintenance**

1. Once established, field borders must not be mowed, disked, grazed, or otherwise disturbed, until after the primary wildlife ground nesting period has ended.
2. Field border will be regularly maintained for its intended purpose through the life of the contract. This includes any removal of vegetation, including grazing.
3. Grazing is allowed if a grazing management plan is used that protects the integrity, diversity and function of the riparian area.
4. Field borders will have a wildlife management plan to maintain established plant communities through the life of the contract. The wildlife plan will maintain the plant community and its structural diversity and provide habitat for intended species.

#### **Documentation Requirements**

1. A map showing the location and size of enhanced field borders.
2. Documentation of the type and rates of vegetation planted in the new field borders.

**WATER QUALITY AND WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY**

**ANM07 – OR      Extending Existing Field Borders for Water Quality Protection and Wildlife**

**Criteria**

- Minimum state requirement for existing field border width is 20 feet.
- Planting requirements: The Oregon & Washington Guide for Conservation Seedings and Plantings (2000) provides examples of typical seeding recommendations for various settings. Native species are preferred to maximize wildlife benefits. Include a diversity of perennial forbs where possible to provide food and cover for pollinators and other wildlife. Any species of perennial grasses or forbs that are considered non-noxious and adapted to the site may be used except those listed below.

Plantings may not include any of the following species:

Bentgrass (creeping, colonial, velvet)  
Bluegrass, Kentucky  
Brome, Smooth  
Canarygrass, Reed  
Cereal grains  
Fescue, Creeping Red  
Fescue, Tall  
Foxtail, Creeping/Meadow  
Quackgrass  
Ryegrass, Annual  
Ryegrass, Hybrid  
Ryegrass, Perennial  
Wheatgrass, Crested  
Wheatgrass, Intermediate/Pubescent  
Wildrye, Russian

**Operation and Maintenance**

- Primary wildlife ground nesting period is March 1 - July 15.

**References**

- Oregon & Washington Guide for Conservation Seedings and Plantings. 2000. USDA-NRCS. Online: <ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/OR/Plants-Materials/OR%20WA%20seeding%20guide.pdf>