

**Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM04- Extend existing filter strips for water quality protection and wildlife habitat**



**Enhancement Description**

Where existing filter strips 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 conservation filter strips that currently meet NRCS conservation practice standard water quality criteria can provide food and cover for native and game species as well as enhancing aquatic habitat. Extended filter strips offer more surface area to filter out sediments and agro-chemicals. Filter strips can also offer buffers to mitigate pesticide drift during

pesticide applications and pollen drift where the mixing of plant varieties is not desired.

Riparian habitats are important transition zones between terrestrial landscapes and aquatic zones. Wildlife species utilize these transition zones because they provide a unique combination of cover, access to water and often provide important travel corridors. Often times filter strips are adjacent to these riparian areas or are important for contributing clean water, and habitat areas nearby. Extending existing filter strips not only enhances wildlife habitat but it increases the effectiveness of water quality protection they provide to the streams.

**Criteria**

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

The extended filter strip must be composed of at least 5 species of non-noxious, wildlife friendly grasses and/or perennial forbs 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 filter strip must not compromise its intended purpose. Vegetation from filter strips 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 filter strip areas and extended filter strip areas will be vegetated to increase overland flow interception and increase water quality values of the stream or water body.



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

#### **Operation and Maintenance**

1. Once established, filter strips must not be mowed, disked, grazed, or otherwise disturbed, until after the primary wildlife ground nesting period has ended.
2. Filter strips 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 will maintain the integrity and diversity of vegetation and the filtering function of the vegetation.
4. Filter strips 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 filter strips.
2. Documentation of the type and rates of vegetation planted in the new filter strip areas.



Water Quality and Wildlife Enhancement Activity – ANM04 – *Extending Existing Filter Strips for Water Quality Protection and Wildlife Habitat*

**Reference:**

**645 – Upland Wildlife Habitat Management**

- **Biology Jobsheet 9 – Establishment of Native Grasses and Forbs**

**643 – Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats**

- **Biology Jobsheet 12 – Tall Grass Prairie**

**393 – Filter Strip**

The extended filter strips must be composed of at least 5 species of non-noxious, wildlife friendly grasses and/or perennial forbs best suited to site conditions.

**NATIVE GRASSES, FORBS AND LEGUMES**

Native grass seed origin shall be within a 200 mile radius of the project site, unless otherwise identified as an acceptable cultivar.

The following are native grasses that are considered wildlife friendly:

Big Bluestem

Indiangrass

Green Needlegrass

Little Bluestem

Sideoats Grama

Prairie Sandreed

Canada Wildrye

Slender Wheatgrass

Western Wheatgrass

Blue Grama

Switchgrass

Canada Bluejoint

Prairie Cordgrass

Virginia Wildrye

Kalms Brome

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## FORBS AND LEGUMES

Forbs and legumes with origins native to Minnesota are preferred. When local Minnesota seed sources are not available, native forbs and legume seed shall originate from Wisconsin, northern Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, northern Iowa, and the Canadian provinces of southern Manitoba and Ontario. If the true origin of the seed can be certified as one of the accepted states or provinces, then there would be no restriction on where the seed is grown. Certification must be provided by the grower, and responsibility for obtaining certification rests with the producer.

The following list identifies native forbs and wildflowers beneficial to upland wildlife and native habitat restoration. The list is not inclusive, and identifies those species, which are readily available through private vendor seed supplies.

<b>DRY</b>	<b>MESIC to WET</b>	<b>DRY to WET</b>
Bush Clover	Canada Tick Trefoil	Black-eyed Susan
Dotted Blazingstar	Common Ox-eye	Illinois Bundleflower
Purple Coneflower	Giant Sunflower	Purple Prairie Clover
Showy Penstemon	Golden Alexanders	Maximillian Sunflower
Silky Aster	Partridge Pea	Stiff Goldenrod
<b>DRY to MESIC</b>	Rattlesnake Master	Yarrow
Butterfly Weed	Tall Blazingstar	
Compass Plant	Wild Bergamot	
Hoary Vervain	Yellow Coneflower	
Leadplant	<b>WET</b>	
Prairie Smoke	Blue Vervain	
Rough Blazingstar	Boneset	
Showy Goldenrod	Joe-pye Weed	
Smooth Aster	New England Aster	
Stiff Tickseed	Panicled Aster	
	Swamp Milkweed	

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