

How to create **Wildlife Friendly Fencing**



JACKSON HOLE



WILDLIFE
FOUNDATION

Why “wildlife-friendly” fencing?

We share Jackson Hole with many species of wildlife. Some animals such as elk and deer migrate between the mountains and the valley floor. Others live as year-round residents on rangelands or in river corridors. Fences act as barriers, and can lead to needless wildlife deaths—something that most people would work to prevent if they could. This brochure presents some ideas for fencing that meet the needs of both landowners and wildlife.

Property planning

As a first step, an initial evaluation of the property is helpful. What kind of fences does it have, and where? What are they for? What is their condition? If the property has no fencing and some is desired, what function will it serve? Fences may be needed for a number of purposes: to delineate property boundaries, to contain livestock and pets, to prevent trespassing, to enclose gardens and barns. Each requires a different kind of fence, but any kind can be designed and placed with wildlife in mind.

Is there a place on the property where no fence is needed? Where plantings or natural vegetation can serve just as well? Such an area is likely to be a wildlife corridor already, especially if it is in a draw or watercourse where willow, hawthorn, and other cover grows. The vegetation serves many of the same purposes as a fence, such as screening and visually delineating a boundary. The areas

that deer, moose, and elk choose as travel corridors are often the same places that landowners want to retain as natural areas, since they are brushy and wet, and have more use as scenic amenities than as barnyards or gardens.

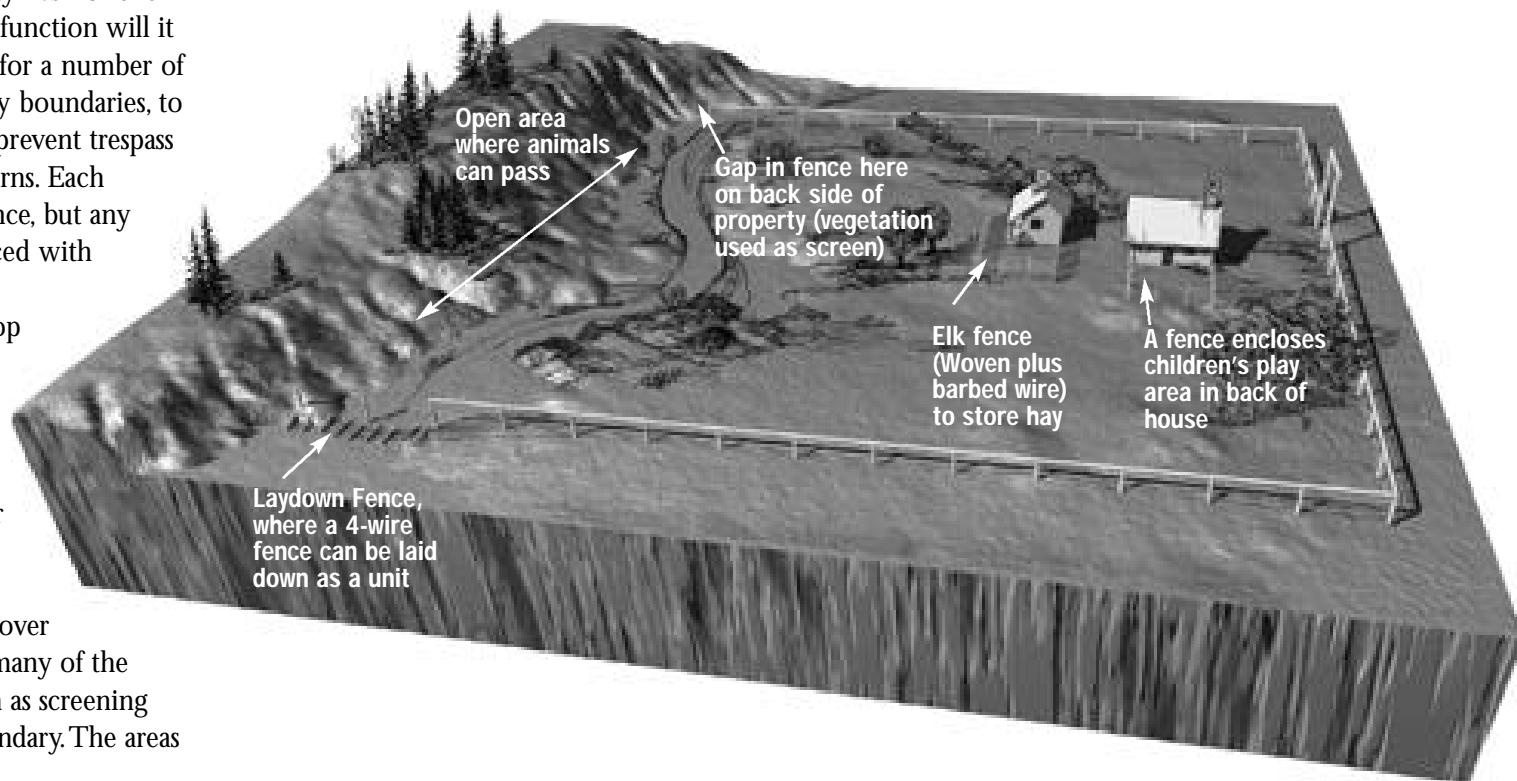
Placement of fencing

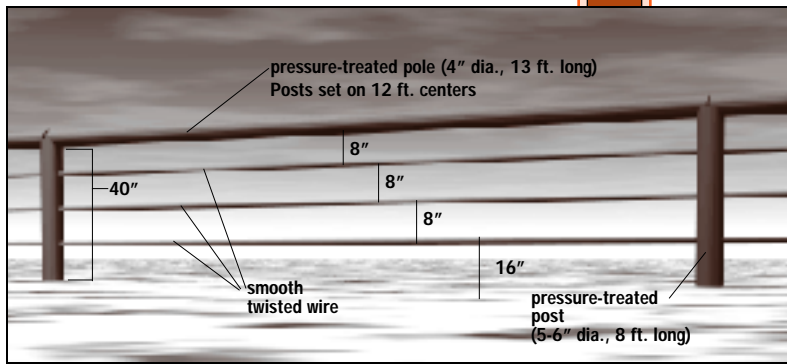
Fencing can be used to enhance a wildlife corridor, by using different kinds of fence for various applications. The illustration shows a wood fence with gaps and lay-down rails in the animal travel corridor, a discontinuous fence on the property line, and special-purpose fences enclosing only those areas requiring them. Not every fence on the property needs to be wildlife-friendly. An elk-proof fence protects a hay supply, another fence encloses a children’s play area. The fencing

scheme shows how several kinds of fence can be used to achieve the landowner’s needs without restricting wildlife movement elsewhere on the property.

What is the ideal fence?

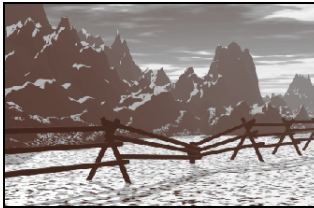
From wildlife’s standpoint, the “ideal” fence is one that can be seen (and therefore not run into, especially in the case of swans and owls), and one that can either be leapt over or scurried under without injury. A fence with posts and a wooden top rail works best. Rails or smooth wire strands can be used below the top rail. To effectively contain stock and allow wildlife movement, a height of 38 to 40 inches is considered maximum; the bottom strand of wire is 16 inches from the ground.





What if you don't have the "ideal" or you need to have barbed wire? Keeping in mind the attributes of the ideal fence—visibility and a way around or over it—other kinds of fences can be altered.

Buck and rail fences, originally designed for areas too rocky to dig fence posts, have become popular for property boundary fences. These are not easy for wildlife to get over, but periodically rails can be laid down or a gap in the fence can be provided (again, look for a place where animals are likely to cross—a swale or creek, away from buildings and access roads.) Since animals often follow a buck-rail fence searching for a way through, it is possible to guide them to the gap provided for their passage.



If a barbed-wire fence is needed to contain cattle, it can be made wildlife-friendly by adding a top rail and keeping the wire strands taut (therefore it is less likely to entangle either stock or wildlife). Is the wire fence needed year-round? If not, it can be designed to lay on the ground during the winter. Wire fences that cross creeks can be made more visible with the addition of a plastic-pipe sleeve or simple flagging. This can help prevent low-flying birds from running into them.

If you are aware of unnecessary barbed wire fencing, please call the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation.

The Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation is committed to:

- *A multi-faceted campaign to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions.*
- *Removal of unnecessary barbed wire fencing that poses hazards to wildlife and raising awareness about the use of wildlife friendly fencing*

- *Preventing the loss of trumpeter swans and other large waterfowl due to collisions with electrical power lines and fencing across waterways.*

- *Promoting responsible ways to co-exist with wildlife through public events and publications including "Who Ate the Backyard? Living With Wildlife on Private Land" by Charlie Craighead.*

- *Many other projects which help to protect and sustain our magnificent native wildlife.*

The Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization. Please send your tax-deductible donation to:

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