

What are the benefits to landowners?

Wildlife friendly fencing is a win for wildlife and for landowners. Landowners benefit from reduced fence damage from wildlife. They also benefit from reduced animal carcasses that can attract predators to their property. Landowners are able to enjoy the same level of fence functioning for containing livestock and preventing trespass, but with reduced wildlife mortality and less fence repairs.

Where can I learn more?

Great ways to make fencing more amenable to wildlife while still functional for livestock including cattle, sheep and horses can be found in *A Wyoming Landowner's Handbook to Fences and Wildlife*, published by the Wyoming Wildlife Foundation. This 55-page guide offers wildlife friendly fence designs for every kind of operation, as well as insights from landowners who actually use these designs. Ask SCLT staff for your copy!

How is the Sheridan Community Land Trust involved?

SCLT is working with interested landowners, the public and other organizations to improve fencing for wildlife. We are using wildlife movement data from the North Bighorn Mule Deer Movement Study and local experience to target priority areas for fence improvements. In Summer 2022, SCLT came together with agencies and organizations in Sheridan and Johnson Counties to found the Bighorn Fence Initiative. Since then, SCLT has hosted five wildlife friendly fencing volunteer projects across Sheridan County, and assisted partner organizations in two projects in Johnson County.

How can I get involved?

There are many ways you can help make fences more friendly for wildlife in Sheridan County.

For landowners who are interested in wildlife friendly fencing:

Contact John Graves, SCLT Director of Conservation, John@SheridanCLT.org

Call the SCLT office: (307)-6734702

To volunteer for a fence improvement project:

- Visit SheridanCLT.org/Volunteer and complete our online volunteer sign-up and check the "Conservation" box under interests. (You can check any of the other boxes, too.) You will be notified of any upcoming volunteer opportunities.

Don't have fences or are unable to help on a volunteer fence improvement project?

- No problem! These projects rely on community support. You can help improve wildlife passage in Sheridan County by making a tax-deductible gift to SCLT. SheridanCLT.org/Donate.



Land Protection



Volunteer



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OVERVIEW

Working lands and abundant wildlife make Sheridan County an amazing place. Cows, horses, moose, elk, deer, pronghorn and many birds can be found all over the county. Fences are important to keeping working lands working and certain areas need to exclude wildlife, such as haystacks, corrals, and doctoring areas. However, many areas of working lands provide important habitat for livestock and wildlife alike. Fences in these areas can be constructed in a way that contains livestock while also allowing easier wildlife movement, reduce wildlife entrapment, and reducing fence maintenance of fixing breaks.

Using wildlife movement patterns from local observations and the North Bighorn Mule Deer Movement Study, Sheridan Community Land Trust is working with landowners and land managers to modify, remove or rebuild fencing in key areas to enhance wildlife passage while protecting functionality for livestock and decreasing fence maintenance. This type of fence design is referred to as wildlife friendly fencing, though it is also friendly to agriculture use of the property.



Sheridan
Community
LAND TRUST

Conservation | History | Recreation

Connecting people to land and history

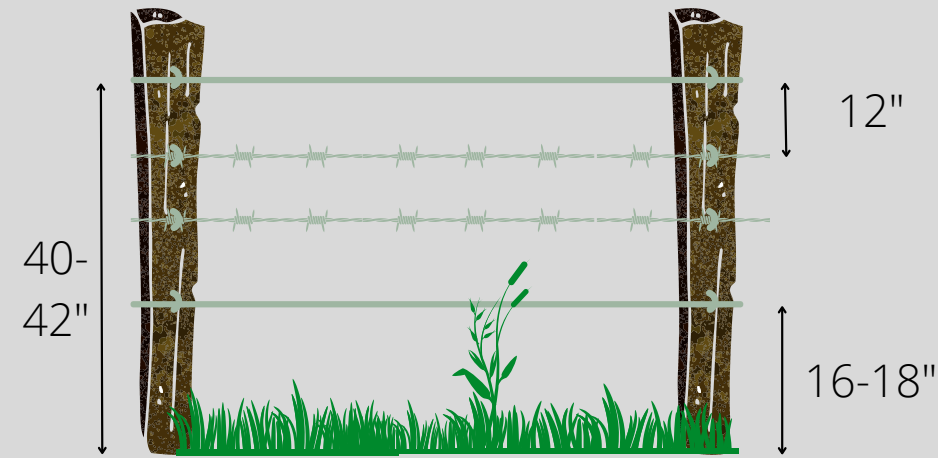
Strategic use of a wildlife friendly fence design can provide benefits for working lands, wildlife and the public.

There are many ways to decrease wildlife incidents with your fence while still meeting your land's management needs.



What is wildlife friendly fencing?

Wildlife fencing is fencing that achieves its purpose - whether that be containing livestock or denoting a boundary - while still allowing for wildlife passage. It can take many forms, but the basic guidelines for pastures with cattle are to have the fence be no more than 42" tall, no lower than 16" to the ground, and to have at least 12" between the top two strands to prevent entanglement. It is also recommended to have smooth wire on the top and bottom strands of the fence where practical.



The lower top wire allows wildlife to completely jump over the fence and reduces the breakage in the wire. The higher bottom wire allows wildlife to move under the fence and for cow calves to easily return to their mothers should they wind up in the adjacent pasture. The space between the top two strands reduces snared entrapment in the wires if wildlife legs do snag a wire as they jump over the fence.

Why is wildlife friendly fencing needed?

Fences can create a barrier to wildlife movement. In certain areas this barrier is important for agriculture operations; however, other areas can be altered to reduce fence maintenance and allow wildlife to pass. When a fence is too high, wildlife may not be able to cross it at all or risk entangling themselves in the fence. When a fence has wire too close to the ground, wildlife can injure or entrap themselves in an attempt to crawl under. If a mother crosses a fence but her young are not able to crawl under, the young are often abandoned and perish. Wildlife friendly fencing is necessary to avoid these deaths and to avoid damage to fencing from unsuccessful wildlife crossings.



Joel Bousman runs a 500-head cow/calf operation with his family near the Wind River Range. Bousman uses a 12-mile section of 4-strand wildlife friendly fence where mule deer frequently cross.

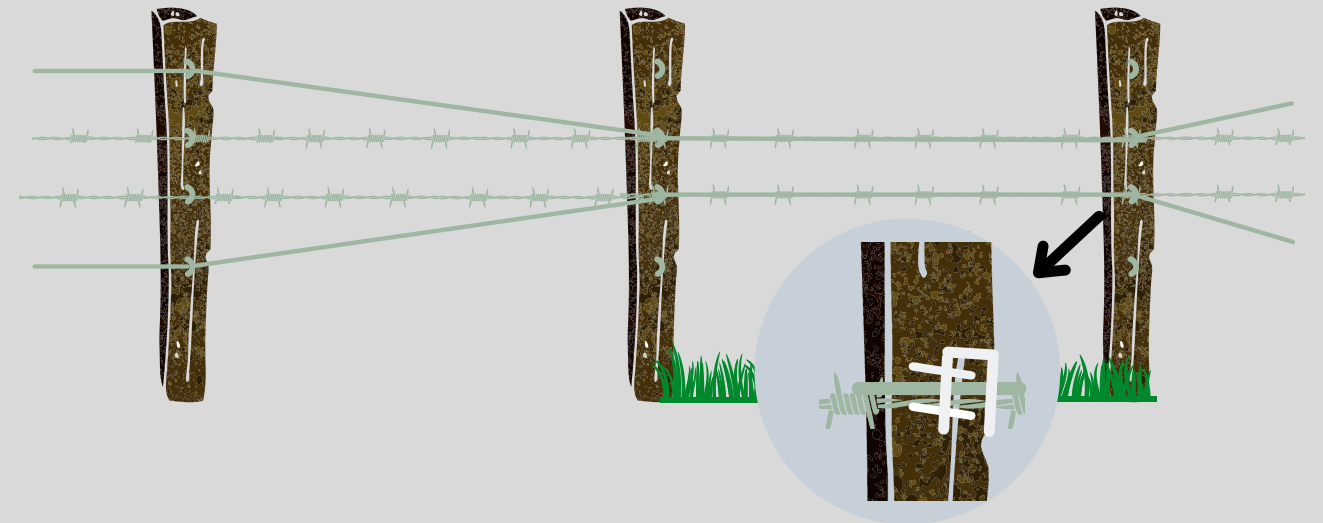
In the 2015 Wyoming Landowner's Handbook to Fences and Wildlife, Bousman says: "I always thought that wildlife friendly meant 3-wire smooth wire fence and that wouldn't work for cattle. Then I was on a land tour and saw this style of fence and thought, well, that would work for us."

When it comes to calves slipping under, Bousman adds: "The only thing that might get through are the really little ones, and not for long – they want to stick close to mom."

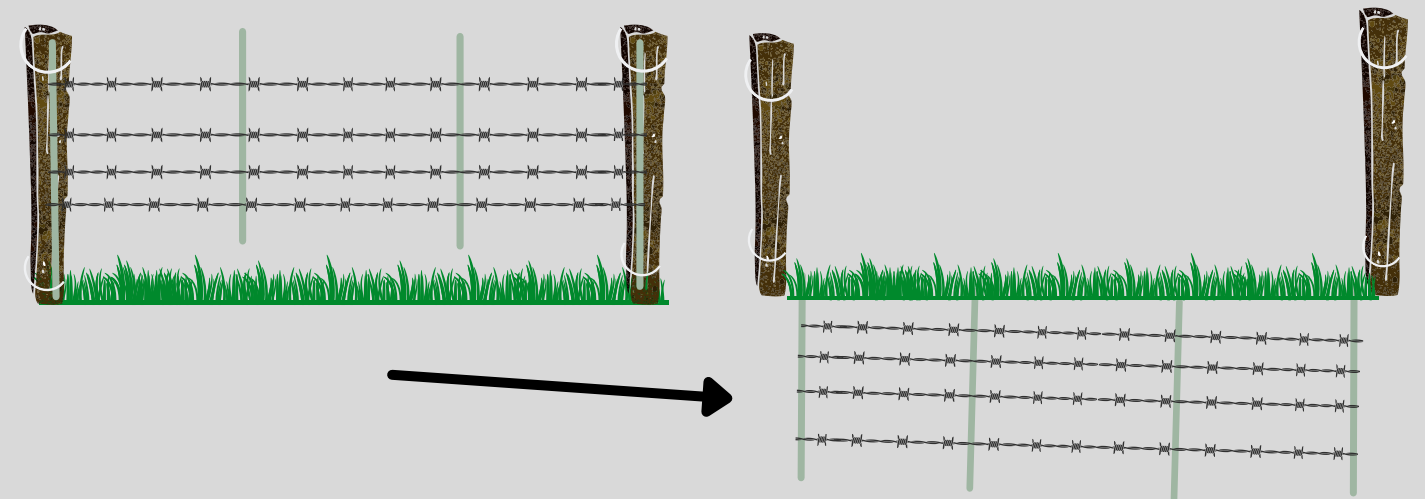
What are other wildlife friendly fence designs?

Wildlife fencing is not one-size-fits-all. While the guidelines on the opposite page generally work for both wildlife and cattle, it may not work for every situation. The Wyoming Wildlife Foundation's *A Wyoming Landowner's Handbook to Fences and Wildlife* includes specifications for many different fences and situations, including designs that will work for sheep, bison and horses. Here are a few seasonal ideas to consider:

Adjustable fences: You can use a simple staple lock to drop the top wire to the height of the second wire and raise the bottom wire to allow for wildlife to pass through when livestock aren't present.



Lay-Down fences: This fence section is connected to posts using loops so that when the pasture is not in use, the fence can be laid down to allow for wildlife to pass through. This has the added benefit that in the wintertime, you can lay down your fence to prevent damage from snow.



Leave a gate open: This is the easiest way to reduce fence damage and increase ease of passage for wildlife. Simply leave a gate open when the pasture is not in use. If you are worried about trespassing, you might consider placing a chain across the gate opening with a no trespassing sign.

Keep fences in good repair: Even if your fence is not a wildlife friendly design, you can reduce wildlife mortality by keeping your fence in good repair with tight wires. Loose wires increase the risk of entanglement for wildlife, leading to the need for even more repairs.