



## MDT RESOURCES SECTION CONTACTS

### Section Supervisor

Bill Semmens  
(406) 444-7227  
[bsemmens@mt.gov](mailto:bsemmens@mt.gov)

### Missoula District Biologist

Joe Weigand  
(406) 444-9205  
[joweigand@mt.gov](mailto:joweigand@mt.gov)

### Butte District Biologist

Deb Wambach  
(406) 444-0461  
[dwambach@mt.gov](mailto:dwambach@mt.gov)

### Great Falls District Biologist

Paul Sturm  
(406) 444-9438  
[psturm@mt.gov](mailto:psturm@mt.gov)

### Glendive District Biologist

Larry Sickerson  
(406) 444-0462  
[lsickerson@mt.gov](mailto:lsickerson@mt.gov)

### Billings District Biologist

Susan Lenard  
(406) 444-0845  
[slenard@mt.gov](mailto:slenard@mt.gov)

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# Wildlife Friendly Fence



## A Guide to Meeting Landowner and Wildlife Needs



**VISION ZERO**  
zero deaths · zero serious injuries  
MONTANA DEPARTMENT  
OF TRANSPORTATION

## Wildlife Friendly Fence

### BENEFITS:

- \* Allows wildlife movement while containing domestic livestock.
- \* Reduces wildlife damage to fences, thus reducing fence maintenance needs.
- \* Designed to reduce the number of injuries and deaths to wildlife.
- \* Can reduce the number of animal/vehicle collisions by reducing:
  - ◆ the chance of wildlife being trapped in the right-of-way (ROW).
  - ◆ the time animals spend in the ROW.
- \* Maintains habitat connectivity for wildlife.
- \* Smooth wire can reduce entanglement and injury to wildlife.



### FEATURES:

- \* Maximum height of top wire = 42 inches
- \* 12-inch spacing between the top two wires to reduce the chance of wildlife getting their legs entangled when jumping the fence
- \* 12 to 18-inch bottom wire height allows for wildlife (antelope and young-of-the-year) passage under the fence

### In contrast, traditional Right-of-Way fence design (5-wire, 6-wire, woven wire, etc.)

- \* Impedes wildlife movements to and from winter/summer ranges, essential forage, and water
- \* Can cause injuries or fatalities during attempts by wildlife to cross over or under the fence
- \* Increases the likelihood of wildlife damaging the fence, which increases maintenance costs

Montana is nationally known for its deer, elk, antelope, moose, bighorn sheep, bears, and bison. Wildlife related recreation brings millions of dollars into Montana's economy annually. However, no one enjoys seeing wildlife struggling while entangled in a fence or hanging dead from a fence. Poorly designed fence can trap animals, separate young animals from their mothers, and block animals from following migration routes and to areas of better forage and protection.



Fences that are built too high and/or have narrow spacing between the wires can entangle wildlife. Bottom wires that are too low for wildlife to crawl under impede movement and separate young from their mothers. Woven wire fence acts as a barrier to young animals and antelope, which prefer to crawl under fences.



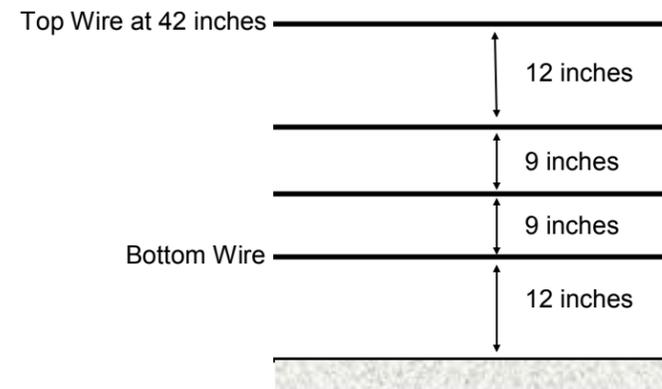
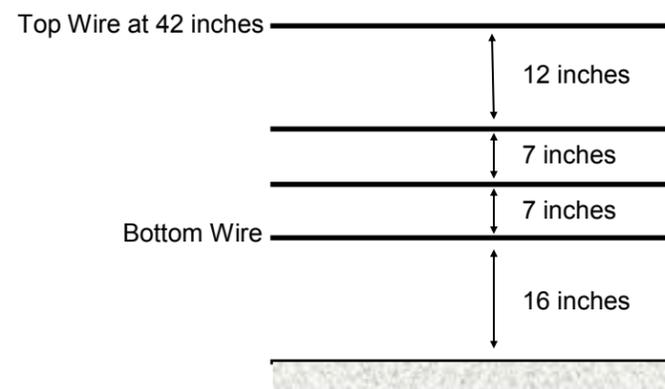
## Wildlife Friendly Fence Designs:

The type of wildlife, land-use, and/or domestic livestock present should be considered prior to selecting a wildlife friendly fence design. Wildlife friendly fence is recommended to be installed across from each other on both sides of the highway.

**Wildlife friendly fence can be :**

- \* **installed for the entire property**
- OR**
- \* **installed in shorter sections within other fence types along the property boundary.**

### MDT WIRE SPACING OPTIONS:

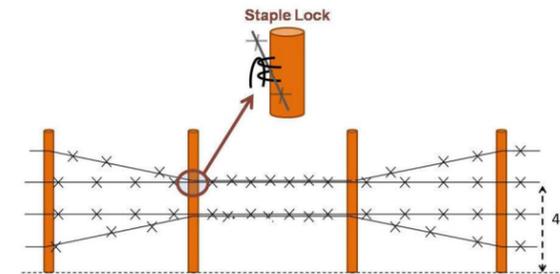


(16 - 18 inch bottom wire height is recommended in areas with antelope)

Wire can be smooth, barbed, or a combination of both. Please discuss wire options with MDT Right of Way personnel (MDT Detailed Drawing: 607-01) or an MDT District Biologist.

## Modifications can be made to make traditional ROW fence

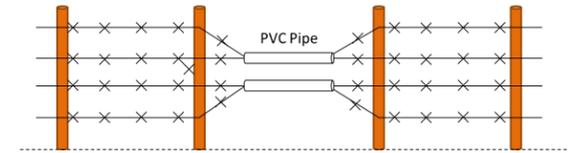
Modifications can be **permanent or seasonal** (when livestock are not present)



Secure top, bottom, or both wires to the next upper or lower wire to allow wildlife passage

## Wildlife Friendly:

Carabiners and zip-ties are also simple alternatives for securing wires together

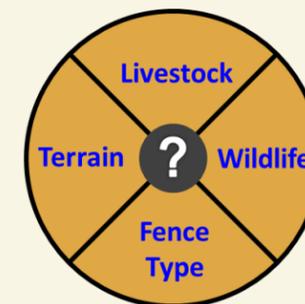


Install gates in ROW fence and leave gates open when livestock are not present



Simple fence alterations allow for wildlife passage  
Note: 2 lower fence strands connected with carabiners to allow antelope to crawl under the fence.

## Common questions about wildlife friendly fence:



- \* Will wildlife friendly fence serve my needs?
- \* What design will work with cattle, sheep, horse, etc.?
- \* What designs are there for varying topography; steep hillsides, gullies, level terrain?
- \* What wildlife species are present in my area?
- \* What are the daily, seasonal, or regional wildlife movements in my area?

MDT's District Biologists and Resources Section Supervisor are available to assist you with the wildlife friendly fence design that works best for your needs.