THE NORTHWESTERN US
FENCING GUIDE

YOUR COMPLETE REFERENCE FOR FENCING FARMS, HOMESTEADS AND PROPERTIES IN ***WA, OR, ID, MT & WY***



TRUSTED BY FARMERS FOR 40+ YEARS

LOCALLY STOCKED IN CALDWELL, ID

KENCOVE
FARM FENCE SUPPLIES

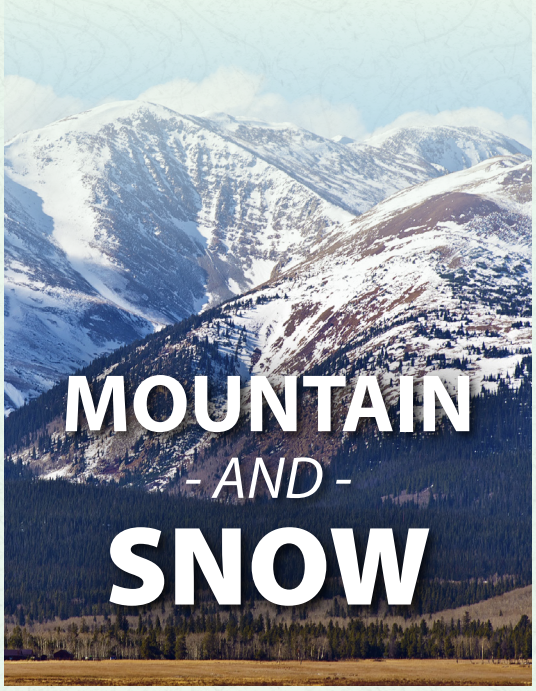
ONE REGION

THREE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FENCES

Most fencing advice assumes one climate and one kind of dirt. The Northwest has neither. The line of mountains running down through the region — the Cascades in Washington and Oregon, the Rockies through Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming — splits your land into three worlds. Which side of that line you're on decides your posts, your wire coating, and above all how you ground an electric fence.



Western WA & OR. Heavy rain, mild winters, soggy ground. Grounding is easy — but rot and corrosion eat posts, wire, and connectors. Spec heavily galvanized.



High elevation across ***all five states***. Deep frost and snow load. Set braces below frost; build for snow weight and a short install season.



Eastern WA/OR, southern ID, plains of MT & WY. Rocky, dry soil that barely conducts. Grounding is the hard part — plan extra rods and joules.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

Find your zone above first — it shapes every section that follows. Then work through your ***predators*** (Section 2), your ***animals*** (Section 3), and your ***system*** (Section 4). The ***grounding*** section (Section 5) is the one most Northwest fences get wrong; don't skip it.

SECTION 1

CLIMATE & TERRAIN

Match the fence to your zone before you spend a dollar

WET WEST

Coastal WA / OR

Rainfall west of the Cascades runs 40–120+ inches a year. Untreated wood rots, ungalvanized wire rusts, and electric connectors corrode at the joint. Use ground-contact-rated treated posts (or steel/pipe), and step up to Class 3 galvanized wire and stainless or galvanized connectors near the coast.

DRY EAST

E. WA/OR · S. ID · Plains

High-desert soil is dry, rocky, and a poor conductor. Posts hit rock; augers struggle. Drive steel T-posts or use rock-set/pounded posts, and expect to do real work on grounding (see Section 5). Wind across open range adds load — brace hard and don't skimp on post spacing.

SNOW & FROST

All FIve States

Frost depth runs 30–60+ inches across much of MT, WY, ID, and the higher Cascades. Set corner and brace posts below the frost line or they'll heave loose in spring. Heavy snow load can flatten woven wire and pull down top wires — keep wires tensioned and posts deep.

SECTION 1

CLIMATE & TERRAIN

Match the fence to your zone before you spend a dollar

SHORT SEASON

Mountain Country

At elevation the ground is frozen or buried into May and freezes again by October. Your build window is tight. Order early, stage materials, and set permanent corners and braces first so the run can go up fast when the weather breaks.

KENCOVE TIPS

Frost heave *kills more Northwest corners than rot or rust combined. A corner post set 3½ feet deep in frost country will outlast one set 2 feet deep by decades — go deeper than feels necessary, and concrete or rock-pack the brace assembly.*

Closing Line:

Every later section assumes you know your zone. If your property straddles the divide — common on the east slope of the Cascades or the Idaho panhandle — fence each part for the conditions it actually sees, not the average.

SECTION 2

NORTHWEST PREDATOR MAP

This is the region's biggest fencing challenge — plan for it

The Northwest carries predators most of the country never has to fence against. A coyote fence won't stop a wolf, and nothing stops a determined grizzly except a properly built electric fence. Match your build to the worst animal on your ground.



Gray Wolves

Threat Tag: High

ID · MT · WY · E. WA/OR

Established and expanding across the Northern Rockies and into eastern Washington and Oregon. Confirmed depredation on calves, sheep, and stock is real and documented. The proven tools are multi-strand high-tensile electric running a hard hit (high joule), fladry or turbo-fladry around calving and lambing grounds, night penning, and livestock guardian dogs. Legal status and management differ by state — check current rules with your state wildlife agency before lethal control.



Grizzly & Black Bears

Threat Tag: High

Greater Yellowstone & NW MT

Grizzlies roam the Greater Yellowstone region (WY, SW MT, E. ID) and the Northern Continental Divide (NW MT); black bears are nearly everywhere. The standard protection for beehives, chicken coops, feed, and calving areas is a properly grounded electric fence at 5,000+ volts. Bears test with their nose — a hot wire at nose height does the teaching. Never fence a bear out with a barrier alone.



Cougars

Threat Tag: High

All five states

Mountain lions range region-wide and jump remarkably well. Small stock needs tall fencing and a secure, roofed night enclosure — open-top pens are an invitation.

SECTION 2

NORTHWEST PREDATOR MAP

This is the region's biggest fencing challenge — plan for it



Coyotes

Threat Tag: Everywhere

ID · MT · WY · E. WA/OR

The universal Northwest predator. Stop them with electric netting, tight woven wire with hot offset wires, and a buried apron or ground wire to beat digging.



Bobcat, Raccoon, Weasel, Mink, Skunk

Threat Tag: Poultry & Small Stock

Weasels and mink slip through 2-inch mesh and openings the width of a quarter. Poultry needs ½-inch hardware cloth, not chicken wire, plus a buried apron against diggers. For range birds, electric poultry netting plus a covered run is the reliable combination.

KENCOVE TIPS

Predator electric fences *fail on voltage, not design. Wolves and bears need a fence that hits hard every time — that means a stout energizer, excellent grounding (Section 5), and routine voltage checks. A predator fence at 2,000 volts is a fence the predator learns to ignore.*

SECTION 3

FENCING BY ANIMAL

Built for the herds that actually run in the Northwest

Animal	Go-to Fence	What Northwest Owners Need to Know
Cattle ***(cow/calf · range)***	High-tensile electric (3–5 strand); barbed for big range	Long runs across open country need serious bracing and post spacing. Add a hot wire for wolf pressure in the Rockies.
Sheep ***(huge in ID · MT · WY · E. OR)***	Electric netting or woven wire + offset hot wires	Predators are the #1 concern, not containment. Pair fencing with guardian animals; use fladry for wolves at lambing.
Horses	Coated wire, electric tape/rope, board + wire	Safety first — no barbed wire. Highly visible fencing prevents panic injuries; electric keeps horses off the fence.
Goats	Tight woven (field) fence + hot wires	Escape artists and climbers. Hot wire at nose and at the top stops both pushing under and climbing over.
Llamas & alpacas ***(common in PNW)***	No-climb / field fence, 4–5 ft	Gentle on fences but vulnerable to cougars and coyotes — protect against predators. Many owners run them as guardians too.
Bison ***(MT · WY)***	Heavy high-tensile, 5–6 ft, massive braces	They go through ordinary cattle fence. Over-build everything: post depth, wire gauge, brace strength, energizer joules.
Poultry	Electric net + ½" hardware cloth + covered run	Pure predator exclusion. Bury an apron against diggers; a roof or netting stops hawks, owls, and climbing cats.

KENCOVE TIPS

Running a mix? ***Build for the most demanding animal and the worst predator on your place. A fence specced for sheep in wolf country will comfortably hold cattle, horses, and llamas too — the reverse is rarely true.***

Not sure which system fits your animals, acreage, and zone? That's exactly the call our fencing specialists take all day. Reach us before you order — it's free, and it saves expensive mistakes.

SECTION 4

CHOOSING YOUR SYSTEM

Wire, posts, and braces for Northwest conditions

System	Best for	Northwest Notes
High-tensile electric	Cattle, sheep, long perimeters, predator control	The Northwest workhorse. Spans long runs, flexes under snow and elk, and hits predators hard. Needs good grounding.
Woven / field wire	Sheep, goats, llamas, mixed small stock	Strong containment; add offset hot wires for predators. Watch snow load — keep it tight and well-braced.
Electric netting	Poultry, sheep, rotational grazing	Portable predator protection. Excellent for moving stock; keep it hot and off the ground in deep snow.
Barbed wire	Extensive cattle range	Traditional for big country, but not horse-safe and limited against predators. Often paired with a hot wire.
Coated / poly	Horses, high-visibility lines	Safe and visible. Choose UV-stable product for the high-sun east side.

Posts for Your Zone



Wet West

Ground-contact treated wood, steel, or pipe; expect rot on anything less.



Dry/Rocky East

Driven steel T-posts or rock-set posts; augering hits rock.



Frost Country

Corners and braces below the frost line, packed or concreted.

SECTION 4

CHOOSING YOUR SYSTEM

Wire, posts, and braces for Northwest conditions

Wire & Coatings



Coastal/Wet

Class 3 galvanized minimum; stainless/galv connectors.



Dry East

Standard galv is usually fine; corrosion is slower.



Everywhere

Match gauge and tensile to the animal and run length.

KENCOVE TIPS

The brace assembly *is the whole fence. In frost-heave and long-run range country, a properly built H-brace or floating diagonal at every corner and end is what keeps tension for 30 years. Under-bracing is the most common — and most expensive — Northwest fencing mistake.*

SECTION 5

ENERGIZERS & GROUNDING

The single thing most Northwest electric fences get wrong

An electric fence is only as good as its ground. A spark needs to travel through the animal, into the soil, and back to the energizer's ground rods. East of the Cascades and all winter long, that return path is the weak link — dry and frozen soil barely conducts. Get this right and everything else works.



Dry & Frozen Soil

Threat Tag: Hardest case

High-desert and winter soil is a poor conductor, so a standard ground system delivers a weak shock. Fixes: add ground rods (three 6-ft rods, 10 ft apart, is a starting point — add more in dry ground), site them in the moistest, most shaded soil you have, and consider a hot/ground-return (bipolar) system so the circuit doesn't depend on the soil at all.



Wet West

Threat Tag: Easy ground, hard metal

Saturated coastal soil grounds beautifully — your problem is corrosion. Use galvanized ground rods and clamps, keep connections tight and protected, and check them annually. A corroded ground connection quietly kills voltage long before you notice stock leaning on the wire.

SECTION 5

ENERGIZERS & GROUNDING

The single thing most Northwest electric fences get wrong



Snow Changes the Rules

Threat Tag: Mountain winters

Deep snow insulates animals' feet from the ground and can short the bottom wires. In snow country, a hot/ground-return system keeps the fence working when the soil circuit fails, and keeping a top wire well above expected snow depth keeps the hit where the animal will meet it.



Sizing & Power

Threat Tag: Don't undersize

Long Northwest runs plus predator loads demand a stout energizer — size by miles of fence and joules, then go a step up. Remote range in MT, WY, and ID often runs on solar or battery energizers; size the panel and battery for short winter days. For predator control, more joules is better: a hard, consistent hit is what teaches a wolf or bear to stay off.

KENCOVE TIPS

Buy a fence tester *and use it. Voltage that reads 6,000+ at the energizer but 2,000 at the far corner means a grounding or connection problem — almost always the ground side, almost always in dry or frozen soil. Five minutes with a tester finds the leak.*

WE SHIP TO THE NORTHWEST

STOCKED IN THE REGION, SHIPPED TO YOU

Kencove ships fence supplies to the Northwest from our warehouse in Caldwell, Idaho — right in the middle of the five-state region. That means shorter transit times and lower freight to Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, from the coast to the high plains.

Order online or by phone, talk to a real fencing specialist who can size your system, wire, and energizer before anything ships, and get it delivered fast. No installer scheduling, no waiting weeks for a quote.

Ths Guide Is for You If...

- ☑ You're losing — or worried about losing — stock to wolves, bears, cougars, or coyotes
- ☑ You're setting up new ground and want to buy the right system once
- ☑ You run sheep, cattle, horses, goats, llamas, or poultry anywhere in the five-state region
- ☑ You fence on both sides of the mountains and need it to hold up in each
- ☑ Your electric fence "works in summer" but fades in dry ground or winter snow

FENCEBUILDER BY KENCOVE

Plan Your Fence Before You Order

Use Kencove's free Fencebuilder tool to plan your entire fence system before you buy. Draw your fence lines on an aerial map of your property, add gates and energizers, and instantly see the exact materials and cost you'll need.

portal.kencove.com/fencebuilder



HOW TO ORDER

Kencove Farm Fence Supplies Trusted by Farmers for 40+ Years

NORTHWESTERN FENCING GUIDE



Our Locations

Headquarters:
Blairsville, Pennsylvania

Northwest Warehouse:
Caldwell, Idaho

Get In Touch With Us!

PHONE
1-800-KENCOVE

Talk to a fence specialist who can help you choose the right products for your animals, acreage, and predator pressure.

WEB
WWW.KENCOVE.COM

Browse our full catalog, build your cart, and check out. All Southeast orders ship from Eastman, GA for fastest delivery.

EMAIL
SALES@KENCOVE.COM

Questions about fencing? Email our specialists for product recommendations tailored to your operation.

Build It Right the First Time

Talk to a Kencove fencing specialist about your animals, your acreage, and your zone — then get exactly what you need shipped to your gate.

KENCOVE FARM FENCE SUPPLIES

Fast, Friendly Service and Expert Advice