



# DICKINSON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SPIRIT LAKE, IOWA 51360 712-336-3782, EXT. 3

JANUARY 2002

## Windbreak Establishment

Windbreaks provide many environmental benefits such as: reducing soil losses from wind erosion, protecting growing plants, managing snow distribution, providing shelter for livestock, providing wildlife habitat and improving aesthetics.

Species within the windbreak should be chosen according to soils in the field, climate and purpose of the windbreak. Diversity of species within the windbreak reduces insect or disease problems and improves aesthetics.

For snow management, the windbreak should extend 100 feet beyond the ends of roadway areas to be protected. Evergreens and/or shrubs should be used if the primary purpose of the windbreak is to manage drifting snow.

If the primary purpose is for wildlife habitat, a windbreak with 10 or more rows is recommended. The species within the windbreak should be of various sizes, forms, food-bearing capability and densities. Shrub rows should be located on outside rows. The layout of the windbreak should include an east-west orientation to allow wildlife to use the south side of the windbreak.

Windbreaks should be made up of at least two rows that can include one conifer or shrub row. This does not include field windbreaks.

The distance protected from

wind erosion extends from the leeward side of the windbreak out to ten times the twenty-year average height of the tallest row of trees or shrubs.

Site preparation is critical to the success of establishing a windbreak. If the existing cover is sod, alfalfa or weedy crop cover the competing vegetation should be controlled by any of the following methods:

strip tilling with tillage equipment, chemical treatment of the planting strip or chemical spot treatments or mechanical spot treatments. If the existing cover is not weedy, the trees



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Tom Koster Curt Smith Keith Van Kleek

## District Mission Statement

The Dickinson SWCD will serve its customers and the needs of the District's natural resources through education, promotion, and demonstration.

Contact us by e-mail at: [swcd@rconnect.com](mailto:swcd@rconnect.com)

Visit the following web sites for information on Dickinson County SWCD and other area offices:

[www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov) or [www.theconservationstation.org](http://www.theconservationstation.org)

and shrubs can be planted directly. Fall site preparation is preferred over spring site preparation. A fall seeding of oats may be used after completing fall site preparation if the planting site is prone to soil erosion.

Maintenance of the windbreak after

planting should be done so four to five feet in diameter or width is treated. Row spacing should be at least four feet wider than any equipment planned for between-row maintenance as low as it does not exceed the recommended spacing for each species.

If pesticides are used, they should be applied according to label directions.

If you have any questions concerning windbreak planning and planting, contact the NRCS office at 712-336-3782, Ext. 3.

### **Different Wetlands, Different Functions**

The natural topography of the Iowa Great Lakes watershed yields to the restoration of wetlands. The purpose of restoring a wetland is determined by what job it has to perform. Wetland

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water depth determines how the wetland will function. Listed below are just a few examples of how wetlands protect our Lakes.

Wetlands that are less than three feet deep and continuously full of water year round are great for ducks that are in the flyways of the Midwest. Generally a 50/50 ratio of upland to water is preferred for waterfowl.

A wetland that is full of soggy, wet soil that only has water in it in the spring is great for improving water quality. Typically these wetlands encourage the growth of plants which filter and clean water. You will most likely find a wetland of this type built in farmland areas. Most of these have a 75% buffer of water loving vegetation and native grasses to clean the water.

Another type of wetland is one that is over three feet deep. The purpose of this wetland is to work like a grade stabilization structure and capture sediment before it runs into the lakes. It is extremely useful around open confinement areas to settle out waste before it contaminates a stream.



Photos courtesy of NRCS

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