



Fact Sheet

Native Buffer Cost-Share Program

Scott Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) can provide up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to landowners for native prairie establishment. The cost-share assistance payment cap is variable based on site conditions. Seedlings must be planted and installed in accordance with the Natural Resources Conservation Service's technical standards and specifications. The landowner must maintain the native prairie cover for a minimum of 15 years.

All lands suitable for native prairie establishment that are not already part of a government easement are eligible for the program. Landowners accepted into the native prairie program are responsible for proper maintenance of the cover established and are subject to periodic inspections.

Maintenance may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Control weeds by treating with chemicals per label directions OR spot mow before seed heads form. When possible, control measures should be avoided between May 1 and August 1, the primary nesting season for wildlife.
- Re-seed areas that do not eventually establish adequately.
- Do not use the contract area for field roads, equipment storage, hay or straw storage, field borders, disposal of livestock or any other organic waste, as a building site or any other uses that would damage or destroy the native prairie area.
- A controlled burn may be beneficial during the establishment period or at any time during the life of the contract to remove organic buildup, control invading plant species, or improve plant vigor. Burning should only be done according to a burning plan carried out by properly trained and equipped people.
- A payment, equivalent to 75% of the expected cost, for three controlled burns is included in the payment to the landowner upon project completion.



Benefits of native prairie restoration to the landscape and wildlife in Scott County

- The plant species of a native prairie has become adapted -- over thousands of years -- to survive climatic extremes and are well suited to local soil types.
- Native prairie plantings typically require no fertilization or watering. Fertilization and watering can be expensive, time-consuming procedures that can encourage undesirable vegetation. Costs associated with lawn irrigation, maintenance and chemical applications are reduced.
- Native prairie species naturally resist weed invasion more effectively than introduced grasses.
- The extensive fibrous root systems of native prairies reduce erosion by holding soil and slowing runoff. The deep roots also build soil and restore soil health by opening the subsoil to water percolation and aeration, replenishing the soil with organic matter.
- Native plant species provide a high-quality habitat for wildlife. As reclamation projects increase in size and plant diversity, animal populations will also increase and become more diverse.



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