

Conservation Practice Standard Overview

Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380) or Renovation (650)

Windbreaks or shelterbelts are single to multiple rows of trees and possibly shrubs planted in a linear fashion. They are established upwind of the areas to be protected. Renovating a windbreak may involve removing, releasing, or replacing selected trees and shrubs or rows of trees or shrubs.

Practice Information

Windbreaks and shelterbelts are primarily used to reduce soil erosion from wind; protect crops, livestock, and farmsteads from wind and related microclimate effects; control snow deposition; and improve air quality by intercepting drifting chemicals and odors.

Windbreak/shelterbelt establishment involves the planting of vegetation to serve the purposes noted above. The effectiveness of a windbreak or shelterbelt is dependent on the height of the mature plants. Therefore, it may take 20 years or more for the practice to become fully functional.

Windbreak/shelterbelt renovation involves widening, partial replanting, removing, and replacing selected trees and shrubs to improve an existing windbreak or shelterbelt. A period of years may also be needed for proper renovation.



These practices can be applied in any area where there is sufficient linear length to establish the windbreak on the lee side of the area to be protected. It is important during planning to consider the dominant wind direction during weather events that cause damage

Common Associated Practices

Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380) or Renovation (650) are commonly applied with conservation practices such as Conservation Crop Rotation (328), Cover Crop (340), Residue Management (344), Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490), Tree/Shrub Establishment (612), Tree/Shrub Pruning (660), and Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645).

For further information, contact your local NRCS field office.