Plant Enhancement Activity – PLT06 – Renovation of a windbreak, shelter belt or hedgerow for wildlife habitat

Enhancement Description

This enhancement is for the renovation of existing sites that are declining in vigor, need additional woody plants (trees or shrubs) or otherwise no longer provide wildlife habitat benefits. Existing rows of woody plants may be thinned, removed or replaced with new plantings. Existing woody plants may be pruned, either branches or roots or both, to improve windbreak function, health and vigor.

Land Use Applicability

Cropland and pastureland

Benefits

Renovation restores the function of existing windbreaks, shelterbelts or hedgerows to provide wildlife habitat benefits as well as other benefits such as reduced wind erosion, pesticide drift, mitigation of odor and noise and controlled snow deposition. Species composition may be upgraded by adding trees or shrubs that produce wildlife food and shelter as well as wood products and visual quality, such as spring blossoms or fall colors. Woody species threatened by pests such as emerald ash borer can be replaced with more resilient species that provide wildlife habitat benefits.

Criteria

1. Identification of wildlife species to be benefited by the renovation
2. Develop a plan for new trees and/or shrubs that will provide the desired habitat and windbreak or shelter belt functions
3. Removal of dead or dying trees that do not provide the desired habitat unless habitat for cavity nesting wildlife is desired
4. Removal of other trees or invasives that do not provide the desired habitat
5. Replacement of removed trees by planting new trees or shrubs that will provide the desired habitat while serving the required windbreak or shelter belt function
6. Pruning or thinning of less desirable trees to encourage the growth of trees that will provide wildlife habitat and windbreak or shelter belt functions

Documentation Requirements

1. Brief written description of the tasks completed with dates and any receipts for planting stock, herbicides, etc.
2. Delineations on a map or aerial photo of renovated windbreak

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Written documentation shall include a summary of the target wildlife species, the soil moisture regime of the site, the type of plants established and establishment methods and an annual summary of any management or weed control activities. Windbreaks shall include an interior row of shrubs which produce nuts or berries usable by wildlife such as species listed in Table 2 of Wisconsin NRCS 645 Wildlife Upland Habitat Management Practice Standard.

http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/WI/645.pdf