



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E386E

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Enhanced field borders to increase wildlife food and habitat along the edge(s) of a field

Conservation Practice 386: Field Border

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed); Crop (Perennial); Associated Ag Land

RESOURCE CONCERN: Animals

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 10 years

Enhancement Description:

Enhance existing field borders to a width of at least 40 feet and establish a mixture of species that provide wildlife food and habitat along the edge(s) of the field. The extended field border will also provide enhanced wildlife habitat continuity.

Criteria:

- Field borders shall be established along selected field edges at a width of at least 40 feet.
- The field border must connect an existing field border to another field border or to an existing or planned wildlife area (e.g. wood lot, CRP, pond, rangeland, etc.).
- Locate borders to eliminate sloping end rows, headlands, and other areas where concentrated water flows will enter or exit the field.
- Field borders shall be established to a mixture adapted species of permanent grass, forbs and/or shrubs that accomplish the design objective.

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|---|-----------|----------|
| E386E - Enhanced field borders to increase wildlife food and habitat along the edge(s) of a field | July 2019 | Page 1 |
|---|-----------|----------|



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- Plants selected for field borders will have the physical characteristics necessary to produce wildlife food and cover for the targeted species.
- No plant listed by the state as a noxious or invasive species shall be established in the field border.
- Seedbed preparation, seeding rates, dates, depths, fertility requirements, and planting methods will be consistent with approved local criteria and site conditions.
- Ephemeral gullies and rills present in the planned border area will be eliminated as part of seedbed preparation. If present, ephemeral gullies and rills located immediately upslope from the planned border area need to be treated to ensure more of a sheet flow into the planned border area.
- Operation and maintenance requirements:
 - Repair storm damage.
 - Remove sediment from above, within and along the leading edge of the field border when accumulated sediment either alters the function of the field border or threatens the degradation of the planted species.
 - Shut off sprayers and raise tillage equipment to avoid damage to field borders.
 - Shape and reseed border areas damaged by animals, chemicals, tillage, or equipment traffic.
 - Do not use the field border as a hay yard or machinery parking lot for any extended period of time, especially if doing so will damage or impair the function of the field border.
 - Schedule mowing, harvest, weed control, and other management activities within the field border to accommodate reproduction and other life cycle requirements of target wildlife species. Vehicle traffic should be avoided in the field border area.



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- Maintain desired vegetative communities and plant vigor by liming, fertilizing, mowing, disking, or burning and controlling noxious and invasive weeds to sustain effectiveness of the border.
- Repair and reseed ephemeral gullies and rills that develop in the border.
- When managing for wildlife, maintenance activities that result in disturbance of vegetation should not be conducted during the primary nesting, fawning and calving seasons. Activities should be timed to allow for regrowth before the growing season ends whenever possible.
- Periodic removal of some products such as medicinal herbs, nuts, and fruits is permitted provided the conservation purpose is not compromised by the loss of vegetation or harvesting disturbance.
- Avoid vehicle traffic when soil moisture conditions are saturated.
- Maintain records of the field border maintenance as needed by the land user.



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Documentation and Implementation Requirements:

Participant will:

- Prior to implementation, prepare the planned acres for vegetation establishment. Refer to NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Field Border (Code 386). (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.) Total planned amount of field border extension = _____ feet
- Prior to implementation, plan the field border extension to an existing field border which connects to another field border or to an existing or planned wildlife area (e.g. wood lot, CRP, pond, rangeland, etc.). Total planned acres connected = _____
- Prior to implementation, select adapted species of permanent grass, forbs and/or shrubs that accomplish the design objective and are best suited to site conditions. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)

| Species | Seeding Rate (lb/ac pure live seed) | Note specific species characteristic(s) |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---|
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- Prior to implementation, determine liming and fertilizer requirements, select planting technique and timing appropriate for the site and soil conditions. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Planting Date | |
| Planting Technique | |
| Lime and Fertilizer Requirements | |

- During implementation, install and maintain erosion control measures as needed for the site. (NRCS will provide technical assistance, as needed.)
- During implementation, notify NRCS of any planned changes to verify changes meet NRCS enhancement criteria.
- During implementation, protect the planting from plant and animal pests and fire.



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- After implementation, maintain and protect the planting from plant and animal pests and fire.
- After implementation, verify the total amount of field border implemented and areas connected. Total implemented amount of field border extension = _____ feet
Total areas connected = _____ Total acres connected = _____

NRCS will:

- Prior to implementation, verify the enhancement is planned within the field(s) or farm boundary.
- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Field Border (Code 386) as it relates to implementing this enhancement.
- Prior to implementation, verify the enhancement is planned for acres that have been appropriately prepared for vegetation establishment. Total planned amount of field border extension = _____ feet
- Prior to implementation, verify the field border extension connects to another field border or to an existing or planned wildlife area (e.g. wood lot, CRP, Pond, Rangeland, etc.). Total planned areas connected = _____
Total planned acres connected = _____
- Prior to implementation, verify no plants on the Federal or state noxious weeds list are included.
- As needed, prior to implementation, NRCS will provide technical assistance:
 - Planning site preparation meeting NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Field Border (Code 386).
 - Selecting the adapted species of permanent grass, forbs and/or shrubs that accomplish the design objective and are best suited to site conditions.
 - Selecting planting techniques and timing appropriate for the site and soil conditions.



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- Planning the use of additional erosion control, as needed for the site.
- Preparing specifications for applying this enhancement for each site using approved state implementation requirements, national technical notes, appropriate state technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.
- During implementation, evaluate any planned changes to verify they meet the enhancement criteria.
- After implementation, verify the vegetation was established to specifications developed for the site.
- After implementation, verify the planting is protected from pests and fire.
- After implementation, verify all erosion control needed for the site is functioning and is maintained to specifications developed for the site.
- After implementation, verify the total amount of field border implemented and areas connected. Total implemented amount of field border extension = _____ feet
Total areas connected = _____ Total acres connected = _____

NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

Participant Name _____ Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____ Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature

Date

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|---|-----------|----------|
| E386E - Enhanced field borders to increase wildlife food and habitat along the edge(s) of a field | July 2019 | Page 6 |
|---|-----------|----------|



**IOWA SUPPLEMENT TO
CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY**

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Additional Criteria for Iowa

- Follow practice standard Field Border (386) along with the Field Border job sheet with one exception, use practice standard Conservation Cover (327) rather than practice standard Critical Area Seeding (342) that the Field Border practice standard references. Follow Conservation Cover guidance for approved plant species, seeding rates, seeding dates, seeding techniques and operation and maintenance.
- Seeding will consist of at least 5 native grasses and 10 native forbs or legumes.
- Develop seeding plans with the use of the Native Prairie Seeding Calculator. Seed at a rate of 40 seeds/ft² of which 20-30 seeds are grass and 10-20 seeds are forbs or legumes.
- Maintain a minimum plant height of 12” throughout the non-growing season to provide winter cover for wildlife.
- Participants are encouraged to transition the existing portion of the field border to native vegetation.