



**CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY**  
**E386101Z**

**CONSERVATION**  
**STEWARDSHIP**  
**PROGRAM**

Enhanced field borders to reduce water induced erosion 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 ADDRESSED: Soil Erosion**

**PRACTICE LIFE SPAN: 10 years**

**Enhancement Description:**

Enhance existing field borders to a width of at least 30 feet and establish a single specie or mixture of species that provide a dense ground cover along the edge(s) of the field.

**Criteria:**

- Field borders shall be established at selected field edges at a width of at least 30 feet.
- Locate borders to eliminate sloping end rows, headlands, and other areas where concentrated water flows will enter or exit the field.
- Orient plant rows as closely as possible to perpendicular to sheet flow direction.
- Field borders shall be established to adapted species of permanent grass, forbs and/or shrubs that accomplish the design objective.
- Plants selected for field borders will have the physical characteristics necessary to control wind and water erosion to tolerable levels on the field border area. 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



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from the planned border area need to be treated to ensure more of a sheet flow into the planned border area.

- Field border establishment, in conjunction with other practices, will be timed so that the soil will be adequately protected during the critical erosion period(s).
- Establish stiff-stemmed, upright grasses, grass/legumes or forbs to trap water- borne soil particles.
- The amount of surface and/or canopy cover needed from the field border shall be determined using current approved water and wind erosion prediction technology. Soil erosion estimates shall account for the effects of other practices in the management system.
- 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.
  - 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.
  - Minimally invasive vertical tillage (e.g. paraplowing) may be performed in rare cases where compaction and vehicle traffic have degraded the field border function. The purpose of the tillage is strictly to relieve soil compaction and increase infiltration rates so as to provide a better media for reestablishment of vegetation and field border function.
  - When managing for wildlife, maintenance activities that result in disturbance of vegetation should not be conducted during the primary nesting, fawning and calving



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- 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.

### **Documentation Requirements:**

- Complete practice specifications on the Field Border Implementation Requirement document.
- The following components shall be included for recording this specification:
  - Field Border widths (minimum 30 feet wide) and lengths based on local design criteria.
  - Field Border location(s) within the field(s) or farm boundary.
  - Species to be used and the location and planting density of the species used.
  - Site preparation requirements.
  - Timing of planting and planting method.
  - Liming or fertilizer requirements.