

Colorado State Conservation Board 2009 Matching Grants Project: Burlington Conservation District: Windbreak Project

What natural resource problem(s) did the project address?

The wide-open spaces of the eastern Colorado plains are subject to frequent wind which can blow valuable topsoil away, increase energy use around homes, and expose livestock to the worst of winter weather. At the local Republican River watershed workgroup meeting, the health of old windbreaks and reduction in new installations was identified as a concern. The Burlington District has a history of helping landowners install "living windbreaks" - carefully sited lines of trees - to combat the soil erosion and other problems associated with wind. The windbreaks can also provide valuable food plants and cover for wildlife and the district consulted with wildlife experts as to the most appropriate species for maximizing wildlife benefit of the windbreaks. Berry-producing or insect-attracting shrubs may be interspersed with trees for this purpose.

Burlington Conservation District offered landowners 50% cost-share to plant new or renovate old windbreaks and demand was higher than available funding. Wildlife benefit was a priority design facet for several of the plantings.

What was achieved?

- **32 acres of new windbreaks established and old windbreaks renovated.**
- **3,400 tons of topsoil erosion prevented**
- **Weed barrier and drip irrigation** offered as part of the cost-share package to **maximize tree establishment and growth** of new windbreaks
- **21 of 25 eligible projects funded** with maximum of \$1,200 cost-share per project
- Landowners assisted by Colorado Division of Wildlife and Pheasants Forever to select **plant species that best benefit wildlife** - and the Natural Resources Conservation Services for design planning for **maximum windbreak effectiveness**. Education and technical help also supported by CSU Extension Services
- District provided **trees, weed barrier, drip irrigation supplies and equipment rental** to help landowners establish windbreaks.
- All projects to be **spot checked** in a year to ensure proper establishment



Windbreaks can incorporate species preferred as food or habitat for wildlife - such as Bur oak and Linden.



Drip irrigation and weed barrier improve tree survival for establishing windbreaks in arid eastern Colorado