

Colorado State Conservation Board 2008 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. Recent drought years have not been encouraging to new tree survival rates. Dry years have also taken a toll on existing windbreaks which have lost high percentages of their trees because of lack of moisture and problems with early weed barrier materials that are restricting tree growth.

Burlington Conservation District identified small acreage landowners as a population that could benefit from more windbreak installation to control soil erosion and provide enhanced wildlife habitat. They offered 50% cost-share to plant new or renovate old windbreaks for these landowners.

What was achieved?

- **26 acres of new windbreaks established and old windbreaks renovated.**
- **Weed barrier and drip irrigation** offered as part of the cost-share package to **maximize tree establishment and growth** of new windbreaks
- **22 of 26 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



The dry, wide open spaces of eastern Colorado plains are prone to frequent winds that can blow topsoil from productive agricultural land.



Weed barrier and drip irrigation boost the establishment of windbreak trees in the semi-arid climate.