



## **OPERATING PROCEDURES-2025 NORTHWEST OHIO FIELD WINDBREAK PROGRAM**

### **I. Definition and Purpose**

The purpose of the Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Program is to plant field windbreaks that provide protection against wind on soil erosion and wind damage to crops. The windbreaks may also provide food and cover for wildlife. Plantings where the sole purpose is the protection of home sites or farmsteads, landscaping, or ornamental use are not eligible for this program. See attachment A.

### **II. Areas Served: Seventeen counties in Northwest Ohio**

Windbreak planting applications will be accepted from all 17 counties in 2025. Counties Served include: Allen, Crawford, Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Hancock, Henry, Lucas, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Sandusky, Seneca, Van Wert, Williams, Wood and Wyandot.

### **III. Who Can Qualify**

A qualifying windbreak must be planted in or adjacent to agricultural land. Landowner parcel owned must be at least 10 acres in size. (Actual windbreak area does not have to be 10 acres in size) One to six rows of trees and shrubs may be planted in the windbreak having a minimum total length of 1,000 row feet. The minimum length for each row is 250 feet.

### **IV. Design and Planning of the Field Windbreak**

The design and planning of the windbreak shall be done by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) or the ODNR, Division of Wildlife (ODW). These agencies will determine the location, number of row feet, and species to be planted. Field windbreaks and multi-row wildlife plantings will be planned according to NRCS Standards and Specifications Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380) or Tree/Shrub Establishment (612).

Planning with the landowner will include a commitment for proper site preparation. The Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Program Site Preparation Plan shall be completed and attached to the order form.

Property line windbreaks will not be planted. Windbreaks must be located a minimum of 8 feet from property lines. Windbreaks must be planted outside of power line right-of-ways and other utility easements.

Due to the potential of winter icing effects on roadways, avoid designing windbreaks having conifer species parallel to roads on the south side.

### **V. Staking of the Windbreak**

- A. Responsibility of the NRCS/SWCD. For windbreaks designed by the ODW, Private Lands Biologist, the PLB will contact the NRCS/SWCD regarding staking the windbreak site.
- B. Staking shall be completed so that the sites are ready for the planting crew as soon as the soil conditions permit planting. Field windbreaks can be staked in the Fall after the crops are off and should be checked in the spring to make sure the stakes are still in place. All sites are to be staked by March 15, 2025.

- C. Stake each row using lath with top six inches painted a fluorescent paint. Fluorescent Blue preferred. Avoid using orange due to possible confusion with utility marking.
1. Space stakes a maximum of 400 feet apart; closer together if vision is obscured. Survey instruments are suggested to ensure straight rows
  2. Make certain that the landowner agrees with the location of the stakes.
  3. When the staking of each windbreak is completed, contact the ODNR, Division of Forestry at Maumee State Forest (419) 822-3052.

## VI. Application Procedures

- A. A Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak program order form must be used. Order forms will be filled out and signed by the NRCS District Conservationist, the SWCD District Technician or the ODNR Division of Wildlife Private Lands Biologist. The signature indicates that the person has: (1) inspected the planting site, (2) the site preparation has been completed and (3) the requirements of the program have been explained to the cooperator.
- B. The Site Preparation Plan indicating what site preparation was completed should be signed and sent to the Division of Forestry with the application form.
- C. The order form is revised annually to reflect the species offered, ordering deadlines, and the prices in effect for each planting season.
- D. Two maps are to be included with the order form:
1. A high quality aerial photo, such as a digital photo map, shall be attached to the order blank This photo shall include: (1) location of planting site, (2) indication of land use adjacent to the windbreak, (3) buildings, (4) roads, (5) lanes, (6) fences, (7) access, (8) property lines, and a (9) north arrow.
  2. A general location map, i.e. a copy of the county or township map shall be attached. This should show location of planting (property) in relation to major intersections, towns, villages, etc.
- E. Orders for Spring 2025 planting must be received in the Findlay, District 2 Forestry office no later than December 1, 2024.
- F. After receiving the windbreak application, the site preparation form and maps, the Division of Forestry will check the planting site. After checking the site, the Division of Forestry will send an approval letter to the cooperator and a copy to the SWCD Office.
- G. Windbreak Cancellations: There will be a \$25.00 fee **plus the cost of the seedlings** if the windbreak order is cancelled after January 1, 2025 or if the windbreak cannot be planted due to the actions of the applicant. No processing fee is charged for orders cancelled before January 1, 2025.
- H. The Division of Forestry reserves the right to reject any order and to limit the number of orders. Division of Forestry will notify field personnel as the limit is approached.

## VII. Payment Procedure

After the field windbreak has been planted in the Spring, an invoice will be sent to the cooperator requesting their payment for the windbreak planting. Checks shall be made payable to ODNR,

Division of Forestry. Payment in full is due within 30 days upon receipt of the invoice. The cost for the 2025 Northwest Ohio Windbreak Program is **\$0.45 per row foot.**

### **VIII. Planting the Field Windbreak**

The ODNR, Division of Forestry shall be responsible for the following:

- A. Determining the number of plants needed and obtaining the planting stock. Spacing of seedlings in the row varies by species as indicated:
  - 5 - 7 foot spacing: arborvitae, black chokeberry, and silky dogwood,
  - 10 - 12 foot spacing: E. white pine, Norway spruce, blue spruce, baldcypress, pin oak, bur oak, swamp white oak, American plum and Sargent crabapple
- B. Planting the windbreak, which includes one application of a pre-emergent herbicide at the time of planting and a second application in the fall, winter or spring following the first growing season.
- C. Performing a survival count in fall following planting. Replacement seedlings will be provided to the landowner to replace trees that have died during the first growing season on a one-time basis. Replacement trees will be shipped or delivered to landowner at no cost. It is the responsibility of the landowner to replant the trees. The Division of Forestry will not return to replant trees. The Division of Forestry reserves the right to select a different species to plant as replacement.

### **IX. Care and Maintenance of The Field Windbreak.**

- A. The care and maintenance is the responsibility of the landowner.
- B. Landowners will be informed of the care and maintenance of a field windbreak during the designing stage of the windbreak.

### **X. Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Interagency Committee:**

The operating procedures have been developed and approved by the Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Program Interagency Committee. The operating procedures are reviewed annually and revised as needed by the committee. The Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Interagency Committee is made up of the following agency representatives:

#### **ODNR Division of Forestry**

John Mueller, District Forest Manager  
Don Schmenk, Maumee State Forest Manager

#### **ODNR Division of Wildlife**

Mark Witt, Private Lands Biologist  
Craig Bonner, Private Lands Biologist

#### **ODA Division of Soil & Water**

Jeff Ankney, Program Specialist  
Cathy Berg, Program Specialist

#### **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service**

Josh Gerwin, Area Resource Conservationist

#### **USDA Farm Service Agency**

Brenda Meyer, County Executive Director

ATTACHMENT A  
OPERATING PROCEDURES  
NORTHWEST OHIO FIELD WINDBREAK PROGRAM

**Farmstead and Homesite Plantings:**

Field windbreaks reduce wind erosion, protect crops and provide for wildlife habitat. The purpose of the Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Program is to establish windbreaks on or adjacent to crop fields. The goal of the program is to encourage large systems which treat entire farms. The program is not intended for sole protection of farmstead, pasture or homesite and orders will not be accepted solely for these purposes.

Incidental plantings adjacent to buildings may be accepted if they meet all of the following criteria:

1. The planting is bordered on one side by a crop field and each row adjacent to the building area is a continuation of a field windbreak row that is planted at the same time.
2. The planting is part of a larger field windbreak system and the area adjacent to the buildings constitutes no more than ten percent (10%) of the total row feet planted.
3. The total order constitutes a minimum of 3500 row feet.
4. The section can be efficiently planted by the crew as part of the total job.

**Wildlife Shrub Plantings (CRP & CREP):**

As a result of the increased interest for multiple row shrub plantings through the CRP & CREP, windbreaks having only wildlife shrubs as the species being planted are eligible to be planted through the Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Program. These windbreaks will be considered as *tree/shrub plantings*. The following guidelines will be used for tree/shrub plantings through the Northwest Ohio Windbreak Program:

- The windbreaks must be through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- The Division of Forestry agrees to plant the seedlings, apply an herbicide in the Spring, and return in the Fall to do a survival count and a second application of herbicide. Replacement seedlings would be offered to the landowners to plant themselves.
- Field windbreak plantings will have a priority over tree/shrub plantings. An optional method for tree/shrub plantings is through district tree planters or private tree planting vendors. Tree/shrub plantings may be planted through the Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Program to the extent that time allows.

**Riparian Plantings (CP22)**

As a result of the increased interest for riparian plantings through the CRP & CREP, the following guidelines will be used for riparian plantings through the Northwest Ohio Windbreak Program:

- The plantings must be through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP),
- The Division of Forestry agrees to plant seedlings, apply an herbicide in the Spring, and return in the Fall to do a survival count and a second application of herbicide. Replacement seedlings would be offered to the landowners to plant themselves.
- Riparian plantings associated with field windbreak plantings will have a priority over stand-alone riparian plantings. Riparian plantings may be planted through the Northwest Ohio Field Windbreak Program to the extent that time allows.