



North Dakota Forest Service

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For immediate release

Windbreak renovation assistance available to landowners affected by wildfires

Wildfires that swept across North Dakota in early October left thousands of acres charred. Among those acres were many field and homestead windbreaks, and native forest. In response, the Outdoor Heritage Fund has graciously approved the North Dakota Forest Service (NDFS) to proceed with an open enrollment for windbreak renovations for those impacted by the wildfires. The Windbreak Renovation Initiative is a grant through the Outdoor Heritage Fund that offers technical and financial support to landowners to restore their deteriorated windbreaks.

This program will be used to support landowners in rebuilding the essential conservation infrastructure that are field and homestead tree rows lost to the fires. These windbreaks provide many ecological services to farmers and the landscape, such as controlling erosion, providing wildlife habitat, and contributing to the long-term health of our rural communities and agricultural systems.

Recent high winds and dry conditions emphasize the importance that windbreaks have to the quality of life in North Dakota. Subsequently, the loss of these tree rows will have a significant impact on the landscape. NDFS Forest Stewardship Manager Matt Olson says, "Our hearts go out to those impacted by these devastating wildfires. This cost share opportunity aims to help rebuild the essential green infrastructure that protect our fields, livestock, and homes."

Working with North Dakota Forest Service staff, landowners can receive a free, customized windbreak assessment and renovation plan with recommendations for practices that can be undertaken to restore the windbreak. Funds from the Outdoor Heritage Fund will be utilized to help defray the costs that landowners incur when implementing removals and replanting for their tree rows.

Landowners interested in receiving assistance can visit <https://bit.ly/WindbreakRenovation> to request a site visit that allows us to assess the windbreak condition and get a better understanding of the landowners'

goals. Any questions can be directed to Matt Olson, NDFS Forest Stewardship Manager, at (701) 683-4323 or matthew.p.olson@ndsu.edu.

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Photo: Farmstead with windbreaks burned by wildfire (Courtesy of ND Civil Air Patrol)