



Practice Description:

Small portions of crop land are taken out of production and planted with native prairie plants for conservation benefits for the entire field.

By planting 10% of a field into 15-foot to 30-foot strips of prairie along the contour, farmers can reduce soil movement by 95% and phosphorus loss by 90%.

Total nitrogen in surface water is reduced by 91%. In-field prairie strips retain soil and nutrients on the field and have an added wildlife benefit.

Practice Benefits:

- 44% reduction in water runoff
- 95% reduction in soil loss
- 90% reduction in phosphorus runoff
- 84% reduction in nitrate-nitrogen runoff
- No difference in per acre corn and soybean yields
- No difference in weed abundance
- Reduced emissions of heat-trapping gases, especially nitrous oxide
- Potentially improved beneficial insects and wildlife

Practice Economics:

- Estimated at about \$40 per treated acre
- Compatible with existing federal and state cost-share programs so farmers who implement prairie strips can recoup some of their costs



Young prairie strips planted in between corn rows in Tama County, Iowa. NRCS/SWCS photo by Lynn Betts.

Other Resources:

- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/151012306@N08/albums/72157670883037538>: A step by step visual guide to prairie strips implementation. These photos were taken on real farms across Iowa and are part of the Conservation Media Library.

The Conservation Media Library was supported by an Iowa NRCS funded Conservation Innovation Grant to the Soil and Water Conservation Society. To learn more about the Library and access other resources, go to www.swcs.org

- <https://vimeo.com/291571298>: A video about prairie strips implementation that is part of the Conservation Media Library.
- www.nrem.iastate.edu/research/STRIPs/: Iowa State University's Science-based Trials of Rowcrops Integrated with Prairie Strips (STRIPs) research initiative.
- <https://www.nrem.iastate.edu/research/STRIPs/FAQ2>: Frequently asked questions from Iowa State University's STRIPs project about integrating Prairie Strips into the farm landscape.
- <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/alternativeag/info/Landowners%20Guide%20to%20Prairie%20Conservation%20Strips.pdf>: Iowa State University Extension's Landowner Guide to Prairie Strips.
- <http://www.tallgrassprairiecenter.org/>: The Tallgrass Prairie Center's website, which features general information as well as examples of prairie restoration on working farms.



Prairie strips at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge near Prairie City, Iowa.
NRCS/SWCS photo by Lynn Betts.

This project is part of the:



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