



Small Scale Solutions for your Farm

Fuel and Fire Breaks



Do You Have Problems with:

- Anxiety about protecting your home and property from potential wildfires
- Volatile fuels on lands around your property
- Need help controlling a prescribed burn

Fuel and Fire Breaks Can Solve These Problems

Firebreaks

Firebreaks are strips of bare soils or fire retarding vegetation meant to stop or control fire.

Fuel Breaks

Fuel breaks are strips or blocks of vegetation that have been added to slow or control a fire.

Purposes and Benefits of Fuel and Fire Breaks

The cost to plant forages depends on if the stand is perennial or annual and if you are starting with pasture that needs to be renovated, cropland converted and enhanced by adding forage to the base, or quick supplemental feed. Main costs associated include site preparation, fertilizer, seed/sprigs, and pesticides if needed.

- Wildfire hazards are reduced
- Greater safety to fire fighters by creating a defensible area
- Reduced intensity of wildfire
- If applied in a woodland, trees may respond to increased growing space with improved growth
- Improved access, improved visual quality, used to help control a prescribed burn



A home spared from a wildfire by creating a de- fensible area around it



Poorly managed vegetation

Combinations of Fire and Fuel Breaks

Unlike firebreaks, fuel breaks may still burn. The key to remember is that these areas can slow the spread of a fire because they are managed to provide far less fuels to carry the flames.

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- Generally, they reduce the fuel volume, break up the fuel continuity and eliminate the fuel chain between structures and surrounding forest vegetation.
- If trees are involved, space the crowns to allow heat to escape. Prune dead lower limbs on larger trees and remove accumulations under them. Pruning also improves the visibility around your home and helps tree growth. Also, interrupt any connection between the ground and the:
 - Fuel break of mowed grass, thinned trees and shrubs, or both
 - Plowed or disked firebreak
 - Windbreaks with no debris, litter, downed limbs, or leaf buildup
 - Defensible space: A safety zone cleared of combustible materials for at least 30 feet immediately adjacent to property needing fire protection

Below, proper management with professional technical assistance will help you accomplish your professional goals.



Associated Costs

The cost to apply these practices will depend on the type of material being treated, the extent of protection desired, and the methods used to apply them. These practices may be applied alone or in combination. They can be relatively inexpensive to perform. .

Major costs involved may include:

- Clearing the firebreak strip
- Blading, disking or plowing a firebreak
- Hand tools to control vegetation
- Herbicides
- Hauling controlled vegetation
- Mowing
- Prescribed fire.



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Technical and Financial Help Is Available

Whether you measure your farm in terms of feet or acres, your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office has experienced conservationists that can help you develop a Conservation Plan to conserve, maintain, and restore the natural resources on your land and improve the long-term health of your operation.

There is no charge for our assistance. Simply contact your local office to set up an appointment. You may also be eligible to receive financial assistance. Your NRCS office will explain any programs that are available so you can make the best decision for your operation. All NRCS programs and services are voluntary.

For More Information

Visit the [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) or visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find your local NRCS office. You can also check with your local USDA Service Center, then make an appointment to determine next steps for your conservation goals.

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NRCS conservationist assisting small scale farmer with developing a customized conservation plan.

