

Fact Sheet

Living Snow Fence Program

Have you noticed big snowdrifts near your property after a storm? Are you ever concerned about your safety during a blizzard? Did you know something can be done to stop blowing snow? The costs of having to close Minnesota's transportation corridors for just a 24-hour period is a non-recoverable \$118 million -- \$66 million in lost wages and salaries, \$8 million in state and local taxes, \$17 million in federal taxes and \$27 million in retail sales.

Landowners throughout the state are becoming more involved in Living Snow Fence Program, which is a natural way of protecting against prevailing winds to manage snow and decrease snow-removal costs, enhance public safety, establish wildlife habitat and control erosion. The program has been proven to save lives, money and time. The Scott Soil and Water Conservation District, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Minnesota Department of Transportation are teaming up to promote the Living Snow Fence in Scott County. This is a voluntary program available to priority-location landowners wishing to establish small tree or shrub plantings on their properties.

What is a Living Snow Fence?

A living snow fence is a designed planting of trees and/or shrubs and native grasses along roads and around communities and farmsteads. Properly designed and placed, these living barriers trap snow as it blows across fields, piling it up before it reaches roads, railroads, farmsteads or communities.



What are the benefits of these plantings?

The purpose of a living snow fence is to establish two or three rows of shrubs or trees on farms to manage snow, provide living screens and enhance wildlife habitat. This practice applies to eligible cropland and protects against drifting snow on lanes, roads, railroads and public facilities.

Living snow fences:

- Save lives by reducing accidents
- Reduce the use of the public's money by reducing plowing
- Decrease shipping delays for goods and services
- Lessen the impact on our environment with less salt use, fewer truck trips and less fuel consumption
- Prevent big drifts that lead to stranded motorists
- Improve driver visibility to reduce vehicle accidents
- Establish wildlife cover
- Create a vegetative sound barrier that buffers roadway noises
- Use fewer plow truck drivers
- Beautifies our Scott County State Highway corridors.

How do landowners get involved?

Living snow fences are established on priority sites at no charge to the landowners. Those who wish to establish a living snow fence on their properties will also receive yearly financial compensation for having the plantings there. Agreements for the program range from 10 to 15 years. Landowners must enroll in the CP 17A Living Snow Fence Practice within the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program and enter into a Living Snow Fence agreement with MnDOT. Specific information on this practice is available by calling Doug Schoenecker, Urban Conservationist – (952) 492-5415 or send an email to dschoenecker@co.scott.mn.us.



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