

Why Are Prairie Strips Important?

Soil and Water

- Initial data indicate a trend toward reduced sediment and nutrient loss through surface runoff from fields with prairie strips compared to those without.

Plants and Pollinators

- The frequency of blooming plant species is greater in prairie strips compared to typical conservation plantings, which are often planted to cool-season grasses such as smooth brome.
- The number of bees and bee species increases with the plant diversity of the conservation planting. The greater abundance of flowers likely contributes to the higher bee abundances and species richness.

Economic

- At \$28-35 per protected acre per year, prairie strips are one of the most cost-effective mechanisms for achieving farmland conservation. The annualized cost scales with the opportunity cost of removing land from corn-soybean production.
- Cost to farmers is ~\$8 per protected acre if the prairie strips are enrolled in CRP.

Birds

- Fields with prairie strips have significantly higher density of birds compared to fields with conventional grass and filter strips. Strongest responses are from dickcissels, common yellowthroats, and red-winged blackbirds.
- Some species in need of conservation assistance, including the dickcissel, eastern meadowlark, and grasshopper sparrow, have responded positively to the presence of prairie strips.
- Preliminary results indicate that red-winged blackbirds fledge young 2.1 times as often from nests in prairie strips compared to low-diversity vegetated areas on farms, dickcissels fledge young 5.6 times as often, and vesper sparrows fledge young 8.4 times as often.

For More Information Call:

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