

Managing Reclaimed Coal Mine Land: WILDLIFE HABITAT

Looks can be deceiving

A reclaimed strip mine will blend into the landscape and look virtually the same as undisturbed Iowa land. Don't be fooled. Just underneath the surface, the soil remains extremely fragile and susceptible to erosion. If the land is not properly managed, acid-forming materials may resurface and soils may begin to erode.

Green browse as habitat

Reclaimed mine sites can be managed as green browse for wildlife. Green browse are living plants intentionally planted to attract and feed wildlife species. Green browse plots are often planted with a mix of grass and perennial legumes.

Green browse plots provide wildlife with bedding, food and brooding sites, and can be customized to attract certain species. Deer and rabbits will feed during the spring, summer and fall while turkey, pheasants, quail and songbirds will use green browse to find insects to feed their young.

To maintain green browse once it is established, mow once a year between July 15 and August 30 to create openings for young birds and mammals to sun themselves and dry off after heavy dews and rains. Mowing will also make the vegetation most appetizing for wildlife. The mowing height should be 4 to 6 inches. Continue to monitor the planting each year. Renovation may be necessary every 3 to 4 years if weeds or grasses take over.

Where to get help

For assistance with developing or maintaining a green browse planting, or other management for your reclaimed area, contact your local USDA Service Center.



Resources

Each county in Iowa has a **USDA Service Center** where the local **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** and **Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)** offices are housed.

These offices have technical and financial assistance available for land management and conservation practices.

Davis SWCD

402 Karr Ave
Bloomfield
(641) 664-2616

Mahaska SWCD

2503 Todd Street
Oskaloosa
(641) 673-3476

Marion SWCD

1445 Lake Drive
Knoxville
(641) 842-3168

Monroe SWCD

1701 S B Street
Albia
(641) 932-7134

Van Buren SWCD

1016 Franklin Street
Keosauqua
(319) 293-3371

Wapello SWCD

2938 Oak Meadow Dr
Ottumwa
(641) 684-6515

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For more information, contact Pathfinders RC&D (641) 472 - 6177 • info@PathfindersRCD.org