

# 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

*This publication made possible through a*

*Resource Enhancement and Protection Conservation Education Program Grant*

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