

Blue Earth County Shoreland Buffer Initiative

County and SWCD Partnership

Blue Earth County worked in partnership with the Blue Earth County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) on a new local initiative to ensure there are 50-foot, vegetated buffers along all

Buffers provide multiple benefits for water quality, wildlife and farmers.



rivers, streams and lakes in agricultural areas. This buffer is required by County Ordinance and State Rules.

The County Environmental Services Department conducted an inventory of shoreland areas and notified owners of cropland that appeared to lack a 50-foot buffer based on aerial images and GIS.

Notification letters were mailed in small batches. Those who received letters were asked to contact an SWCD-designated individual at the SWCD .

The SWCD worked with landowners discussing alternatives and marking the required boundary in the field at the owner's request.

A 2011 Minnesota Clean Water Fund grant provided funds for the SWCD to provide these services. Without this grant the project would not have been possible.

The County will continue working toward 100% compliance, and the SWCD indicated they will continue to provide support to landowners requesting assistance.

Blue Earth County Shoreland

- ◆ 368 miles of rivers
- ◆ 186 miles of unnamed streams
- ◆ 43 lakes
- ◆ 6,129 parcels of land in shoreland
- ◆ 3,122 parcels with crop land
- ◆ 6,970 acres buffer required
- ◆ 365 acres lack buffers
- ◆ 375,702 total acres of cropland in county

**PROJECT GOAL:
100% Voluntary Compliance**

Final Report July 1, 2011 through December 31, 2013

The County estimated there were 400 property owners who need to establish a combined total of 365 buffer acres. The total buffer area needed by each owner ranges from .1 to 10.7 acres. The average number of buffer acres each landowner will need to establish is less than one acre.

FINAL PROJECT RESULTS

through December 2013

Number of Landowners County Notified: 336 (97%)

Number of Landowners who contacted the SWCD: 227

- **75 owners are in compliance**—58 at their own expense
89 parcels
30 acres—23 acres at their own expense
- **53 owners are pending /interested in program**
72 acres—70 parcels
- **90 owners stated they were unsure**
- **9 owners indicated they will not establish the buffer**
- **109 property owners did not respond**

**Clean Water
Fund Grant
2011-2013**



Grant Amount	\$136,842
Local Match	\$40,000

**Final Grant Report
through December 2013**

Grant Funds Used	\$129,329.69
Local Match Contribution	\$65,402.14