

Blue Earth County Shoreland Buffer Initiative

County and SWCD Partnership

Blue Earth County is working 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 rivers, streams and lakes in ag-

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



ricultural areas. This 50-foot buffer is required by County Ordinance and State Rules.

The County Environmental Services Department is inventorying all shoreland areas to determine compliance with the buffer standard and is in the process of notifying owners of cropland that appear to lack a 50-foot buffer.

Notification letters are being sent out in small batches every two to three weeks. Those who receive letters are asked contact James Fett, at

the SWCD, to discuss steps toward compliance.

The SWCD is a partner for this project because of their experience working with landowners to establish buffers and other best management practices and their knowledge of financial incentive programs available.

A 2011 Minnesota Clean Water Fund grant provided funds for the SWCD to provide these services.

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 require buffer
- ◆ 365 acres lack buffers

**PROJECT GOAL:
100% Voluntary Compliance**



Progress Report July 1, 2011 through February 29, 2012

The County estimates there are 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.

PROJECT RESULTS

Through February 2012

Number of Landowners County Notified: 142

Number of Landowners who contacted the SWCD: 83

- 29 are signing up for a program easement
- 39 are establishing buffer on their own
 - SWCD marked boundary on 22 of 39
 - 5 are seeded and complete
 - 12 boundaries are scheduled to be marked in Spring or Fall 2012

**Clean Water
Fund Grant
2011-2012**



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

**Grant Report
through February 2012**

Grant Funds Used	\$39,823.93
Local Match Contribution	\$35,756.00