

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 agricultural areas.

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



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. The notification process should be complete in Spring 2013. 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 buffer required
- ◆ 365 acres lack buffers
- ◆ 375,702 total acres of cropland in county

PROJECT GOAL:
100% Voluntary Compliance



Progress Report July 1, 2011 through December 31, 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 December 2012

Number of Landowners County Notified: 289

Number of Landowners who contacted the SWCD: 200

- 22 plan on are signing up for CRP
- 21 applied for RIM Buffer Easements or interested in next RIM signup
- 126 establishing buffer on their own
 - 28 are seeded and complete
 - SWCD marked boundary on 97
 - 26 boundaries scheduled to be marked in spring 2013

Clean Water Fund Grant

2011-2014



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

Grant Report through December 2012

Grant Funds Used	\$80,150.04
Local Match Contribution	\$49,728