



Alternative Practice Options for Landowners

2015 Buffer Initiative

Summer 2015

The 2015 Buffer Initiative relies on long-standing federal, state, and local programs to provide financial and technical support to landowners to implement buffers or alternative water quality practices.

A combination of the practices below may be used to sufficiently meet water quality goals - and when that happens, a buffer may not be needed. This alternate approach can be pursued via assistance, review, and validation, if requested from the local soil and water conservation district (SWCD).

Examples of proven alternative practices, used alone or in combination to protect water quality, have been adopted via the [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office Technical Guide \(FOTG\)](#). The guide is also available at SWCD offices.

Vegetative Practice Standards

- [Conservation Cover \(327\)](#)
- [Contour Buffer Strips \(332\)](#)
- [Cover Crops \(340\)](#)
- [Critical Area Planting \(342\)](#)
- [Field Border \(386\)](#)
- [Filter Strip \(393\)*](#)
- Grass Planting
 - [Forage and Biomass Planting \(512\)](#)
 - [Restoration and Management of Declining Habitat \(643\)](#)
- [Grassed Waterway \(412\)](#)
- [Tree and Shrub Establishment \(612\)](#)
- [Vegetated Treatment Area \(635\)](#)
- [Windbreak Shelterbelt Establishment \(380\)](#)

* Variable width buffers: If a filter strip is installed according to this practice standard, the width will range from 30 to 120 feet based on site conditions. The filter strip practice is the standard applied for enrollment in the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (under Conservation Practice 21).

Structural/Engineered Practice Standards

- [Constructed Wetland \(656\)](#)
- [Denitrifying Bioreactor \(747\)](#)
- [Diversion \(362\)](#)
- [Fencing \(382\)](#)
- [Grassed Waterway \(412\)](#)
- [Grade Stabilization \(410\)](#)
- [Sediment Basin \(350\)](#)
- [Stream Crossing \(578\)](#)
- [Streambank & Shoreline Protection \(580\)](#)
- [Terrace \(600\)](#)
- [Water Sediment Control Basin \(638\)](#)
- [Wetland Restoration \(657\)](#)

Management Practice Standards

- [Access Control \(472\)](#)
- [Conservation Crop Rotation \(328\)](#)
- [Contour Farming \(330\)](#)
- [Contour Strip Cropping \(585\)](#)
- [Drainage Water Management \(554\)](#)
- [Forage and Harvest Management \(511\)](#)
- [Nutrient Management \(590\)](#)
- [Prescribed Grazing \(528\)](#)
- [Residue Management \(329\)](#) - includes conservation tillage, no-till and ridge tillage
- [Strip Cropping \(585\)](#)

For More Information

Contact your local SWCD for more information about buffers and local requirements. For more information on the new buffer law, please visit: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers/.