



# Options for Landowner Financial & Technical Support

Minnesota Buffer Law

Spring 2016

The 2015 Buffer Law 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. These programs include:

## Federal

### Farm Service Agency (FSA)

- **General Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** – Helps agricultural producers safeguard environmentally sensitive land. CRP participants plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. Ten year contracts with annual rental payments and restoration cost-share.
- **Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP)** – Environmentally desirable land devoted to certain conservation practices may be enrolled in CRP at any time under continuous sign-up. Ten to fifteen year contracts with annual rental payments and restoration cost-share.



*A grass buffer strip in Redwood County.*

### Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** - Provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers through contracts up to ten years. These contracts provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns and opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland.
- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)** - Helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance.
- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)** - Includes both working lands (Agricultural Land Easements) and protection type of easement programs (Wetlands Reserve Easement). Provides easement payment and restoration costs.

### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

- **Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program** - Restores, improves, and protects fish and wildlife habitat on private lands through alliances between the USFWS, other organizations, and individuals.

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## Federal/State

### Farm Service Agency/Board of Water and Soil Resources

- **Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP)** - This federal and state conservation program combines CRP contracts and RIM easements across 54 counties in the southern and western part of the state to restore and protect wetlands, riparian buffers, and vulnerable drinking water areas.

## State

### Board of Water and Soil Resources

- **Reinvest In Minnesota Reserve Program (RIM)** - Conservation easement program offers permanent easements to restore and protect wetlands, riparian buffers, and other lands. Provides easement payment and restoration costs.
- **Conservation Cost-Share Program** - Provides grants and contracts through soil and water conservation districts for soil and water quality protection.



*A buffer in Olmsted County.*

### Department of Agriculture

- **Agriculture BMP Loan Program (AgBMP)** - Water quality program provides low interest loans to farmers, rural landowners, and agriculture supply businesses. The purpose is to encourage agricultural Best Management Practices that prevent or reduce runoff from feedlots, farm fields and other pollution problems identified by the county in local water plans.
- **Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP)** - Voluntary opportunity for farmers and agricultural landowners to implement conservation practices that protect water. Those who implement and maintain approved farm management practices will be certified and in turn obtain regulatory certainty for a period of ten years.

## Local

### Local Governments (such as Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Watershed Districts, and Counties)

- Programs that offer financial assistance for restoration and protection practice implementation.
- Technical assistance that provides conservation planning to identify resource concerns and practice options.

## Where do I go 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/](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers/).