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## The first buffer deadline has passed and results are strong

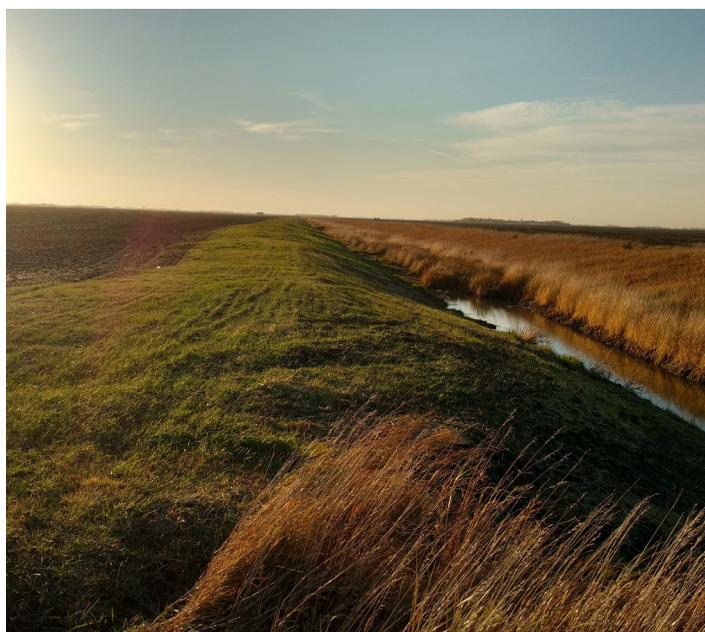
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Thanks to the efforts of Minnesota Farmers, landowners, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts, statewide compliance with Minnesota's Buffer Law was strong when the first implementation deadline passed on November 1, 2017.

In fact, statewide compliance to date on public waters is almost 97%, with 72 counties and 14 watershed districts electing jurisdiction to enforce the law locally.

Governor Mark Dayton signed bipartisan legislation in 2015 to establish Minnesota's water quality buffer initiative. This effort, designed to reduce phosphorous, nitrogen, and sediment from entering Minnesota's lakes and streams, is critical to improving water quality statewide.

After receiving additional feedback from farmers and landowners across Minnesota, Governor Dayton signed another bipartisan bill into law in 2016 to provide more flexibility for landowners.



*Buffer example from Kittson-County in October 2017.*

With more than 40 percent of the state's waters polluted or impaired, the need for this initiative is clear.



*Clay County buffer Fall 2017.*

There are a number of resources for landowners to help with buffer implementation, including the option to use alternative practices that have equivalent water quality benefits to buffers.

BWSR has guidance documents on its website to support landowners in identifying alternative practices for their land. Additionally, landowners who request financial and technical assistance can request additional time to comply with their local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

"Thanks to the efforts of Minnesota landowners, we are pleased with the progress made toward buffer compliance. The flexibility of Minnesota's buffer law helps Minnesota's farmers and landowners deliver improved water quality benefits for future generations." BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke said. "There are so many great examples of landowners and SWCDs working together to find a solution that works for them and their land. That's something we can all be proud of."