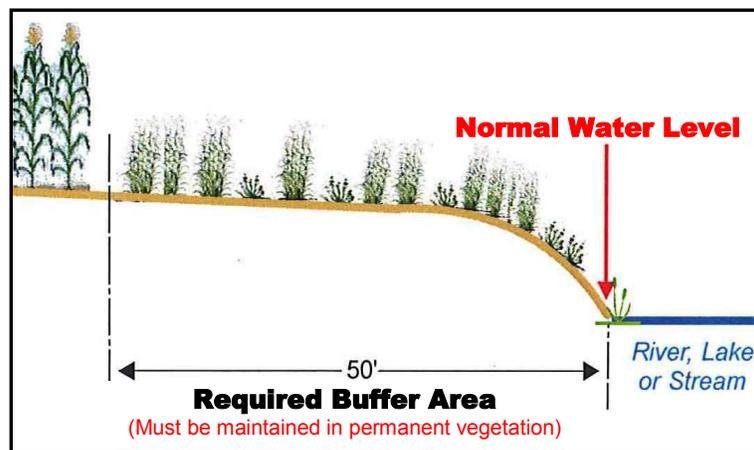


OTTER TAIL COUNTY BUFFER INITIATIVE

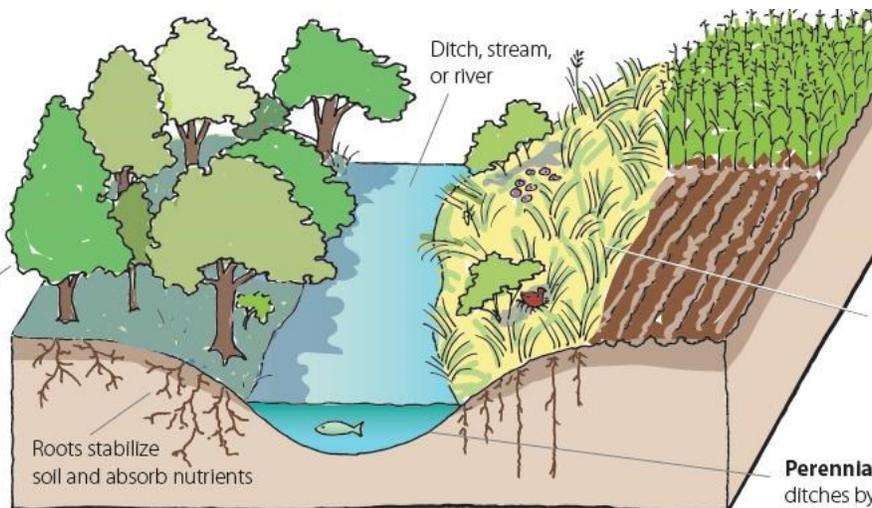
Minnesota Statute, section 103F.48 RIPARIAN PROTECTION AND WATER QUALITY PRACTICES requires a permanent 50-foot wide vegetated buffer on agricultural land in shoreland areas adjacent to designated public waters.

The Otter Tail County Buffer Initiative aims to assist landowners in moving towards the direction of 100% voluntary compliance. The West Otter Tail Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) provides technical and financial assistance to landowners for the design and implementation of required buffers.



How buffers protect water

- Trees**
- Hold soil in place
 - Use up nutrients
 - Shade the water
 - Provide habitat



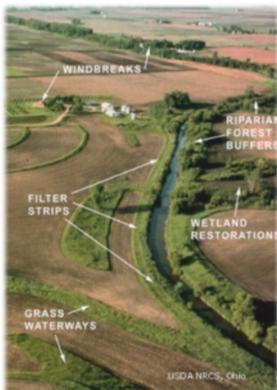
- Tall native grasses**
- Prevent erosion
 - Filter pollutants in runoff
 - Provide habitat

Perennial buffers help maintain ditches by preventing erosion and fill-in

Conservation Programs

Program	Agency	Details
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10—15 year contract Annual payments from \$76—\$177 per acre Signing incentive of \$100 per acre Up to 90% reimbursement for establishment
Local and Regional Programs	West Otter Tail Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Cost-Share Program covers up to 75% of establishment cost for buffer strips Check with SWCD for other available programs
Perpetual Easements	West Otter Tail SWCD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pays \$1,000—\$3,600 per acre to permanently protect the area 100% cost-share for establishment

- ⇒ **Conservation Programs** offer financial and technical assistance to compensate landowners for taking sensitive agricultural land out of production. Contact your local SWCD office to learn more about eligible programs.
- ⇒ Landowner's can also establish the required buffer on their own. Contact your local SWCD office to obtain a compliance agreement. Local SWCD technicians can come out, and mark/flag the area that maybe out of compliance. The existing ordinance requires that the 50 ft. buffer along public waters must be maintained in permanent vegetation. The buffer can be planted to native prairie grasses, cool season grasses, pasture mixes, and/or trees. These areas can be grazed/hayed.



Birdseye view of an agricultural landscape with grass filter strips and other types of conservation buffer. Photo courtesy of USDA NRCS

Buffer Strips are planted strategically between fields and surface waters (rivers, streams, lakes, and drainage ditches). They provide a wide variety of environmental benefits ranging from protecting water quality, soil conservation, to wildlife habitat.

- ⇒ Buffer Strips slow runoff from fields, trapping and filtering sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and other potential pollutants before they reach surface waters.
- ⇒ Deep rooted plants and wider corridors are more effective at protecting water quality and promoting ground water recharge, as well as stabilizing the shoreline.
- ⇒ Continuous Buffers provide connecting corridors allowing wildlife to move from one habitat to another. They provide a source of food, nesting cover, and shelter.