

July 5, 2017

SWCD Partners,

Last week the BWSR board approved the buffer cost-share program, allocating almost \$5 million dollars to support landowners in meeting the requirements of the buffer law, which requires a buffer on public waters by November 1, 2017 and a buffer on public drainage ditches by November 1, 2018.

The funds will be distributed to soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) and are to be used for cost-sharing contracts with landowners or their authorized agents to implement riparian buffers or alternative practices on public waters and public drainage ditches.

Passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Dayton at the end of the 2017 legislative session, these designated Clean Water Fund cost-share dollars provide important support to the Governor's Buffer Initiative.

SWCD Roles and Action Steps:

1. **Begin Marketing.** We all recognize the urgency to make use of these funds. Attached is a template press release you can use in local newspapers, your newsletter, radio, and social media.
2. **Decide if your SWCD will accept the funds.** Expect a grant agreement for these funds to arrive this summer. It will contain procedures and additional information on expectations for the use of these funds. Attached is a Frequently Asked Questions document with details on the program. Additional information on Buffer Cost Share can be found in the FY2018 Clean Water Fund Policy here: http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/cleanwaterfund/fy2018/FY18_CWF_Policy.pdf
3. **Record landowner requests for technical and financial assistance.** Please start establishing a list of eligible applicants for the Riparian Buffer Cost Share funds. This will be important to establish deadline waiver extensions and potential need for additional funds (or returned funds). A template Record of Buffer cost share applicants is attached.

BWSR has also finalized an updated Joint Compliance Waiver form for use by SWCDs and landowners related to the expanded waiver options now available to landowners after the recent legislative session. We encourage you to use this form in conjunction with the list being developed and used to track the requests/needs for the cost share program.

Expect more information in the coming weeks. Thank you again for your work on the buffer program. Your expertise is valued and appreciated.



John Jaschke
Executive Director, BWSR