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Contact: Clay SWCD Staff
218-287-2255

Landowners have new options to meet Buffer Law Requirements

Funds available to soil and water conservation districts for implementation of buffer law.

July 12, 2017

Clay County Minnesota Landowners,

Almost \$5 million dollars is now available to support landowners in meeting the requirements of Minnesota's buffer law. The buffer cost-share program funds were approved at the June meeting of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). These Clean Water Funds, passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Dayton at the end of the 2017 legislative session, provide important support to the Governor's Buffer Initiative.

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.

The 2017 legislation also recognizes that some landowners may have hardships (such as weather) in meeting the public waters deadline. The added language allows for an eight-month extension for implementation when a landowner or authorized agent has filed a riparian protection "compliance plan" with their local SWCD by **November 1, 2017**. Compliance waivers offer a buffer deadline extension until **July 1, 2018**.

The state buffer law requires a buffer on public waters by November 1, 2017 and a buffer on public drainage ditches by November 1, 2018.

For more information on the buffer law, including the cost-share program, contact the Clay Soil and Water Conservation District at 218-287-2255 or visit the BWSR webpage at www.bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers.

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