

Clean Water Practices

Filter Strip ♦ *Riparian Forest Buffer* ♦ *Small Wetland Restoration* ♦ *Grassed Waterways*

Improving the Quality of Wisconsin's Water

This factsheet highlights four high value practices which protect streams, lakes and rivers from sediment and pollution. These practices are strategically located on the landscape to accomplish several objectives. The practices protect environmentally sensitive land, reduce runoff and erosion, at the same time increasing wildlife habitat that benefits endangered or threatened species. These practices are not only cost-effective but also increase your income and diversify your farm enterprise.



Filter Strip

Areas of grass, legumes and other non-woody vegetation that filter runoff and waste water by trapping sediment, pesticides, organic matter and other pollutants. Filter strips are planted on cropland at the lower edge of the field, or along streams, lakes or wetlands. Filter strips significantly reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients entering a stream or river from adjoining land. The width and type of vegetation established in the filter area are determined by site conditions. Filter strips can also be designed to enhance wildlife habitat.

Riparian Forest Buffer

A riparian forest buffer is an area of trees and shrubs located adjacent to streams, lakes, ponds or wetlands that filter out pollutants from surface runoff as well as providing shade for fish and other wildlife. Riparian buffers are planted so that surface runoff and sub surface runoff must filter through them before reaching the water. The vegetation's natural litter also provides food and shelter for valuable wildlife.



Small Wetland Restoration

Land that has been drained for crop production can be easily restored to a functioning, valuable wetland. Wetlands provide important habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife. Wetlands also filter out pollution and sediment and reduce flooding by slowing and storing water. Healthy wetlands are vital to the recharging of underground aquifers.

Landowners can install clean water practices such as these with help from the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) available in certain areas of the state.



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Grassed Waterways

Channels, either natural or constructed, that are planted with suitable vegetation to protect soil from erosion. Grass waterways can help heal gullies and washouts, and greatly reduce loss of topsoil and the sedimentation of streams, ponds and lakes. A grassed waterway transports and filters surface water reducing sediment and pollutants into adjacent waters, improving water quality.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a strong Federal-State-Local partnership for conservation. It is a voluntary program offering financial incentives to help farmers protect and improve water quality. The Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection administers the state portion of the program and provides funds for incentive and easement payments. The USDA Farm Service Agency administers the federal part of the program and makes cost-share, incentive and rental payments to farmers. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides the technical assistance to plan and install the conservation practices and certifies the practices are complete. County Land Conservation Departments may provide conservation planning, practice certification and monitoring the contracts or easements.

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County Land Conservation Committees and Departments

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