

MEMORANDUM
Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

To: Board of Managers
From: Mike Kinney
Subject: WCD Buffer Law Letter

Date: August 18, 2016

Background/Discussion

On August 22nd the Washington Conservation District (WCD) will send out a letter to property owners regarding the new buffer law that was signed by the Governor in June 2015. The letter will be sent to property owners that may be required to install a buffer or alternative practice to meet the requirements of the law. This may include some property owners within the CLFLWD.

Attached: WCD Buffer Law Letter



August 22, 2016

«First_Name_owner» «Last_Name»
«Street»
«City», «State» «Zip_Code»

More information on the buffer initiative can be found here:
www.bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers

Dear «First_Name_owner» «Last_Name»,

The Washington Conservation District (WCD) values the relationships we have built with landowners over the years and we seek to continue to grow those great relationships. We know that when it comes to protecting Minnesota's waters for future generations we are all on the same team and can work effectively together. We also know Minnesota farmers are some of the most innovative in the world.

You are receiving this letter because your property touches a lake, river, stream, drainageway, or public ditch in Washington County and may require a buffer or alternative practice to meet the requirements of Minnesota's new buffer law that was signed by the Governor in June of 2015. This law requires a 50-foot perennial vegetative buffer along public waters (lakes and watercourses) and 16.5 feet on public ditches. In July of this year, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) published the official perennial vegetation buffer map, that is online here: www.dnr.state.mn.us/buffers.

To help you meet the buffer requirements, WCD staff will be conducting site visits this fall and next spring to:

1. Determine if appropriate buffers are already in place;
2. Provide technical assistance to identify, stake, and verify the boundaries for new vegetative buffers before they are created;
3. Discuss approved alternative practices that could be used to meet the requirements of the law.

In the early phases of this program (2016 and 2017), grants may be available through the Conservation Reserve Program or other cost-share programs. Additional funds may be available for projects that incorporate native plants. In addition, landowners who become certified under the Department of Agriculture's Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (www.mda.state.mn.us/awqcp) will meet the rules of the law.

Please contact me to schedule a site visit at 651-330-8220 (ext. 20) or jriggs@mnwcd.org. We look forward to working with you to accomplish our common goals of protecting Minnesota waters and assuring that agriculture remains viable, healthy and innovative in our state.

Sincerely,

Jay Riggs, District Manager
Washington Conservation District