

# **SIBLEY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT FY-18 RIPARIAN BUFFER COST-SHARE PROGRAM POLICY**

- Program Period:** July 24, 2017 to December 31, 2019. FY-18 funds will need to be encumbered and expended by December 31, 2019. Funds not encumbered by March 1, 2018 will need to be returned to BWSR within 30 calendar days.
- Grant Amount:** \$40,000.00 of which \$32,000.00 is available for practices and \$8,000.00 is available for technical/administrative use. Funding notification was received from BWSR on July 24, 2017.
- Priority Area:** The funds will be available to implement buffer strips or alternative practices adjacent to public waters and public ditches that will not have the redetermination of benefits process completed by 2018 in all of Sibley County. If a buffer already exists, Buffer Cost Share funds cannot be used for a greater width beyond the requirement of the law or to install another type of practice in the area; these funds can only be used to reach compliance.
- Cost-Share Rates:** Maximum cost-share rates shall be 75% for alternative practices and \$300.00 per acre for implementing buffer strips.
- Approved Practices:** Alternative practices listed in eFOTG and the Common Alternative Practices guidance document that was adopted by the BWSR Board on June 28, 2017.
- Implementation of buffer strips are only allowed to be seeded with native vegetation. Seeding species must be pre-approved by the district and the seed tags must be turned in for verification. Cost share is limited to the width required for compliance of the MN Buffer Law and must be maintained for 10 years. This contract must be complied to regardless of any legislative changes that may occur over the 10 year contract period. Acreage is capped at 10 acres total per landowner/entity. With consultation of the district, haying and burning during the effective life of the cost share contract (10 years) should be planned during times that will minimize impact to ground-nesting birds (outside the primary nesting season of May 15 – August 1). See the BWSR Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines, pg. 37 for more detail. After the effective life of the practice, haying and grazing is governed by the guidance for Haying and Grazing Buffers on the BWSR Buffer Program webpage. The contract holder is responsible for controlling undesirable weeds, especially those listed under the State and local noxious weed list.
- Contract Dates:** Starting and completion dates will be set by the Sibley Soil & Water Conservation District Board when the cost-share contract is approved. Amendments to these established dates are at the discretion of the Sibley Soil & Water Conservation District Board as long as the amended dates are within the period of the grant agreement.

**Quality Assurance:** Grants Administration Manual (GAM) requirements for inspections still apply. GAM guidance recommends inspections in year 1, as well as 33% and 66% of the contract period, but allows some flexibility. To meet the GAM and Buffer Law Procedure 2, for a ten year practice, every three years would meet requirements.