United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

2011 Ranking Period 1

# Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM06 - Extending existing riparian herbaceous cover for water quality protection and wildlife habitat

**Enhancement Description**
Where existing buffers are utilized, extend them to gain more efficiency in intercepting overland flow and reducing the transport of nutrients, pesticides and agro-chemicals.

**Land Use Applicability**
Cropland, pastureland and rangeland.

**Benefits**
Widening existing herbaceous buffers that currently meet NRCS conservation practice standard water quality criteria can provide food and cover for native and game species as well as enhancing aquatic habitat by providing shade, input of carbon to the stream, and stabilizing streambank conditions. Extended buffers offer more surface area to filter out sediments and agro-chemicals. Riparian herbaceous buffers can also offer buffers to mitigate pesticide drift during pesticide applications and pollen drift where the mixing of plant varieties is not desired.

Riparian herbaceous habitats are important transition zones between terrestrial landscapes and aquatic zones. Wildlife species utilize these transition zones because they provide a unique combination of cover, access to water and often provide important travel corridors. Extending existing buffers not only enhances wildlife habitat but it increases the effectiveness of water quality protection they provide to the streams.

**Criteria**
Existing buffers must meet minimum state water quality criteria requirements for width. Extend the existing buffer for a total of 60 feet or more to enhance habitat and water quality functions.

The extended buffer must be composed of at least 5 species of non-noxious, wildlife friendly grasses and/or perennial forbs best suited to site conditions. Include species that provide pollinator food and habitat where possible.

1. All site preparation and plant establishment shall be accomplished according to the appropriate NRCS conservation practice standard criteria and specifications.
2. Herbaceous riparian buffers shall consist of a diversity of plant species of which the majority are capable of producing nutritious food sources to wildlife.
3. Any use of the herbaceous buffer must not compromise its intended purpose. Vegetation from riparian herbaceous buffers can be harvested for bio-energy as long as the harvesting is done in accordance with a plan that does not compromise the water quality and wildlife benefits of the extended buffer strip.

4. The extension of riparian herbaceous buffers can incorporate other buffer types (filter strips and riparian forest) where applicable to meet specific operator management goals.
5. To the extent possible the buffer areas and extended buffer areas will be vegetated to increase overland flow interception and increase water quality values of the stream or water body.

**Operation and Maintenance**

1. Once established, buffers must not be mowed, disked, grazed, or otherwise disturbed, until after the primary wildlife ground nesting period has ended.
2. Buffers will be regularly maintained for its intended purpose through the life of the contract. This includes any removal of vegetation, including grazing. Grazing is not permitted unless a grazing management plan is in effect.
3. Buffers will have a wildlife management plan to maintain established plant communities through the life of the contract. The wildlife plan will maintain the plant community and its structural diversity and provide habitat for intended species, remove duff, and control woody vegetation.
4. Grazing is not permitted unless a grazing management plan is in effect that maintains the buffer's intended purpose.

**Documentation Requirements**

1. A map showing the location and size of enhanced riparian herbaceous buffers.
2. Documentation of the type and rates of vegetation planted in the new riparian herbaceous buffers.

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The average width of the existing buffer must be a minimum of 20 feet in order to be eligible to apply this enhancement.

The average total width of the buffer following installation of the enhancement must be a minimum of 60 feet up to a maximum of 150 feet.

*Note: If the existing buffer is an average width between 20 to 50 feet, the participant must extend the buffer area so that the total width of the buffer following installation of the enhancement will be a minimum average of 60 feet.*
*If the existing buffer is an average width between 50 to 140 feet, the participant must at extend the buffer by a minimum width of 10 feet.*

Wisconsin supplement information is continued on next page...

**Wisconsin Supplement 1/11/2011 Continued (ANM06: 2011 Ranking Period 1)**

Follow Wisconsin Conservation Practice Standard 393 (Filter Strip) and Wisconsin Agronomy Technical Note 5 and/or 6:

http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/WI/393.pdf
ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/WI/technotes/agronomy-tn5.pdf
ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/WI/technotes/agronomy-tn6.pdf

Primary ground wildlife nesting season is from May 15 through August 1st.

Written documentation shall include a summary of the moisture regime of the site, the method of establishment and the plant species established. Provide an annual summary of site management and weed control activities implemented.