

# COTTONWOOD SWCD MONITORING PLAN FOR BUFFER COMPLIANCE TRACKING

## §103F.48 RIPARIAN PROTECTION AND WATER QUALITY PRACTICES

---

### 1. COMPLIANCE TRACKING OF ALL PARCELS SUBJECT TO THE BUFFER LAW

All parcels in the county are to be reviewed within a 3 year timeframe. The Cottonwood SWCD will review a third of the parcels each year. Cottonwood County will be divided into three areas (See Attachment A) and the SWCD will randomly pick area A, B or C once every three years to review. The review shall consist of aerial photo review or on-site review depending on availability of updated aerial photos and access to the property.

### 2. RANDOM SPOT CHECKS

Random spot checks will be done in addition to the tracking of all parcels within a 3 year span. These checks may be conducted via aerial photo review or on-site review depending on availability of updated aerial photos and the practice that is being checked/access to farms. A combination of both aerial and on-site review may also be used.

- a. The SWCD will conduct 25-50 of parcels on the Buffer Protection Map located in Cottonwood County on a random spot check review each year outside of the scheduled area.
- b. Additionally, the SWCD will review parcels of emphasis more frequently, which include, but are not limited to:
  - Previously non-compliant
  - No-till/Conservation tillage or cover crop alternative practice plans
  - Variable width buffers (i.e. Land O' Lakes buffer tool, Decision Support Tool)
  - Other Alternative Practice Plans, (expiring CRP)
  - Cost-share funded projects (years 1,3,9 of contract)
  - Parcels of further emphasis (potential violators)

### 3. PROCESS TO HANDLE COMPLAINTS

The Cottonwood SWCD will utilize the following process should a complaint be made regarding the compliance of a parcel:

- a. The SWCD shall review applicable files to determine if an alternative practice or exemption (i.e. CRP) is approved for the parcel and review previous aerial imagery to determine any possible changes made to the practices or buffer area since the most recent compliance check.
- b. If there is an approved practice, staff will contact the landowner via mail with a set date and time for a site visit and complete an on-site visit with or without the presence of the landowner (site visit timing will be determined by seasonality, timing of alternative practices, crop stage, etc) to determine that the alternative practice is being met.
  - i. If compliant, staff will issue or reissue a Compliance Validation form and mail to the landowner.
  - ii. If non-compliant, staff will forward the information to the county for enforcement.
- c. If there is not an approved practice, staff will contact the landowner via mail with a set date and time for a site visit to discuss the parcel's compliance.
  - i. An on-site visit will be made by staff to determine compliance.
    1. If compliant, staff will issue or reissue a Compliance Validation form and mail to the landowner.
    2. If non-compliant, staff will forward the information to the county for enforcement.
  - ii. Failure for a landowner to meet at the specified time or reschedule by the specified date will result in a site visit by staff without landowner presence and a compliance determination made at that time. If the parcel is determined to be non-compliant it will immediately be referred to the county for enforcement.

# COTTONWOOD SWCD MONITORING PLAN FOR BUFFER COMPLIANCE TRACKING

## Attachment A

