

Big Pine Creek Watershed Project

Best Management Practices Fact Sheet

Conservation Buffer

Conservation buffers consist of maintaining a strip or area of permanent vegetative cover around the field border or along a drainage ditch or stream.

Purposes of conservation buffers include, but are not limited to:

- Reducing suspended solids and associated contaminants in runoff.
- Reducing dissolved contaminant loading in runoff.
- Providing a spatial buffer between cropped land and streams to reduce the risk of chemical spray drift to the surface water.
- Reducing erosion and improving stability to stream banks and shorelines.
- Providing food and cover for fish and wildlife.



Photo courtesy of United States Department of Agriculture

Contact Info for the Soil & Water Conservation Districts in the Big Pine Creek Watershed

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For additional details on the various practices that comprise the conservation buffer bundle, refer to the following Natural Resources Conservation Service conservation practice standards:

- Conservation Cover (NRCS practice code 327)
- Filter Strips (NRCS practice code 393)
- Field Border (NRCS practice code 386)
- Riparian Herbaceous Cover (NRCS practice code 390)
- Riparian Forest Cover (NRCS practice code 391)
- Tree/Shrub Establishment (NRCS practice code 612)
- Forage and Biomass Planting (NRCS practice code 512)
- Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (NRCS practice code 395)
- Streambank and Shoreline Protection (NRCS practice code 580)

Detailed information on each of these practices can be found at:
<http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/toc.aspx?CatID=4288>

Available financial assistance:

The Big Pine Creek Watershed group is offering cost-share incentives to help producers adopt best management practices (BMPs) aimed at reducing the amount of nutrients, sediment and bacteria entering our surface waters. **Conservation buffers** are one of the BMPs we want to encourage. The financial incentives for conservation tillage will come in the form of reimbursement of 75% of the prevailing NRCS EQIP payment rates.

- Applications for cost share assistance are available from the Soil & Water Conservation District offices in Benton, Warren and White counties.
- Closing dates for ranking periods are still to be determined. Please check the watershed group's webpage which can be accessed via the Benton County SWCD website bentoncountyswcd.org
- Applications will be ranked based on merit. Pairing conservation buffers with other conservation practices such as no-till/strip till and/or filter strips will increase the ranking score of the application.
- Successful applicants will sign a contract spelling out the terms of the cost-share agreement.
- Assuming the designed and constructed practice meets NRCS standards and the field passes visual inspection, the applicant will be mailed a reimbursement check.