



South Dakota Riparian Buffer Initiative



What Are Riparian Buffers?

Riparian buffers are a strip of vegetation between agricultural land and a stream which help protect the stream from impacts of the land use around it. Buffer strips improve water quality and provide valuable habitat, bank stabilization, forage for livestock, and increase the value of marginal crop lands. Buffers are an excellent conservation practice vital to improving South Dakota's impaired watersheds

Before buffer strips...



After buffer strips...



photos courtesy of the Big Sioux River Watershed Implementation Project

Program Requirements

- Land must be within one hundred twenty feet of a waterbody noted in ARSD 74:51:03 or ARSD 74:51:02:04 and be within the Big Sioux River Watershed, or locally designated by the local board of county commissioners as outlined in SDCL 10-6-31.7
- Must have existing or be willing to establish perennial vegetation
- Vegetation may not be harvested or mowed between May 1st – August 1st
- Vegetation may not be grazed between May 1st – September 30th
- A minimum of four inches of cover must always be maintained
- Buffers must be a minimum of 50 feet in width, with a max average of 120 feet in width
- Must commit to a ten-year contract

Benefits to Landowners



Vegetation in the buffer may be grazed or hayed in the spring and fall



Exclusion fencing and alternative water cost-share is available



Increased bank stabilization and water quality for the streams



Incentive payments and tax breaks for landowners

