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Buffer Strips: Common Sense Conservation

United States Natural Resources Conservation Service

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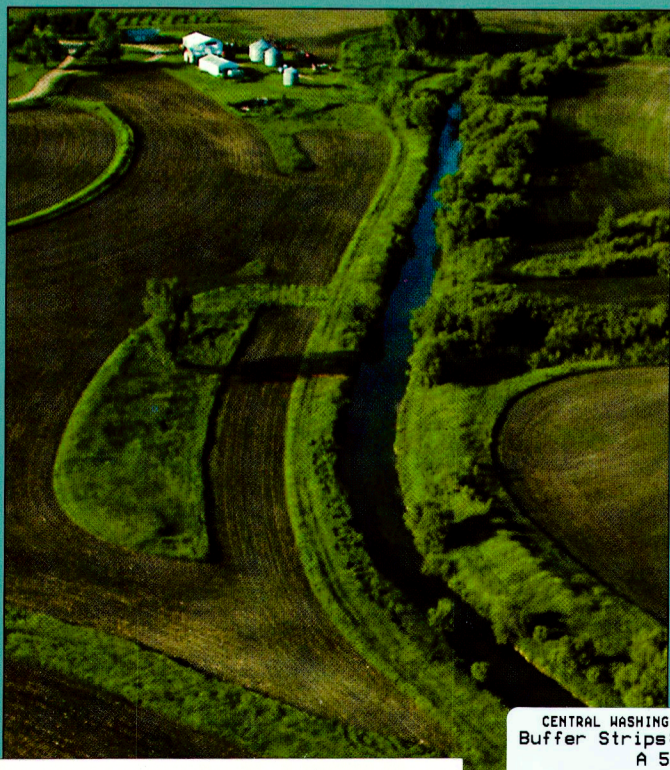
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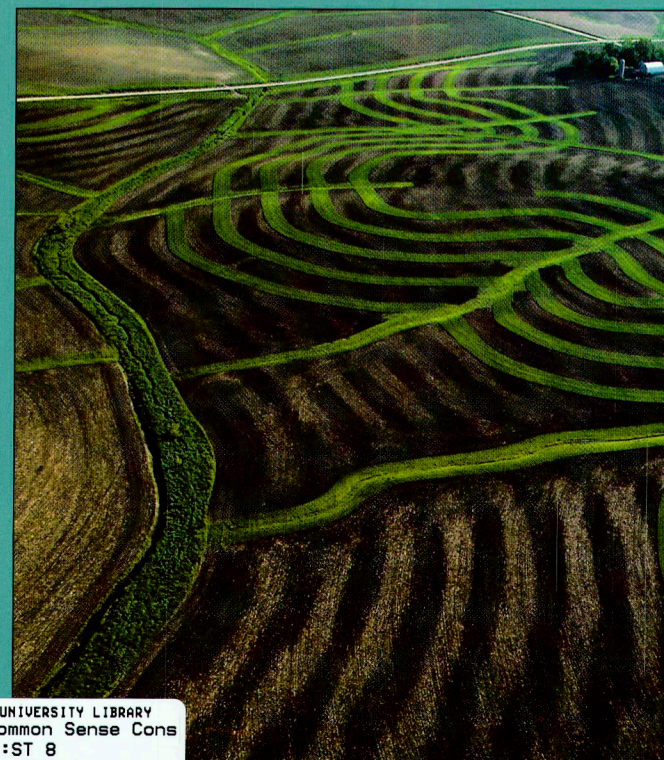
Buffer Strips: Common Sense Conservation

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Along streams...



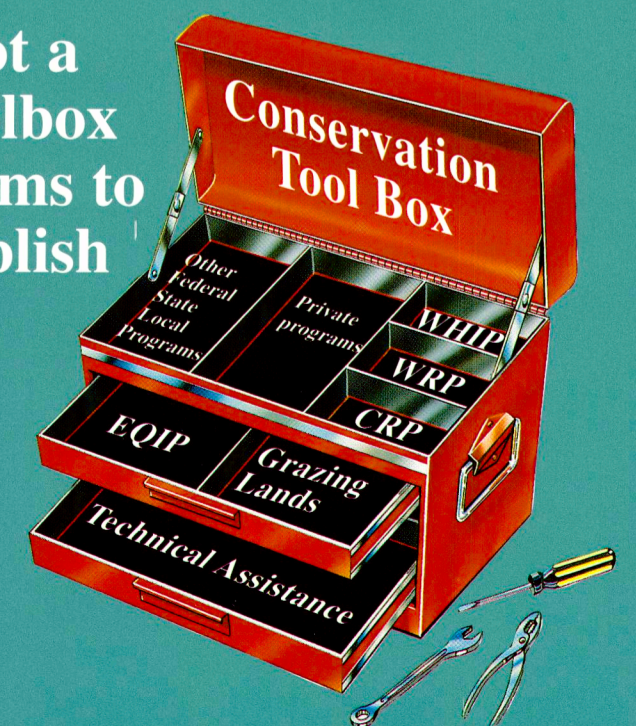
within the field...



and on field edges.



You've got a
whole toolbox
of programs to
help establish
buffers!



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Showcase and protect your farm with Buffer Strips

Conservation buffer strips are areas or strips of land maintained in permanent vegetation, designed to intercept pollutants. They can enhance wildlife habitat, improve water quality, and enrich aesthetics on farmlands. Buffers are most effective when they're used in combination with other conservation measures as part of a planned conservation system. Buffer types and primary purposes:

Contour buffer strips: Strips of perennial vegetation alternated with wider cropland strips which are farmed on the contour. They can reduce sheet erosion and reduce movement of sediment, nutrients and pesticides.

Filter strip: Strips of grass or other vegetation used to intercept or trap sediment, organics, pesticides and other pollutants before they reach a water body.

Riparian forest buffer: Streamside vegetation consisting of trees, shrubs and grasses that can intercept pollutants from both surface and ground waters before they reach a stream.

Field border: Strips of perennial vegetation planted at the edge of a field. They can be used for a turn area or travel lanes for farm machinery.

Windbreak/shelterbelt: Row or rows of trees, shrubs or other vegetation used to reduce wind erosion, protect young crops, and control blowing snow.

Grassed waterway: Strips of grass on areas where water concentrates as it runs off a field. While they are used primarily to prevent gully erosion, waterways can be designed or combined with filter strips to help filter contaminants.

Alley cropping: An agroforestry practice consisting of growing trees or shrubs in rows or corridors with alleys of agronomic crops or forage between them. Both the forestry and agronomic crops are harvested.

Other practices considered as buffers or closely associated to them are hedgerow plantings, herbaceous wind barriers, cross wind trap strips, streambank protection measures, and vegetative barriers.



filter strip



contour buffers



riparian forest buffer



windbreak/shelterbelt



alley cropping



grassed waterway



field border