

## MINNESOTA'S BUFFER INITIATIVE

Minnesota's New Buffer Initiative will soon require public waters in the state - lakes, rivers and streams - to be surrounded by vegetated buffers 50-feet wide (on average) and public ditches to have 16.5-foot wide buffers as well. Buffers will need to be installed on public waters by November, 2017 and on public drainage systems by November, 2018.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources recently released **buffer maps that show which waters are subject to the new requirements**. Landowners can use these maps to determine if buffers are needed on their property. The buffer maps can be found at <http://dnr.state.mn.us/buffers/index.html>.

A buffer is vegetated land adjacent to a stream, river, lake or wetland. Buffers help slow the flow of water and filter out phosphorous, nitrogen, and sediment, which are all pollutants that degrade water quality. The buffer initiative will reduce erosion and pollution from runoff by establishing about 110,000 acres of buffers along Minnesota waterways.

The new rules will not impact lakeshore residents who have beaches, docks or landscaping. However, those properties will still have to comply with existing DNR, county and watershed district rules.

The Hennepin County Environment and Energy Department will be contacting landowners who may be affected by this new law in late-2016 and early-2017. If you have questions contact Jim Kujawa at 612-348-7338 or Kirsten Barta at 612-543-3373.