

Project 98–110 Nebraska Water Quality Initiative

Project Legend:

The goal of this three-year project by the Nebraska Corn Growers Association is to demonstrate an effective and economical method to improve Nebraska's surface water quality by establishing grass filter strips to reduce herbicide runoff into streams.

Proposal Context: Statewide

Duration: June 1998 – July 2001

Cost: \$100,000 awarded from NET.

NET Funding Objective: Surface & Groundwater, Soil Management, Habitat

Process:

- Developed an effective and feasible method to improve Nebraska surface water quality through the use of buffer strips.
- Buffer strips were installed in major river basins across the state to demonstrate their effectiveness and usage as a tool to improve water quality and wildlife habitat.
- Introduction and education of components to landowners who are willing to participate in best management practices to improve water quality in their operations.
- More than 100 buffers were installed in six watersheds across the state. Site selection was prioritized by several factors including need, benefit, and exposure.
- Areas high in the watershed were given preference. Sites were selected on locations that had streams, intermittent streams, or rivers. Access to the site was factored in, and sites that allowed for exposure to high traffic were preferred.
- Consultants worked with local and state agencies to coordinate site location, installation, and follow-up on the buffers.
- The installation of 24 demonstration sites has allowed the project to draw attention to this low cost method of protecting groundwater in the states irrigation wells. The education phase of this project has been expanded to reach a greater number of landowners.

Domains: The environmental domain is represented within this project because of the buffer strips that were installed, reducing the amount of herbicide that makes its way into rivers and streams. The Public Policy domain is also represented because these buffer strips are now used by landowners across the country for both environmental and economic benefits.

Transferability: Since the completion of this project, installation buffer strips have become a common practice not only in agriculture, but in urban areas where water quality has become an issue. When properly maintained, buffer strips can be recommended in nearly every community.

