



CONSERVATION BUFFER ORDINANCE

Last Update: 06.24.2025

Now therefore the Town Board of the Town of Monroe, County of Adams, State of Wisconsin does hereby ordain as follows:

Whereas enlarging of agricultural fields as needed requires sensitivity to maintaining wildlife habitat, reducing soil erosion from wind and water and also protecting soil and water quality. The Town of Monroe continues to value the protection of natural features for the benefit of the environment and for future generations, including but not limited to; water quality, woodland, wildlife, soil quality.

Whereas protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and commercial forest is important to the Town of Monroe, it is important to be done while maintaining links between woodlands and fields around the farm and community and continued protection of the ground water.

Whereas the State of Wisconsin in Wisconsin Statute 92.14 and the County of Adams through the Land and Water Resource Management Plan 2016-2025 have shown the importance to conserve and protect the County's soil, water and related natural resources using Best Management Practices.

Section 1. Removal of Trees and Cover

Any clearing of 40-80 acres for any land use (including acreage previously cleared), and Conservation Buffer of a minimum of 12 feet will be placed along the border/roadway/edge outside of the road right of way.

- (1) Conservation buffers are small areas or strips of land in permanent vegetation, designed to slow water runoff, provide shelter and stabilize land. Strategically placed buffer strips in the agricultural landscape can effectively mitigate the movement of sediment, nutrients, and pesticides within farm fields and from farm fields.
- (2) Buffers include: contour buffer strips, field borders, filter strips, grassed waterways, living snow fences, riparian buffers, shelter belts/windbreaks, (grass, shrubs and trees), and wetlands.
- (3) The small amount of land taken out of production helps producers meet environmental and economic goals.
- (4) Conservation buffers protect soil, improve air and water quality, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and beautify the landscape.



CONSERVATION BUFFER ORDINANCE

Last Update: 06.24.2025

(5) Conservation buffers shows a land owner's commitment to conservation and their willingness to protect the environment.

(6) Benefits of Conservation Buffers

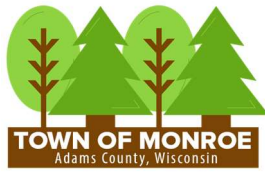
- Slow water runoff.
- Remove up to 50% or more of nutrients and pesticides in runoff.
- Remove up to 60% or more of pathogens in runoff.
- Remove up to 75% or more of sediment in runoff.
- Reduce noise and odor.
- Serve as a source of food, nesting cover, and shelter for wildlife.
- Stabilize stream-banks and reduce water temperature in stream.
- Provide a setback distance for agricultural chemical use from watercourses.
- Reduce downstream flooding.
- Represents profitable, common sense conservation for landowners.
- Reduced risk of tractor rollover due to set back of steep ditch or creek.
- Take advantage of incentives provided for agriculture to establish buffers from local, state and federal programs.
- Establishment of natural vegetation.

(7) Conservation Barriers set outside of the road right of way assist in maintaining the Town of Monroe's Firewise management practices.

(8) Due to erosion from wind and due to the need for living snow fences, a higher profile conservation buffer is preferred.

(9) Types of buffers:

- Contour buffer strips – narrow bands of vegetation established across the slope of a crop field and alternated down the slope with strips of crops.
- Field border – strips of vegetation planted at the edge of fields, that can be used for turn areas or travel lanes for machinery.



CONSERVATION BUFFER ORDINANCE

Last Update: 06.24.2025

- Filter strips – strips of grass or other vegetation used to slow water runoff from a field. These intercept or trap sediment, nutrients, pesticides and other pollutants before they reach a river, lake or stream.
- Grassed waterways – strips of grass on areas where water is concentrated as it runs off a field. Used primarily to prevent and control gully erosion, waterways also act as a filter, trapping sediment and other pollutants.
- Living snow fence – Trees and/or shrubs designed to control drifting snow to protect buildings, roads and other property. They can be installed to help protect nearby areas for livestock, provide wildlife cover and enhance soil moisture.
- Riparian buffers – streamside planting of trees, shrubs and grasses that can intercept pollutants from both surface and ground water before they reach a river or stream. Provides habitat for wildlife and also enhances fish habitat.
- Shelterbelts/windbreaks – a row or rows of trees and/or shrubs used to reduce wind erosion, protect field crops and shelter from blowing snow. Shelterbelts also provide protection from the elements for houses, farm buildings, livestock and wildlife.
- Wetlands – areas of shallow water within or near cropland that have water loving grasses, shrubs and/or trees growing in and around the area. These act as a filter and provide wildlife habitat.

Section 2.

Any clearing of 40-80 acres for any land use (including acreage previously cleared) will require an application filled out from the Town of Monroe that will need to include a plan for a minimum of 12 feet Conservation Buffer.

- (1) Example – Existing agriculture 40 acres has an additional 40 acres added to the area. This represents an area in which compliance will need to be met.

Section 3.

In accordance to the above reasoning, any new commercial business or development will also plan for a minimum of 12 feet Conservation Buffer.



CONSERVATION BUFFER ORDINANCE

Last Update: 06.24.2025

This Ordinance is effective from after its' adoption.

Adopted this 18th day of October 2016.

APPROVED.

Dwaine C. Hays, Chairperson

Robert A. Kissinger, Supervisor 1

James Peterson, Supervisor 2