



# BMP Assessment Factors for Drain Projects

## About the Project

Certain **BMPs (like filter strips)** within a drainage district can reduce future maintenance of a drain, making drain projects and maintenance less expensive. A pilot project has been developed to provide incentives to property owners who implement these types of BMPs. The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Farm Bureau, the Saginaw County Public Works Commissioner and the Monroe County Drain Commissioner received a **USDA NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant** for this pilot project, with additional support from the Cook Family Foundation.

## Goals of the Grant

The project partners are seeking to **increase the use of BMPs** by property owners to **reduce sediment** delivery into drains and **improve water quality**. The USDA NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant will assist with the costs of developing the program so that certain agricultural BMPs within drainage districts can be taken into consideration when assessing for drain projects. Filter strips will be initially piloted but the program can be easily adapted to include additional BMPs.

## FAQs

### How do property owners qualify?

A property owner must own land classified by County Equalization as agricultural land in a drainage district with a petitioned drain project. The owner must be willing to implement a filter strip plan for their property to qualify for the BMP reduction factor in the drain apportionment.

### What if a property owner already has qualified filter strips on their property?

Property owners who already have qualified filter strips in place on their agricultural land may also qualify and benefit from the BMP reduction factor.

### Do landowners qualify for the BMP reduction factor if filter strips on their property are enrolled in another program?

The BMP factor will still apply even when the filter strip is enrolled in another program(s).

### How does a property owner receive the BMP reduction factor?

Property owners must enter into an agreement with the drainage district to implement and maintain an agreed upon filter strip plan. When apportionments are determined, the Drain Commissioner will use a BMP factor in the apportionment to reduce the assessment where agreements are in place.

### What are the requirements of the agreement?

The width, type of plantings, and length of the agreement will vary by county. In certain situations, the drainage district may agree to install the filter strip as part of the petitioned project construction.

### What happens if a property owner does not maintain the filter strips?

The drainage district will issue a notice if the property owner does not properly maintain the filter strip. If the proper maintenance does not take place, the drainage district may require the property owner to pay the amount of any previous reductions in assessments for the project. The BMP reduction factor also will be removed for the remainder of the project's assessments.

### What counties will this program be active in?

A pilot was conducted in Saginaw and Gratiot counties in an intercounty drain in 2019. The project team is organizing workshops to inform Drain and Public Works Commissioners from across Michigan about the project in December 2019. Drain and Public Works Commissioners will determine whether they would like to apply the BMP factors in their respective counties.

### For more information:

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## Project Partners:

