# Fast facts about stormwater ponds



*One of more than 85 stormwater ponds in Mankato at 113 Teton Court.*

## Why are stormwater ponds useful?

Stormwater ponds are part of the city's infrastructure. The primary function of a stormwater retention pond is stormwater storage and sedimentation to help increase water clarity. Stormwater ponds are like any other infrastructure in the city. They have aesthetic value; however, stormwater ponds are not for fishing or swimming because they can contain contaminants. They are operated in a specific manner and have periodic maintenance done to ensure they function properly.

Stormwater retention ponds located in neighborhoods are part of a broad, useful citywide stormwater treatment system. Rainwater runoff is transported to the Minnesota River through catch basins located along roadways, traveling through the retention pond to remove sediment and then on to the river.

## Keeping stormwater ponds at maximum value

City staff make strategic decisions on how to protect and preserve wetlands, woodlands and manage stormwater and provide sustainable city service with minimal impact. City staff works with developers to design stormwater ponds, so they protect the city against floods and filter pollutants before water flows back to the river. City staff ensure:

- maintenance of buffer zones around perimeter of pond
- maintenance of weeds as necessary
- dredge periodically to maintain sedimentation capacity
- enforce stormwater regulations

## Be a part of the solution

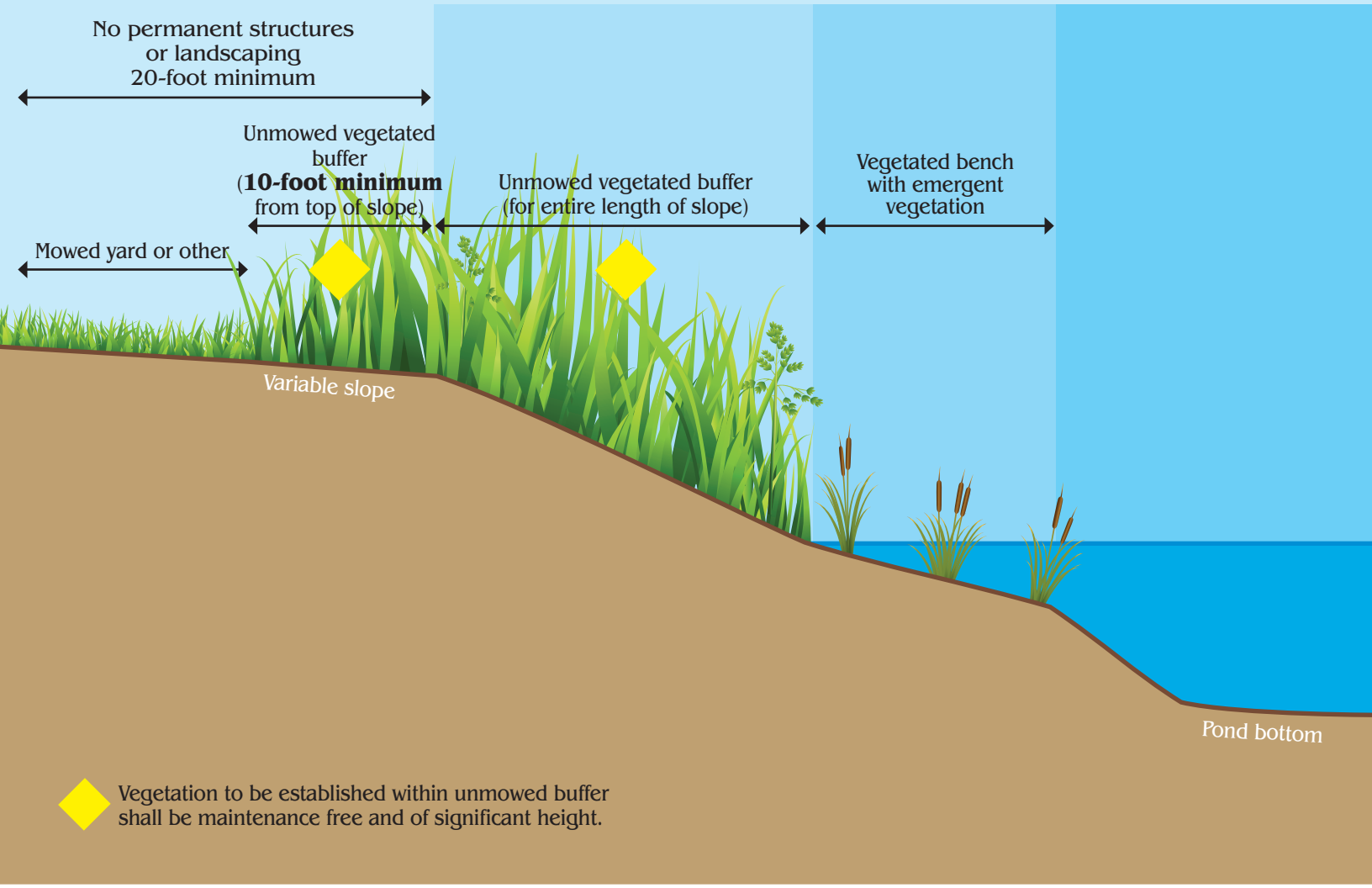
Everyone can help protect Minnesota's rivers and lakes. A little effort goes a long way to protect water resources. Some ways to help:

- Follow recommended guidelines for fertilizer application because nutrient loads to ponds from lawns can be significant. Phosphorus and nitrogen directly stimulate algae growth in the pond.
- Remove animal waste in the area because it's high in phosphorus and nitrogen.
- Sweep grass clippings away from streets, sidewalks and driveways. Compost clippings to prevent grass from entering the stormwater system. Grass clippings can fill up the pond and add nutrients for algae growth, which can be unsightly and may cause offensive odors in natural waterways.
- Wash vehicles on a grassy area and reduce amount of soap used. Using biodegradable soap or low phosphorus soap when washing vehicles is best.
- Store landscaping and construction material on a level surface to prevent material from washing into the storm drain system or plugging the storm sewer.
- A small amount of motor oil or antifreeze can have a major impact on small water bodies. Clean up spilled liquids and material from auto repairs.

Working together and understanding the purpose for stormwater ponds helps protect the environment and benefits neighborhoods.

**For questions, or more information, contact city of Mankato staff at 507-387-8543.**
**www.mankato-mn.gov**

# What a vegetated buffer area for stormwater pond buffer zone should look like




## What is a stormwater pond buffer zone and why is it important?

Buffer zones surrounding a stormwater pond's perimeter are important because they help ensure stormwater ponds operate properly. It is important these areas are not disturbed by unauthorized landscaping and are kept free of permanent structures. Since roots of native grasses can grow more than eight feet deep, they better control erosion than turf grass, which have roots that barely reach six inches deep.

## Other benefits:

- provides unrestricted access for maintenance equipment when needed
- acts as a barrier to keep children away from open water areas
- discourages nuisance geese
- benefits aquatic ecosystems:
  - provides food, shelter and nesting sites for fish and wildlife
  - controls erosion
  - protects water quality by intercepting nutrients
  - improves aesthetics
  - stabilizes pond bottom sediments

**311 or 507-387-8600**
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