

# FRIENDS OF NORTHERN LAKE CHAMPLAIN

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## GETTING BUFFERED:

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One of the more effective ways to reduce the amount of sediment and phosphorus that enter the waters of Vermont is to have a buffer strip between waterways and cropped farm fields. These buffers act as a filter for excess nutrients and also help to prevent stream bank erosion. Since April 2006, all farms are required to comply with Accepted Agricultural Practices, with the following rules being most relevant to water quality:

\* A buffer zone of perennial vegetation shall be maintained between annual croplands and the top of the bank of adjoining surface waters. These annual crops are usually corn or soybeans.

\* Surface water is defined as being all rivers, streams, brooks, lakes, ponds, reservoirs and all bodies of surface water, artificial or natural. This does not include drainage ditches that carry water intermittently.

\* This buffer is to be a minimum of 10' wide, measured from the top of the stream bank.

\* Where there are concentrations of water flowing into a waterway, the buffer must be 25' wide.

\* No manure may be applied within the buffer area.

\* No tillage shall occur in the buffer area, but the area may be harvested as a perennial crop (such as hay).

\* **If you have questions, please contact the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.**