

STREAMSIDE BUFFERS

Protect and enhance your farmland naturally with trees.

If you're a farmer or an agricultural landowner with a stream on your property, you know water can sometimes get the upper hand during and after heavy rainfalls. High water caused by heavy rains can cause erosion, even make streambanks collapse. And that can compromise the source of your livelihood. But planting a streamside buffer is a natural and effective way to offset severe weather's impact—and help you to realize maximum value from your land.

So, what is a streamside buffer?

A streamside buffer is a deliberate planting of trees and shrubs along any size of waterway to protect it against erosion and pollution. Trees within these buffers act like sponges to slow rainwater runoff, keeping your land intact and protecting your property value.

Effective streamside buffers feature trees and shrubs native to our region. Native plants thrive in our climate, are easier to care for and provide excellent food and habitat for local species of wildlife in water and on land, including trout and pollinators.

Cleaner water and healthier land benefits all Pennsylvanians. Planting a streamside buffer shows your neighbors that you are a good steward of your land and how much you value your community.



THE BENEFITS OF STREAMSIDE BUFFERS



Reduced erosion: Tree roots hold streambanks in place.



Improved habitats: Streamside buffers create better natural conditions for wildlife in the water and on land, including trout and pollinators.



Enriched landscape: Buffers add shade, privacy and help with property value.



Cleaner water: Trees and shrubs filter pollution.

Which stream appears healthier to you?



Without a streamside buffer, heavy rainfall can cause pollution to run off into your waterway—and even erode streambanks.



As the streamside buffer matures, its ability to filter out pollution increases. That results in cleaner water and healthier land.

Streamside buffers are an agricultural best practice.

For agricultural landowners, there are additional reasons to install streamside buffers. They reduce crops lost to flood damage, prevent erosion and soil loss, and are a part of a sustainably managed farm operation.

A streamside buffer with exclusion fencing helps prevent waterborne diseases from spreading to your animals from upstream sources, and reduces calving risks. Streamside buffers with exclusion fencing can also help keep your livestock clear of hazardous mud and gullies, keeping the animals safer and healthier.

It's important to note that streamside forest buffers planted on active pasture grounds must be protected by livestock exclusion fencing. Fencing will keep livestock from eating or trampling the new trees in the buffer and help stop streambank erosion. Livestock crossings can be incorporated into the system as needed to allow the pastured animals to move from one side of the stream to another, and to allow water access for drinking.

What next steps can I take to buffer my stream?

We want to help you plant your buffer! We can recommend an approach that is customized for you and your property—and we can help find funding opportunities and support to install your streamside buffer.

Contact our stream buffer experts at dcnr.pa.gov/BufferMyStream, ra-nrstreambuffers@pa.gov, or 717-705-2820 to arrange a visit.

Buffering your stream shows your neighbors and the community that you are a good steward of your land. It has a positive impact on Pennsylvania's natural resources and the Chesapeake Bay watershed—and leaves a legacy for years to come.

CLEANER WATER AND HEALTHIER LAND REINFORCED THIS FARMER'S BELIEF IN STREAMSIDE BUFFERS

Roger Rohrer's farm is in the heart of Lancaster County, a rich agricultural community. Through his firsthand experience, Roger has become a huge proponent of streamside buffers.



"Being a good neighbor is very important to us, and our buffers are the best BMP to manage stormwater and is the best and last defense for keeping pollution out of our streams. Our neighbors appreciate the cleaner water and the wildlife the buffers bring to the area," Rohrer said.

"Buffers are not only a great asset for improving our farm's environmental footprint, but they also enhance our neighborhood's quality of life for all."



The trees and plants within streamside buffers create healthier streams and better habitats for wildlife in the water and on land.

With all the benefits that streamside buffers provide, shouldn't you consider having one installed on your farmland?

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YOUR LAND. YOUR LEGACY. YOUR NATURAL RESOURCES.

Protect them all by planting a streamside buffer.

Learn more at dcnr.pa.gov/BufferMyStream



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