

Your Streamside Buffer ...



UNHEALTHY?

1. Runoff that flows over solid surfaces, like roofs and paved driveways, will accelerate erosion. Pollutants and excess silt degrade habitat for aquatic life. Cleared manicured lot lacks shade and privacy. Loss of native plants leads to more erosion, runoff and work for you.

2. Dumps, above and below the ground, pose a risk of leaching pollutants into streams.

3. Malfunctioning septic system allows phosphorus, bacteria and anything else you pour down your drain to leach into adjacent waterways.

4. Anything built or stored in the floodplain is at risk of being washed downstream. Not only can this cause personal loss, but large debris can further damage downstream property and infrastructure.

5. Hardened shoreline can deflect erosion downstream, eliminate natural filtering and degrade habitat.

6. Lawn to the water's edge lacks deep roots required to stabilize the stream bank. Lawns have no habitat value. They put your property at risk for erosion, and deliver lawn chemicals directly to the stream, to say nothing of ruining the fishing.



HEALTHY?

7. Overhanging branches provide a nesting place for birds and shade to keep streams from getting too warm for fish during the hot days of summer. Leaves provide the base of the food chain in aquatic ecosystems, feeding insects on both the streambed and floodplain that will in turn become the prey of fish and small mammals.

8. Exposed roots shelter fish and other aquatic species.

9. Tree trunks, stems, branches and leaves all help to slow the flow of water across the ground, capturing soil, pollutants and excess nutrients along the way. By the time water reaches the stream, it is moving cleaner and slower.

10. Tree roots can also filter pollutants transported in groundwater prior to entering streams.

11. Having a nice lawn does not have to be at odds with living next to a stream. You can still have access to the stream by leaving openings in your landscape design. When raking leaves or gathering grass clippings designate a compost area in the corner of your yard as far from the stream bank and flood prone areas as possible.

12. Building away from the edge of the stream allows floodplains to function effectively and will reduce the probability and magnitude of property damage. In addition to providing storage for high flows, floodplains minimize sedimentation, filter pollutants, process organic wastes, moderate temperature fluctuations, and provide habitats for a variety of plants and animals.