



## Trees for Streams Program

Vermont's **Trees for Streams** is a Natural Resource Conservation District led program that provides technical and financial assistance to help Vermonters restore and stabilize riparian habitat around the state.

### What is a Riparian Buffer?

Riparian areas or **buffers** are the grasses, shrubs, and trees that grow along streams and rivers. Common, native species in Vermont include willows, dogwoods, poplars, birches, and evergreens. In natural conditions these plants densely colonize streambanks, controlling erosion and filtering water runoff before it enters streams and rivers.



### What are the benefits for stream bank erosion prevention and flood resiliency?

Streambank erosion is a common occurrence along rivers that lack an adequate riparian buffer. When streambanks erode they change flow patterns, potentially exacerbating and causing further erosion downstream. Vigorous riparian areas have deep root systems that bind soil. They also help re-establish floodplain connectivity, which attenuates flood damage.



### Did you know?

Research shows that stream bank erosion contributes an estimated **18%**, or 365,600 lbs, of the phosphorus entering Lake Champlain every year (LCBP 2018 State of the Lake Report).

### What are the benefits for water quality?

Riparian buffers improve water quality by intercepting sediment, nutrients, and chemicals present in overland runoff. The roots of woody plants bind stream bank soils in place, reducing sediment inputs. They also allow for greater water infiltration than a lawn or poorly vegetated field and the more complex root systems filter out pollutants.

### What are the benefits to fish and wildlife?

Healthy populations of fish and other aquatic life depend on riparian buffers for the food and shade they offer, and the water quality protection they provide. Riparian buffers also provide food, shelter, water, and breeding sites for wildlife, and are important corridors for wildlife movement.

The Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District is always seeking landowners within the District (Chittenden and Washington counties; and the towns of Washington, Williamstown and Orange) who live along rivers or streams and would be interested in having a riparian buffer planted on their property.

*To apply contact us or fill out the form available at*

<http://winooskinrcd.org/work/watershed-stewardship>

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