

# Streamside Trees Are Valuable...

Many people needlessly cut down trees to have a river view. Use selective clearing and pruning practices to have a filtered view while keeping low shrubs and large trees in place.



This

photo by VADCR-DCBLA

Selective clearing allows for a view, protecting a waterway for future use.

## Need Paths?

If you need pathways, clear the minimum necessary to the use. Preserve vegetation. Take advantage of natural features. Try to keep paths at least 75 feet from the water. For water views, clear paths to the water in the least sensitive areas. Use an unpaved, porous surface and wind the path around trees and shrubs minimizing removal. Never remove the complete understory of small trees and shrubs. They provide protection in addition to mature trees.

## What Type of Trees?

Depending on elevation, buffers should be planted with native plants such as silky dogwood, rhododendron, red maple, silky willow, tag alder, black willow, sycamore, ninebark, yellow root, and other native species found along stream corridors.

## How Wide?

For stream buffers, the wider the better. Many localities recommend widths of 50 to 200 feet. Others require a buffer of 100 feet. Any size buffer of trees and shrubs is better than turf grass. Grasses do not have enough root mass to prevent stream bank erosion and do not offer the additional benefits of trees.



Not This

photo by VADCR-DCBLA

Tree removal exposes a waterway to pollution and damage, harming recreational and scenic values.

## Got Cows?

If your farm animals have access to a stream, please contact your local soil and water conservation district for assistance. Programs are available to help pay for fencing, alternative water sources, and tree planting. Keeping farm animals out of streams is better for their health. If farm animals must drink from the stream, a hardened access can minimize damage to streams and rivers.



Farm animals can be a source of sediment pollution and bacteria.



## What You Can Do

- Stop mowing all the way down to the creek
- Maintain a healthy stand of native trees and shrubs along waterways
- Avoid use of pesticides and fertilizers near waterways
- Keep cattle and four-wheelers out of waterways
- Plant areas where bare soil is exposed
- Control erosion when disturbing the soil
- Organize planting projects for shoreline areas

For information go to [www.danriver.org](http://www.danriver.org) or call:

**Virginia Department of Forestry**  
Assistant Director of Water Quality  
(434) 977-6555

**North Carolina Division of Forest Resources**  
(919) 733-2162

**Dan River Basin Association (NC Office)**  
413 Church Street, Suite 401 • Eden, NC 27288-3243  
(336) 627.6270 • [www.danriver.org](http://www.danriver.org)

**Dan River Basin Association (Virginia Office)**  
3300 Kings Mtn Rd • P.O. Box 7 • Collinsville, VA 24078  
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## STREAMSIDE TREES

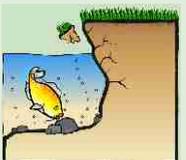
*Like Money in the Bank*

*protect drinking water, wildlife habitat and property values*



*Trees are nature's free water filters, shock absorbers and sponges!*

*Turf grass is a poor buffer*



# Rivers are the lifeblood of the Dan River region.

## Streamside forests are the lifeblood of our rivers...

Our rivers provide essential water for drinking, fishing, floating and industrial use. The **Dan River** and its tributaries such as the **Smith, Mayo, Banister, Sandy and Hyco Rivers** are economic engines — and the very reason many of our communities exist today.

While our region is blessed with rivers and abundant forest cover, water quality studies show that many miles of local rivers and small streams need to be protected against pollution, sediment, and degradation. A cost effective solution lies right along the shorelines.

**Maintaining a stand of trees along rivers and streams - even backyard creeks - is the single most important thing we can do to protect our drinking water supplies.**

Trees and woody shrubs growing on the land next to rivers and streams:

- Buffer waterways against pollution and damage
- Act as natural water filters, shock absorbers and sponges
- Provide habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals
- Improve air quality
- Reduce noise
- Provide a wind break to improve crop yield
- Prevent erosion
- Protect property values and groundwater supplies

If you are fortunate enough to own property along a stream, please protect your investment and maintain a healthy stand of trees and shrubs along the banks. Healthy streamside forests are like money in the bank!

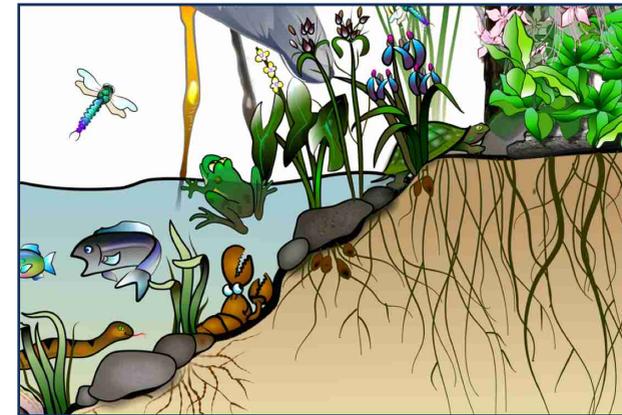


**Lack of trees results in damage to the stream bank and river.**

### **Trees Reduce Flood Damage and Protect Drinking Water Supplies**

Also referred to as “riparian buffers,” streamside trees and shrubs are nature’s insurance policy. Roots of woody vegetation help to “cement” the soil to help prevent erosion and absorb and filter water to minimize damage from flooding.

Trees stabilize water supplies and reduce water treatment costs. They filter pollutants and help protect ground water supplies for wells. By helping to prevent erosion, trees reduce sediment in the river. Sediment clouds the water, transports pathogens and pollutants, and makes municipal treatment for drinking water more difficult and expensive.

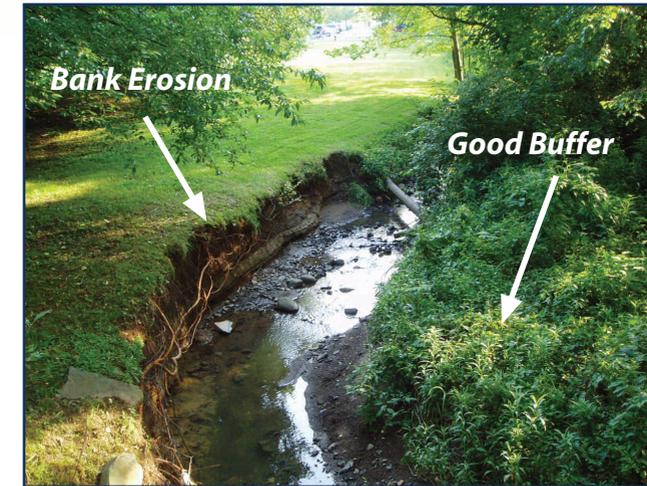


### **Better Fishing, Wildlife and Recreation**

Stream buffers are essential to good wildlife habitat and productive fisheries. Streamside forests:

- Provide food and habitat for creatures at the bottom of the food chain
- Prevent soil from washing downriver where it can smother fish eggs
- Keep rivers cool for trout and other species of fish
- Provide travel corridors for wildlife
- Improve recreational value of rivers

In addition to fishing, rivers can be used for boating, tubing, swimming, hiking, picnicking, hunting, wildlife watching or photography. Wooded river corridors with carefully designed access to the water can help make a community an attractive place in which to live, work and play.



### **Small Streams Need Protection**

Small streams are the heart and soul of a river system, and they make up about 75% or more of the stream miles in a river basin. Small streams have a critical impact on the health of downstream rivers and lakes, fisheries, as well as on surface and ground water supplies.

Small streams should not be piped or straightened, and stream banks need to be protected by a wide swath of trees and shrubs. It goes without saying that wetlands and floodplains are part of the stream system, and they must be protected, too.



**Not this buffer: Be sure to preserve low-growing plants and shrubs**

