

R I V E R

B A N K S &

B U F F E R S

No. 9



# Riparian Buffer Field Assessment

in Northern New Jersey Watersheds

OWNER \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS or FIELD NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREAM NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Approx. Width Of Existing Buffer \_\_\_\_\_ Stream Order \_\_\_\_\_

### General Land Use:

- Forest
- Agricultural (crop \_\_\_\_\_, grazing, pasture, fallow)
- Residential (low intensity, high intensity?)
- Commercial/industrial
- Recreational
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### PURPOSE OF RIPARIAN BUFFER (check all that apply):

- intercept sediment
- intercept pesticides
- lower water temperature along trout streams
- improve fish habitat (warmwater or coldwater fishery?)
- aesthetics
- intercept nutrients/fertilizers
- intercept other pollutants
- help stabilize streambank
- improve wildlife habitat (species of interest \_\_\_\_\_)
- privacy

### STREAMBANK CONDITION

- frequent water level changes? Yes / No
- slope of bank: steep, moderate, slight
- type of soil: clay / gravel / gravelly loam / loam / shale
- active erosion? Slight / moderate / severe  
*NOTE: erosion should be evaluated and addressed first*
- existing plant cover: little-none / moderate / well vegetated
  - type of plant cover \_\_\_\_\_
  - large leaning trees? \_\_\_\_\_
- invasive exotics present? Yes / No Species? \_\_\_\_\_  
approximate area of infestation \_\_\_\_\_
- human access desired? Yes / No Trespassing problems? Yes / No

### TOP OF BANK

- existing plant cover: little-none / moderate / well vegetated  
type of cover: grasses / shrubs / trees \_\_\_\_\_
- invasive exotics present? Yes / No Species? \_\_\_\_\_  
approximate area of infestation \_\_\_\_\_
- soil type \_\_\_\_\_

### ABOVE THE BANK

- active erosion? slight / moderate / severe
- slope: steep / moderate / slight
- does the land slope toward or away from the water?
  - does it direct runoff toward buffer? \_\_\_\_\_
  - sheet flow / concentrated channel flow
- existing plant cover: little-none / moderate / well vegetated
  - type of cover: grasses / shrubs / trees
- plant cover on adjacent land
  - little-none / moderate / well vegetated
  - type of cover: grasses / shrubs / trees
- invasive exotics present? Yes / No Species? \_\_\_\_\_  
approximate area of infestation \_\_\_\_\_
- nuisance wildlife present? Yes / No Species? \_\_\_\_\_
- diverse wildlife present? Yes / No Species? \_\_\_\_\_
  - food plants present: Yes / No
  - cover plants present: Yes / No

Sketch an overhead view of the property here. Include streambank, buffers on adjacent property, location of any existing buffer, and location of fields, structures, other land uses. Show north and direction of stream flow.

Sketch a side view that includes the water surface and any slopes in the drainage area.

## WATER QUALITY

- color: clear / slightly turbid / very turbid
- temperature \_\_\_\_\_

## TYPE AND QUANTITY OF POTENTIAL POLLUTANTS FROM DRAINAGE AREA

(check all those that apply)

- lawns, landscaped areas or gardens where fertilizers and pesticides are used
- land intensively cropped with exposed soil at certain times of the year
- commercial fertilizer
  - manure
  - lime
  - pesticides
  - fertilizers
- grazing animals use the drainage area
  - grazing animals have access to the stream. They are allowed free access / restricted access.
- parking lots and roads are sending runoff into the stream
- steep slopes drain down to the stream
- sensitive fisheries present
- plant or animal species of concern present
- stream/river is used for swimming or boating
- stream/river is a source of drinking water
- a well is located near the stream/river
- construction is underway or planned in the drainage area. This is for uses with
  - low impact potential (parks, low density residential)
  - high impact potential (urban/commercial development)

## LANDOWNER'S PRIORITIES

- control erosion
- control human access
- restrict access by grazing animals
- control invasive exotics
- plant or encourage streambank buffer vegetation
- plant or encourage buffer vegetation at topof bank
- provide shade to stream (for streams 75' wide or less)
- remove large leaning tree(s) from soft riverbank if they threaten to pull bank material into the water (leave root system intact)
- grade to change channelized flow to sheet flow
- redirect drainage
- install stormwater management system
- connect with adjacent habitat
- aesthetics

## SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE

A professional can help you ask and answer questions about your land, choose and locate plant material, prepare a design, and look into possible sources of financial assistance. See the fact sheet on **Sources of Assistance**.

### Fact sheets in the series *Riparian Buffers for Northern New Jersey*

- No. 1 Introduction to Riparian Buffers
- No. 2 Backyard Buffers
- No. 3 Forestland Buffers
- No. 4 Buffers for Habitat
- No. 5 Buffers for Agricultural Land
- No. 6 Urban Buffers
- No. 7 Guidance for Communities
- No. 8 Planting Riparian Buffers (& plant list)
- No. 9 Field Assessment
- No. 10 Sources of Assistance



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