

What are Riparian Buffers?

Riparian buffers are upland areas adjacent to streams, lakes, wetlands or other surface water. Leaving a natural, undisturbed strip of land along water bodies provides a transition zone between the surface water and the human land use upstream. This transition zone is called a riparian buffer, or more simply, a buffer.

Buffers along rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands provide for diffuse of stormwater runoff, maintain bank stability, and remove nitrogen, phosphorous, and other pollutants from stormwater before it reaches our waterways. Stream buffers are also complex ecosystems that provide habitat and improve the health of the wildlife they shelter, as well as open space for people to enjoy. For riparian buffers to be most beneficial, they must remain undisturbed in their natural state.

A healthy buffer of native vegetation is one of the most effective ways to protect our water resources.

