

What is watershed stewardship?

The conservation and protection of soil, water, and natural resources within a watershed.

What can FARMERS do to be a better steward of their watershed?

Here's a list of watershed conservation practices:

CONSERVATION BUFFERS

- Riparian Buffers
- Filter Strips
- Grassed Waterways
- Stream Bank Fencing

WILDLIFE HABITAT

- Wetland Enhancement
- Border Cutting
- Food Plots
- Warm Season Grasses
- Stream Bank Fencing

AGRICULTURAL BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMP'S)

- Contour Strip Cropping
- Spring Developments
- Manure Storages
- Nutrient Management Plan
- Heavy Use Area Protection
- Roof Runoff Management
- Barnyard Stabilization

What can you do to protect your stream and streamside property?

Tips for creating a STREAMSIDE BUFFER (also called a RIPARIAN BUFFER):

- Begin with a “no mow” or “no graze” zone along your stream banks. Make yours as wide as possible. An ideal buffer is 35-75 feet wide.
- Plant trees and shrubs in your buffer zone.
- Select native Pennsylvania grasses, trees, and shrubs. They’re easy to maintain and they attract wildlife.
- Where you do keep a lawn, set your mower blades at least three inches high. Taller grass slows runoff, resists drought, and needs less fertilizer.

Tips for STABILIZING your stream bank:

- Limit the use of lawns along streams. The shallow roots of lawn grasses offer little protection against erosion. Never mow right to the edge of the stream.
- Use land management practices that protect stream-side vegetation.
- Make sure you (and your consultant) fully understand the problem before fixing it.
- Work with your neighbors to manage the land along the ENTIRE length of the stream.
- Avoid or minimize channel narrowing and straightening.
- Contact your regional Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) office before you alter a stream bank. Permits are likely to be required.

Tips to prevent SEDIMENT:

- Use hay bales or a special silt fence to prevent soil from washing off construction site.
- Cover piles of soil with tarps to protect them from rain.
- Never store loose soil near a stream.
- Use good farm practices like no-till cropping and planting winter cover crops to conserve soil.
- Contact your local DEP office or county conservation district if you see soil runoff from a construction site.

Tips for reducing POLLUTION:

- Don’t fertilize plants near streams and limit your overall use of pesticides and herbicides.
- Compost yard waste. Don’t bag lawn trimmings; leave them in place for effective recycling of nutrients.
- Don’t store or dump manure, garden waste, or grass clippings near streams.
- Don’t burn refuse near stream banks.
- Store firewood, trash, and other materials well away from streams.
- Never dump trash or chemicals into streams, storm drains, or sewers.