

# Riparian Stream Buffers

## What?

A riparian buffer is an area along a stream that remains wooded and vegetated.

## Why?

Riparian buffers are essential in limiting stormwater pollution and nutrients that enter streams and go downstream. Streams without riparian buffers are more likely to experience erosion and degraded water quality.

## When?

The City passed a riparian buffer protection ordinance in fall of 2010 that established riparian buffers on streams that are shown on the USGS Quadmap and NRCS soil survey maps. A map of the affected streams and the ordinance can both be viewed at the City Planning Department.



## Exemptions

A grandfather clause exists in the riparian buffer protection ordinance that allows existing uses to continue as long as the use is present and ongoing within the riparian buffer as of the implementation date of the ordinance.

However if these uses change then the buffer ordinance applies. If you have a question about existing or new uses of the buffer, please contact the City Planning Department.

## Two Different Buffer Zones

- Zone 1 – An undisturbed or natural area that is 30' wide and runs parallel to the stream. Trees and vegetation located in this zone are not allowed to be cut or removed without approval from the City. In addition, buildings, parking lots, driveways, or other impervious surfaces (surfaces that water cannot penetrate) are prohibited in Zone 1.
- Zone 2 – A 20' wide strip that is adjacent to Zone 1 but with a few more maintenance allowances. For example, Zone 2 allows lawns to be maintained and trees to be removed. However, similar to Zone 1, buildings, parking lots, driveways, or other impervious surfaces are prohibited in Zone 2.

## What do Riparian Buffers Do?

Stream Buffers are an essential part of a healthy ecosystem. They provide many benefits including:

- Improved Water Quality.
- Reducing Stream Bank Erosion.
- Limiting Flooding Impacts.
- Provide Habitat for Animals & Aquatic Insects.
- Controlling Water Temperature for Streams.
- Limiting Nutrient Runoff.

## Questions?

Contact City Planning Department at  
(336) 570-6705.