

## RIPARIAN BUFFERS HOW DO THEY WORK?

The trees, shrubs, and grasses in riparian buffers each play an important role protecting our beautiful rivers and streams and the living creatures that rely on them.

The deeper roots of trees and shrubs hold the soil and stabilize the banks. This:

- reduces soil erosion and sedimentation in high water events, improving water quality
- reduces flood damage, as the water level rises the vegetation slows the water's velocity

The grasses and leaf litter slow the velocity of water entering the stream. This:

- reduces flooding, more water is absorbed into the soil
- removes pollutants and sediment, improving water quality

Riparian buffer vegetation provides critical habitat for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. See back for more information.

### RIPARIAN BUFFER WEBSITES:

The Connecticut River Joint Commissions:  
[www.crjc.org/riparianbuffers.htm](http://www.crjc.org/riparianbuffers.htm)

Vermont Community Wildlife Program:  
[www.vtfishandwildlife.com/cwp\\_elem\\_comm\\_rh.cfm](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/cwp_elem_comm_rh.cfm)

## RIPARIAN BUFFERS WILDLIFE HABITAT

Many people are aware of the value of our large rivers for their scenic beauty, their recreational opportunities, and their wildlife habitat. However, our year-round and smaller streams that run only part of the year are also valuable for fish and wildlife. Riparian buffers provide vital habitat along both large rivers and smaller streams. Trees growing along the water's edge shade and cool the water, improving fish habitat. Streamside riparian areas contain a rich mixture of plants and animals, provide shelter and food for insects and fish, which in turn provide food for mammals and birds. Many familiar mammals inhabit the wooded land adjacent to rivers and streams. Riparian buffers also provide protective travel corridors for animals moving from drier upland areas to richer riverside bottomlands.

### RIPARIAN MAMMALS:

- Mink
- Black bear
- Beaver
- Muskrat
- Raccoon
- Deer
- River otter

TO PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS,  
THE TOWN OF HARTFORD HAS  
ESTABLISHED RIPARIAN BUFFER  
ZONES OF 25 FEET FOR OUR STREAMS  
AND 100 FEET FOR OUR RIVERS.

*A PDF of this brochure can be downloaded from the following site:*

*<http://www.hartford-vt.org/content/conservation/>*

## CONSERVATION NOTES RIPARIAN BUFFERS



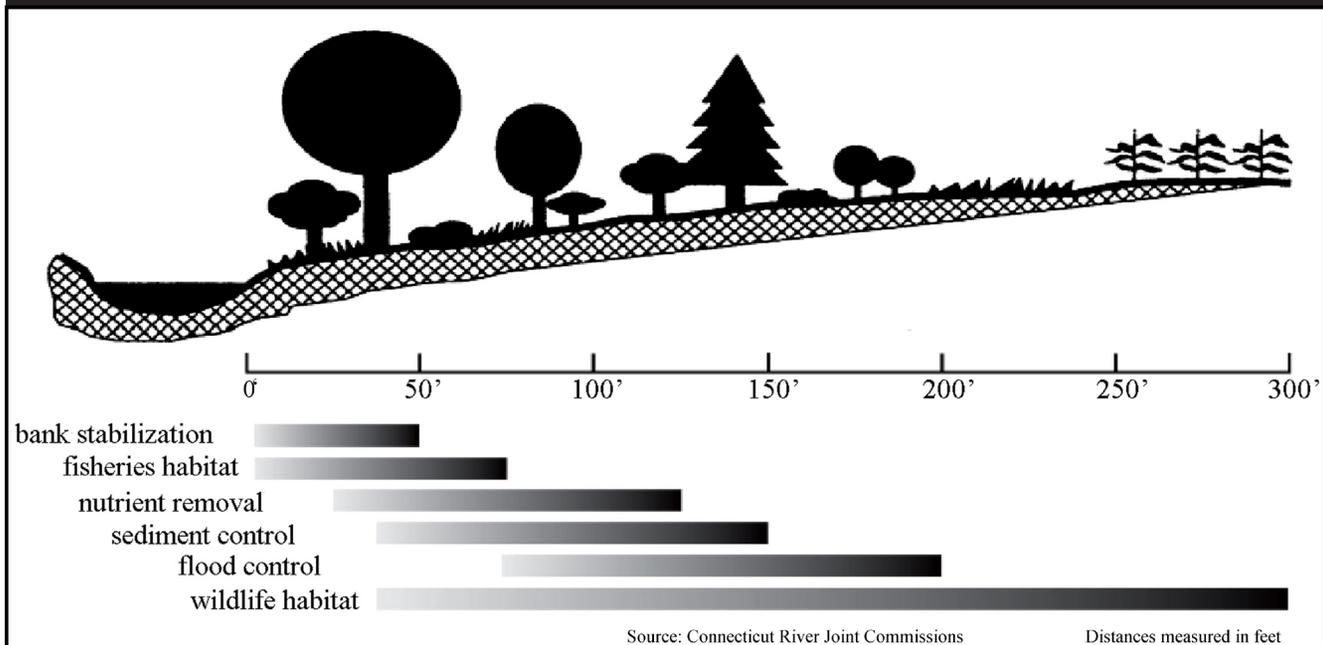
PHOTO: U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

### WHAT IS A RIPARIAN BUFFER?

**A riparian buffer is an area of trees, shrubs and grasses along rivers and streams. It protects water quality, reduces property loss, and preserves wildlife habitat.**

HARTFORD  
CONSERVATION  
COMMISSION

## WIDER RIPARIAN BUFFERS PROVIDE...



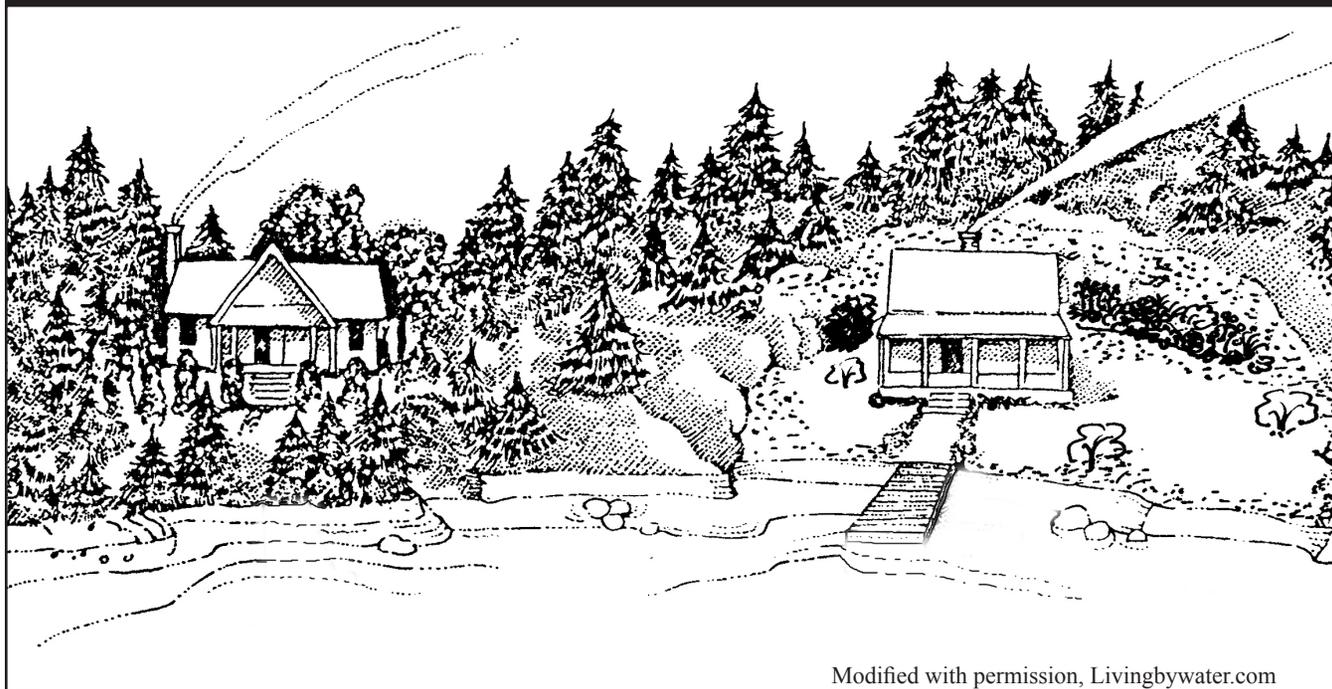
## THINGS WE CAN DO TO PROTECT OUR RIVERS AND STREAMS:

- Leave existing riparian vegetation in place
- Create/enhance riparian buffers by planting native trees and shrubs
- Keep livestock fenced out of waterways and away from the riparian buffer
- Keep piles of manure, salt, soil, and fertilizers away from the riparian buffer
- Avoid using heavy equipment in the riparian buffer

## ...BENEFITS FOR ALL

### BENEFITS:

- Natural shoreline provides wildlife habitat
- Narrow footpath to water cause less chance of erosion
- Low maintenance native plants provide riparian buffer
- Trees keep the water cool with view maintained
- No docks allow natural water flow



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### THINGS TO AVOID:

- Bare shoreline increases runoff and erosion
- Paved paths increase runoff pollution
- Removal of natural vegetation eliminates pollution filter and shade
- Permanent docks alter natural water flow and cause erosion elsewhere