

STREAM CORRIDOR PROTECTION

Retain and incorporate natural vegetation as buffers between developed or farmed areas and rivers, streams and creeks.

At the Water's Edge

The link between land and water is a critical zone for natural development and human history, as well as the future health of our waterways. Directly adjacent to the water, this zone has a saturated water table close to the surface and sometimes becomes subject to floods. Often these streamside borders contain the highest diversity of wildlife. They have been referred to as “nature’s condominiums.”

Streamside plants and forests are crucial to the protection and enhancement of water quality. Many stream corridors have been cleared of vegetation through agricultural and developmental practices. This has compromised wildlife habitats, and led to increased pollution and flooding downstream. Since most streams flow through private property, corrective measures are dependent upon effective education of, and participation by, property owners.



10 Benefits of Streamside Protection

1. Percolation and groundwater recharge is improved.
2. Sediment is reduced.
3. Excess nutrients and chemical pollutants are filtered.
4. Stream bank erosion is reduced.
5. Nutrients become available for desired plant growth.
6. Flooding is moderated.
7. Water temperatures are lowered for habitat improvement.
8. Woody and leaf debris contribute to aquatic habitat.
9. More visual diversity and beauty.
10. Better habitat and safe corridors for animals.

Wooded buffer areas provide multiple benefits.

How to Care for Stream Corridors

Municipalities have significant capacities to protect stream corridors. Zoning can include minimum stream setback requirements. Many communities require that sensitive lands be subtracted in lot yield calculations. Federal floodplain regulations and state and local wetland protection measures can prevent ill advised development in, and adjacent to, wetlands (state-regulated wetlands require a 100-foot buffer setback). Conservation subdivisions (See A1) can be designed to protect water and wildlife resources. By identifying prime wildlife corridors (See D1), towns can add another dimension to their protection strategies. The Dutchess County Soil and Water Conservation District provides technical expertise and has access to funding sources. Local Conservation Advisory Commissions and the Environmental Management Council are also excellent sources for inventory work and implementation plans.