

4-H Riparian BUFFers Project Developed Combining Youth Learning and Community Service

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LIVING LABORATORIES

- Riparian buffers can serve as ideal sites for youth to "Learn By Doing" - the 4-H slogan
- The 4-H Riparian BUFFers project provides educational opportunities and hands-on experiences that help youth learn about the importance of healthy riparian buffers and how to restore impaired buffers
- Youth are also encouraged to adopt a recently restored buffer and participate in community service by helping to maintain it



LOOKING AT BUFFERS

- Youth learn how to identify healthy and unhealthy riparian buffers

Signs of a Healthy Riparian Buffer:

- Vegetation is lush growing all along the stream banks
- No bare soil exposed in and around the stream
- Stream banks smooth, sloping and gradual
- Trees and shrubs abundant within 100 feet of the stream banks



Photo Credit: Susquehanna County Cooperative Extension

Signs of an Unhealthy Riparian Buffer:

- Lawn mowed up to the edge of the stream
- Bare soil exposed in and around the stream
- Stream banks sharp & high with undercut erosion
- Trees and shrubs absent within 100 feet of the stream banks



Photo Credit: Pennsylvania State University Extension

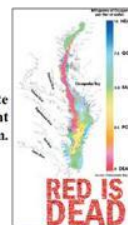
BUFFERS ARE IMPORTANT

Youth learn the importance of Riparian Buffers and the effects of unhealthy buffers



Prevention of flash flooding & stream bank erosion

Reduction of contaminants that accumulate and cause serious harm to important resources downstream.



Filtering of sunlight which prevents unwanted forms of algae

Production of sufficient food and shelter in order for aquatic animals to survive



BUFFER MAINTENANCE = YOUTH EXPERIENCE

Most federal programs that fund the restoration of riparian buffers require several years of maintenance.

- Some landowners find it difficult to fulfil these requirements on their own
- Youth can serve as a great asset in helping to complete these maintenance tasks.
- Few youth-oriented materials provide education about riparian buffers as well as their maintenance.

RESTORED BUFFERS NEED HELP

Youth Learn the ways that they can help to maintain a recently restored riparian buffer

- Invasive Species Identification & Removal
- Tree Shelter Check-ups
- Photo Logs of Buffer Site Progress
- General Site Clean-up & Maintenance

EXTENDING THE EXPERIENCE

Youth share the importance of buffers and buffer maintenance with others or explore how to be further involved

- Classroom Reports
- School Awareness Campaigns
- Public Presentations
- Community Displays
- Landowner Interviews
- Career Investigation
- Photo Journals
- Educational Websites



WIN-WIN PROJECT

- Increased knowledge of watershed protection
- A sense of ownership in the effort to protect their local watershed
- The opportunity for more landowners to participate in stream side restoration programs
- Cleaner water and improved wildlife habitat



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