

# Conservation Programs & Practices for: *Stream and Riparian Corridor* Fish and Wildlife Habitat

## Species of Benefit

Stream and riparian corridors support aquatic and riparian species such as:

- Brook trout
- Freshwater mussels
- Neotropical migratory birds such as wood thrush and Kentucky warblers
- Hickory and American shad
- American eel

The purpose of habitat restoration and management is to maintain or re-establish the attractiveness and productivity of healthy wildlife systems. Effective wildlife management can add value to outdoor recreational activities and the aesthetics of your property, as well as ecological importance. Though no one acre or one area can be all things to all wildlife, through careful planning and discussion we can make the best management choices for species with declining populations.



Stream restoration can stabilize banks and reduce erosion while providing passage and habitat for fish.



In Maryland, there are nearly 100 streams that provide habitat for native, self-supporting, populations of brook trout.

Stream corridors, including streams, their floodplains and riparian buffers offer many benefits to wildlife. Rich soils, abundant moisture, and regular inputs of nutrients and biological materials result in a complex natural community. The loss of streams and native riparian vegetation can result in a loss of habitat for many species of animals, both on land and in the stream itself.

In-stream habitat can promote fish migration and spawning and provide shelter. Riparian habitat provides travel corridors for safe movement between habitat types and promote the dispersal of wildlife populations. Riparian areas also serve as breeding habitat for migratory birds.

NRCS offers technical and financial assistance to farmers to restore and manage stream and riparian corridor habitat in Maryland through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

## What will EQIP pay for?

EQIP provides payments to restore and manage stream and riparian corridor habitat through activities such as:

- Stabilize stream head-cutting and erosion using techniques that facilitate natural stream processes.
- Exclude livestock from riparian areas and provide shading on cool water streams.
- Restore floodplains by establishing permanent vegetation and re-establishing hydrologic connections to streams.
- Improve or provide passage for fish and other aquatic organisms through blockage removal or obstruction mitigation.
- Removal and control of invasive species to maintain or facilitate establishment of native vegetative communities.

## Restoration Requirements

- Only native plants shall be used.
- Riparian buffers must be installed as part of a total management plan, and be 35 feet wide or more.
- Areas established may augment existing suitable habitat areas to meet the minimum.
- Mowing may be used when necessary to control woody vegetation.
- Mowing and management activities should be conducted on not more than 1/2 of the herbaceous area in any one year.
- Mowing and management activities should be deferred as late as possible into the winter, but conducted no earlier than after the end of the primary nesting season (August 15).
- Streambank and shoreline protection and similar practices are not eligible to address shoreline erosion where erosion is driven by tides, winds, or fetch, except when the problem can be treated by use of vegetation, erosion matting, and grading.

# NRCS Conservation Programs for Stream and Riparian Corridor Habitat

## About NRCS

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with farmers, ranchers, and partners to ensure a sustainable, nutritious and abundant food supply, as well as ensure clean water and healthy soil for generations to come.

For over 75 years, NRCS has provided agricultural producers and private landowners with locally-led assistance to help them implement voluntary conservation practices that protect our state's natural resources while maintaining production and economic opportunities.

Contact your local NRCS service center for more information and assistance.

Allegany: 301-777-1494  
 Anne Arundel: 410-571-6757  
 Baltimore County: 410-527-5920  
 Calvert: 410-535-1521  
 Caroline: 410-479-1202  
 Carroll: 410-848-6696  
 Cecil: 410-398-4411  
 Charles: 301-934-9588  
 Dorchester: 410-228-5640  
 Frederick: 301-695-2803  
 Garrett: 301-334-6950  
 Harford: 410-838-6181  
 Howard: 410-489-7987  
 Kent: 410-778-5353  
 Montgomery: 301-590-2855  
 Prince George's: 301-574-5162  
 Queen Anne's: 410-758-1671  
 St. Mary's: 301-475-8402  
 Somerset: 410-651-0370  
 Talbot: 410-822-1577  
 Washington: 301-797-0500  
 Wicomico: 410-546-4777  
 Worcester: 410-632-5439

*Helping People Help the Land*

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP helps promote farm and forest production by enhancing the environmental quality of soil, water, air, plants and animals.

Farmers can apply for financial and technical assistance for over 100 conservation practices to benefit their land and operations through EQIP.

## Conservation Practices for Stream and Riparian Corridor Habitat Restoration and Management\*

Conservation Practice:	Purpose:
Access Control	Restrict or control livestock access to wildlife habitat
Aquatic Organism Passage	Remove or replace structures that inhibit passage of fish and other aquatic species
Brush Management/ Herbaceous Weed Control	Remove woody species, or invasive or undesirable herbaceous species, using herbicides, mechanical methods, or grazing animals
Fence	Exclusion of livestock from streams and riparian areas
Field Border	Establish areas of grasses, forbs, and shrubs along field edges
Filter Strip	Provide a herbaceous buffer upslope of riparian areas and streams
Grade Stabilization Structure	Control stream head-cutting and incision
Prescribed Grazing	Maintain early successional habitat using grazing animals
Riparian Forest Buffer/ Herbaceous Cover	Protect stream water quality and provide stream and wildlife forested or herbaceous cover
Spring Development	Provide an alternative watering facility for livestock
Stream Crossing	When necessary to provide a stable crossing for livestock
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	Restore biological and physical characteristics of a stream and its floodplain. Enhance stream quality by filtering nutrients, providing shade for trout, and contribute woody debris and organic matter that is important to stream habitat.
Streambank and Shoreline Protection	Stabilize streambanks using vegetative, bioengineering, or structural methods, or stabilize shorelines using vegetative methods
Upland or Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	Install and maintain wildlife structures or control herbaceous or woody species that require successive yearly treatments
Watering Facility/Well	When necessary to provide an alternative watering facility for livestock
Wetland Restoration	Restoration of a floodplain that has been degraded by filling, ditching, land-leveling, or levee construction

\*More practices may be available. Visit your local NRCS service center to learn more.