

(391) Riparian Forest Buffer

FY 2017 Environmental Quality Incentives Program Requirement Sheet

A site- and species-specific wildlife habitat management plan is preferred for all EQIP applications. If no such plan has been approved by the NRCS area biologist or NRCS partner biologist, the conservation planners must follow this requirement sheet to address limiting habitat factors identified in the TN NRCS Wildlife Habitat Appraisal Guide (WHAG).

Eligible lands: Private agricultural land and private nonindustrial forestland where there is an insufficient riparian forest buffer to protect streams and/or waterbodies from surface runoff. Additionally, this practice must be applied immediately adjacent to streams having perennial flow, seasonal streams, sinkholes, karst areas, other ground water recharge areas, wetlands, ponds, and lakes.

EQIP Riparian Forest Buffer Practice Requirements:

1. **Soil test required for all permanent herbaceous plants.** (University of Tennessee or any certified NAPTP Lab). Areas of contrasting soils, problem spots or portions of fields significantly different should be sampled separately, provided the area can be fertilized separately. Examples: bottomland and upland. See University of Tennessee publication PB 1061 ([UT PB1061](#)) for soil sampling information.
 - a. **For NWSG mixtures**, if pH is 5.0 or higher apply no lime; if lower apply 2 tons per acre. Do not apply fertilizer at planting.
 - b. **For shrubs or temporary cover (unless legumes are used)**, apply no lime or fertilizer.
2. Do not graze or hay planted areas for the practice life.
3. Use herbicides in accordance with the label. Tame grasses are required to be chemically eradicated prior to establishment of the field border. Tame grasses include any prostrate or sod-forming grasses including such species as tall fescue and Bermudagrass. NRCS will not provide herbicide recommendations.
4. The following applies for fields with existing wooded buffer between the water body and field:
 - If the existing wooded stream buffer is 30 percent or more of the geomorphic floodplain, or a minimum of 150 feet (average width), financial assistance is **NOT AUTHORIZED**.
 - If the existing wooded stream buffer is less than 30 percent of the geomorphic floodplain, financial assistance **IS AUTHORIZED** to extend the existing wooded buffer up to 30 percent of the geomorphic floodplain, or a maximum of 150 feet (average width), whichever is less.
 - If the water body or sensitive area has an existing wooded buffer of 150 feet or wider, financial assistance is **NOT AUTHORIZED**. Financial assistance for extending an existing buffer to 150 feet **IS AUTHORIZED**.
5. Riparian forest buffers on streams must be a minimum of 35 feet, or wider than a maximum of 150 feet (average width). These widths refer to only one side of a stream. For water bodies or sensitive areas, the minimum average width is 35 feet, up to a maximum 150 feet.
6. The riparian forest buffer may consist of all three zones. Zones 1 and 2 are required and, combined, must be at least 35 feet wide. Zone 3 is optional according to the standard. Zone three must be established to a native warm or cool season grass/forb mix.
7. At least three (3) species of trees and/or shrubs shall be established, with at least one species from the red oak family and one from the white oak family. Rows may contain the same species but shall not exceed a maximum of one consecutive row of the same species. To achieve optimum interspersion, plant at least 2 species per row alternating species within the row.
8. Natural regeneration of herbaceous vegetation in Zone three is an acceptable cover on capability classes I and II soils, and only tame grass or weed eradication and temporary cover, if needed, is eligible for financial assistance.
9. **Forgone income is only applicable on cropland acres enrolled.**

Reference: BIOLOGY TECHNICAL NOTE NO. TN-6. Riparian Zone Plant Selection. TN-NRCS

Follow FY 2017 Approved Seeding Mixtures document for species selection, rates, and mixtures. NRCS area biologist or NRCS partner biologist may approve alternative species, rates, and mixtures.