

Protecting Riparian Areas

Streamside forests are crucial for the protection and enhancement of water resources in Rhode Island. One of the key tools for preserving water quality in a watershed is by protecting key riparian areas from development.



Greenspace protection projects, like those in the South County and Woonasquatucket watersheds, identify and map the natural assets in a watershed and develop a comprehensive plan to protect these resources.

A number of options may be employed including purchase of development rights, using creative land use techniques to preserve meaningful open space, and the purchase of critical parcels. The ultimate goal is to use the planning process to protect the natural, cultural and recreational resources within a watershed.



OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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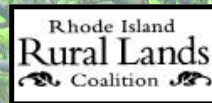
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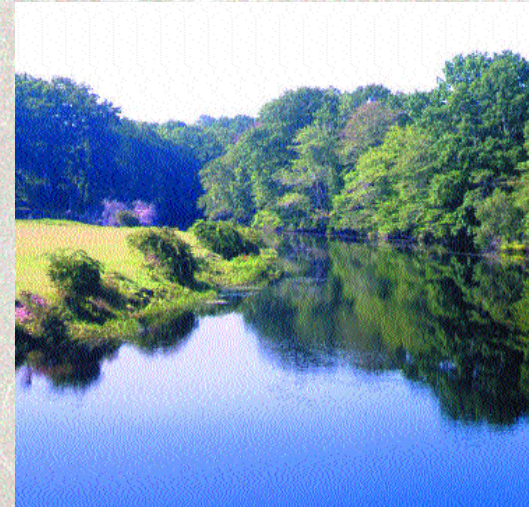
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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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www.riwatersheds.com



Riparian Buffers & Healthy Watersheds



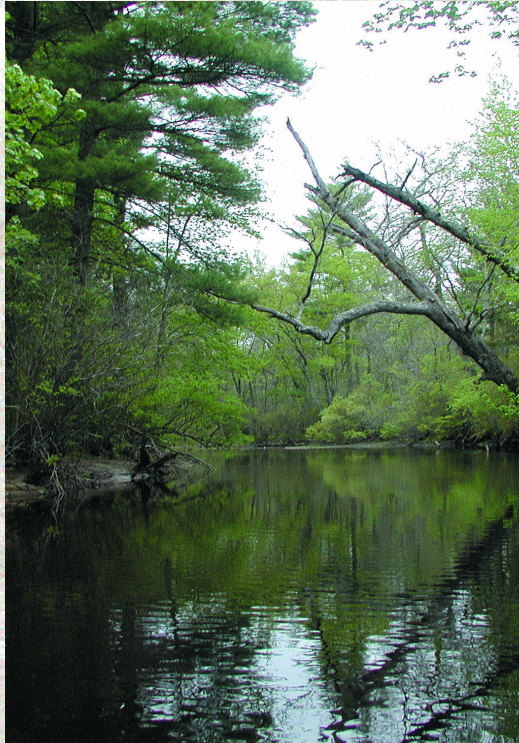
Recognizing the Vital Role that Forests Play in Protecting Water Quality

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Programs and activities are available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or national origin.

From Providence's Waterfire to South County's wealth of beautiful lakes and rivers, Rhode Island's watersheds make the state a great place for residents and visitors alike.



The state's economy and its environmental resources, as well as our quality of life, are dependent on the health of our watersheds. Whether it be for transportation, recreation, aesthetics, wildlife habitat, drinking water, or food, the protection of water resources is critical.

A riparian forest buffer is an area of trees, shrubs, and other vegetation located adjacent to rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands.



These areas are important for protecting water quality and reducing flooding.

Paved streets and parking lots, agricultural practices, urbanization, automobiles, lawns, and industrial operations, all contribute to the amount of runoff and harmful pollutants making their way into our surface waters and wetlands.

Riparian forest buffers and forested wetlands act as natural filters to remove sediments and pollutants from water making its way through the watershed. These natural buffers improve overall water quality for drinking, fishing, and recreation.



Values of Forest Buffers



Filter out sediments, nutrients, pesticides, and other pollutants



Provide habitat for plants and animals



Absorb excessive stormwater and reduce streambank erosion



Moderate water temperatures by providing shade



Reduce the need for treatment facilities for drinking water



Enhance aesthetics and provide recreational opportunities



Provide areas to replenish groundwater



Link parcels of open space, providing greenways between communities



Provide opportunities for nature viewing and environmental education