STREAMSIDE FORESTS: THE NATURAL, COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTION TO CLEAN WATER

A simple and cost-effective way to protect and improve the health of our streams — and our drinking water — is to plant trees along the banks.

Photo: David H. Funk

Streamside Forests

STREAMS PROVIDE DRINKING WATER

Streams provide much more than places for recreation, they provide habitat for plants and animals — and the drinking water for many of us.

TREES MAKE HEALTHIER STREAMS

Pennsylvania — or Penn's Woods, as it was called — was almost completely forested for thousands of years. Today many streams no longer have trees growing along their banks. The absence of these streamside forests, combined with population growth, has resulted in declining stream health.

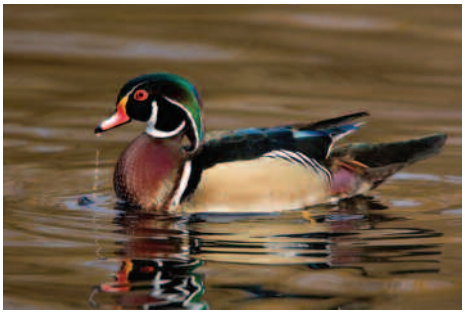
PLANT TREES FOR CLEANER WATER, NATURALLY

Unhealthy streams mean poor water quality, which increases the amount of money we must spend to treat our water supplies. A simple and cost-effective way to protect and improve the quality of our streams — and our drinking water — is to restore trees along the banks.

Streamside Forests = Healthier Wildlife Habitat

Streamside forests are important habitat areas for wildlife. These forests maintain the stream conditions that aquatic animals and plants need to thrive.

Shade from streamside forests keeps water temperatures cool — a necessity for brook trout, the state fish of Pennsylvania.



Streamside forests are important habitat areas for birds like this colorful wood duck.

Tree leaves provide food and habitat for many aquatic animals, such as insects and crustaceans, which in turn provide food for fish.

Photo: David H. Funk

Tree roots stabilize stream banks and reduce erosion. They also create habitat for animals.

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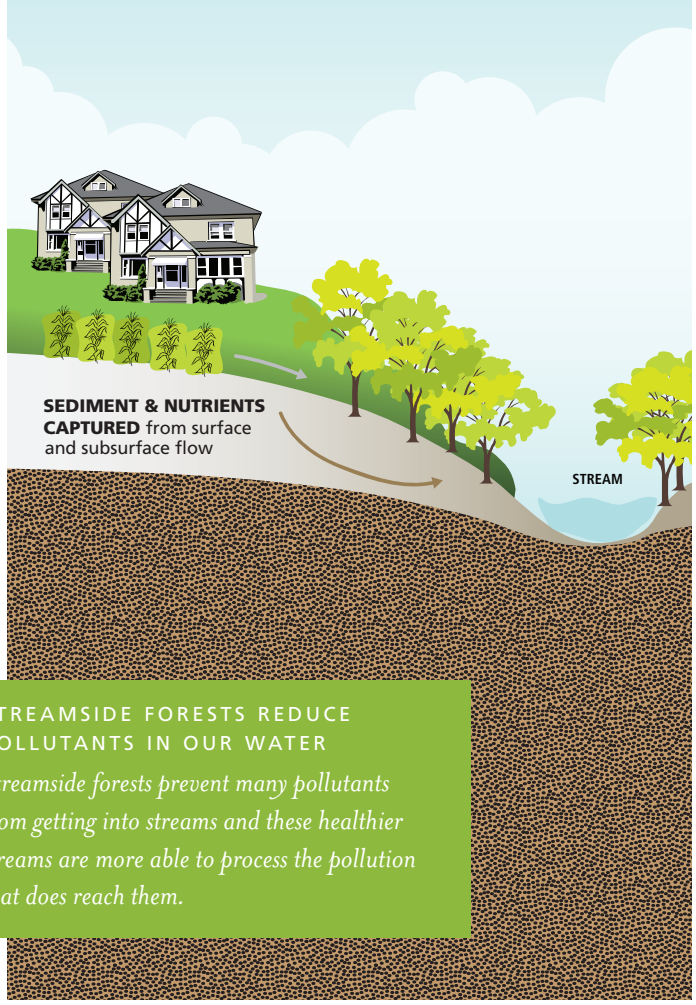
Streamside Forests



STREAMSIDE FORESTS REDUCE POLLUTANTS IN OUR WATER

Streamside forests prevent many pollutants from getting into streams and these healthier streams are more able to process the pollution that does reach them.

TREES REDUCE POLLUTION

Streamside forests prevent sediments and other pollutants from reaching the stream. In addition, because forested streams are healthier, they are more able than deforested streams to process the pollution that does enter them. Healthy, forested streams are full of life, including microscopic organisms that are efficient at breaking down pollutants. Planting trees along streams supports a rich variety of life that can continue to clean our water for us, naturally.

TREES REDUCE FLOODING

Forests function like sponges. Roots from trees and shrubs break up the soil so that rainwater soaks into the ground, rather than running off the surface. This helps reduce flooding and replenish groundwater, another important source of drinking water.

TREES DECREASE DRINKING WATER COSTS

Poor water quality costs taxpayers money. Streamside forests reduce the cost of clean drinking water by reducing the need for chemicals to treat the water.

Streamside Forests = Cleaner, Cheaper Water

A 10% increase in forest cover in a drinking source area results in a 20% decrease in treatment and chemical costs.

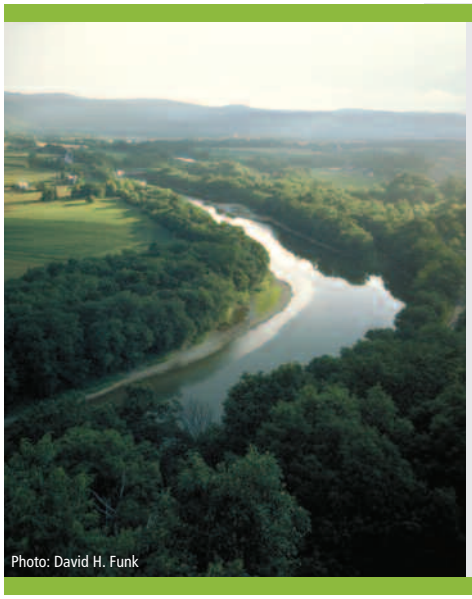


Photo: David H. Funk

TREES SAVE TAXPAYERS MONEY

Source: American Water Works Association, 2004

[1] Cost per million gallons of water.

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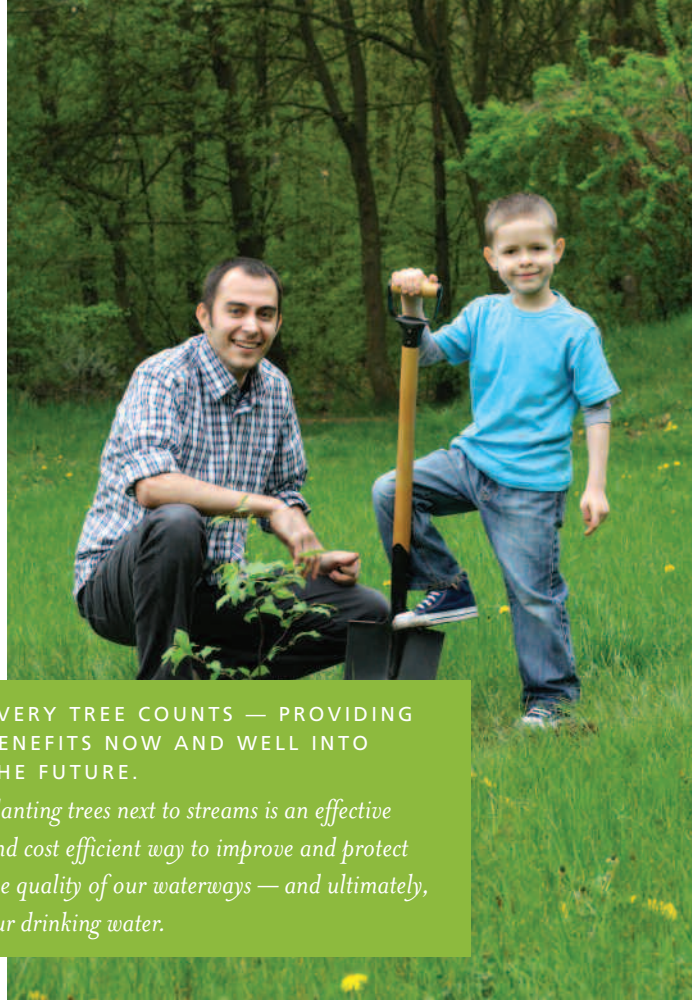

EVERY TREE COUNTS — PROVIDING BENEFITS NOW AND WELL INTO THE FUTURE.

Planting trees next to streams is an effective and cost efficient way to improve and protect the quality of our waterways — and ultimately, our drinking water.

Plant Trees: Become Part of the Solution

START WITH A TREE

Plant trees on your property even if you don't have a stream. Tree roots break up the soil and allow rainwater to infiltrate into the ground, which helps replenish groundwater and reduce flooding.

GO NATIVE

Plant native trees and shrubs. Native plants will thrive in our climate, are easier to care for, and they provide excellent food and habitat for wildlife.

REMEMBER, WIDER IS BETTER

Streamside forests provide a setback — or buffer — between the stream and the adjacent land use. A narrow streamside forest can provide some benefits, such as shade, but wider buffers are necessary to keep streams healthy. Research findings support a 100 foot minimum on both sides of the stream.

Trees provide benefits that last for generations.

Why Streamside Forests?

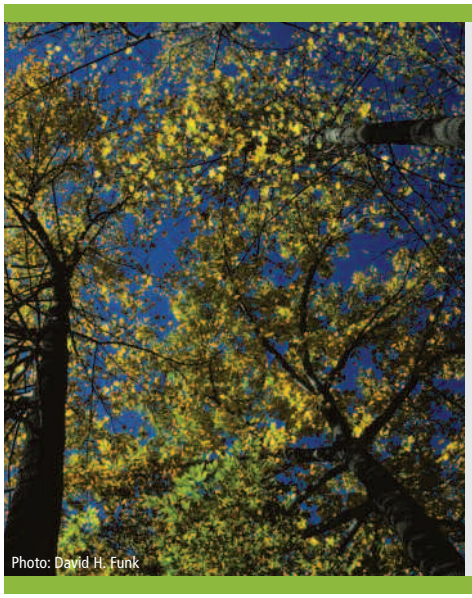

Photo: David H. Funk

SIX REASONS TO PLANT TREES

1. Improve water quality by reducing pollution
2. Lower drinking water treatment costs
3. Replenish groundwater supplies
4. Reduce flooding
5. Provide habitat for wildlife
6. Increase property values

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