

## Streamside Buffer

Often the most effective (and cheapest) way to stabilize a stream is to leave it alone. If erosion problems haven't reached a critical point yet, simply eliminating or limiting the impacts (livestock access, plowing, lawn maintenance, ATV activity, etc.) to a streambank and its surrounding area may allow it to heal itself. By allowing a strip of land along a stream to "go wild", you are giving sensitive seedlings a chance to get established and create root structure in the soil. Planting trees can kick start this process and allow control over the species growing along your creek.

Along with the stabilizing effect on the streambank, streamside trees and vegetation improve water quality. The shade cast on the stream by trees and shrubs keeps water temperatures down, thereby limiting algae growth and maintaining suitable habitat conditions for aquatic life. The vegetation along the stream intercepts and utilizes sediment and nutrients that would otherwise end up in the creek. The natural area created by a streamside buffer provides habitat for wildlife. While a view of the stream can be pretty, a hidden stream is usually healthier and more stable.



