

Job Sheet for

# Riparian Forest Buffer as Wildlife Habitat

(391, 645)

**Purpose:** A riparian forest buffer is an area of trees and shrubs located adjacent to streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands that decrease the amount of surface runoff and pollutants in shallow subsurface water flow and provide food and cover for wildlife. These buffers decrease the amount of water flow and pollutants into larger bodies of water and improve water quality.



### Requirements:

- **Zone 1** is the area that begins at the normal water line or at the edge of the active channel or shore and extends a **minimum of 15 feet**
- Dominant vegetation, whether planted or naturally seeded, should consist of at least two species of native woody plants that are well-suited to the habitat site and intended purpose
- Spacing should be adequate for the greatest amount of growth in the species used
- **Zone 2** is an additional strip of land that begins adjacent to Zone 1 and extend a **minimum** distance of **20 feet**
- The **combined** width of Zones 1 and 2 is **35 to 150 feet**, or 30 percent of the flood plain, whichever is less
  - Note: A third zone (Zone 3) of native herbaceous vegetation may be used adjacent to cropland along with the two zones of woody vegetation to further decrease erosion and runoff and provide additional wildlife habitat
- Protect riparian forest buffer from grazing

### Maintenance:

- Periodic inspection and protection from livestock damage and destructive fire
- Periodic removal of trees where they represent a hazard to streambank stability
- Vegetation shall remain undisturbed except for periodic harvesting of trees to maintain the functioning of the buffer
  - Note: All forest harvesting operations should be in compliance with Georgia's Best Management Practices for Forestry

Riparian Forest Buffers

Suggested Plantings:

- Zone 1 and 2 – water oak, willow oak, and laurel oak at a rate of **100 to 200 trees per acre**
- Zone 3 – on lands adjacent to cropland, native herbaceous plants

Primary Habitat Consideration:

- Natural food and cover for wildlife
- Create travel corridors for all wildlife
- Improve water quality

**Site Specific Comments and Recommendations:**


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