

Stream Habitat Improvement and Management

Virginia Conservation Practice Job Sheet

395



Definition

Maintain, improve or restore physical, chemical and biological functions of a stream, and its associated riparian zone, necessary for meeting the life history requirements of desired aquatic species.

Criteria

Planned stream habitat improvements will:

- Address the aquatic species and life history stages for which the stream is being managed.
- Be based on a site-specific assessment of local hydrology, channel morphology, geomorphic setting, fish and other aquatic species present, riparian and floodplain conditions, and any habitat limitations including water quantity and quality, food supply, and restriction of upstream and downstream movement of aquatic species using the NRCS Stream Visual Assessment Protocol, Version 2 or comparable evaluation tool.

Manage adjoining riparian areas to support a diverse vegetation community suitable for the site conditions and desired ecological benefits.

Design in-stream structures to be compatible with the dynamic nature of streams and rivers, facilitate natural geomorphic recovery when possible, and minimize disruption of recreational and other traditional uses of the stream corridor.

Structures installed for the purposes of this standard will not;

- Impede or prevent passage of fish and other aquatic organisms at any time, unless intended to isolate populations of native species of conservation concern.
- Cause excessive bank erosion.
- Cause unintentional lateral migration.
- Aggradation or degradation of the channel.
- Hinder channel-floodplain interactions.

Where practical, restore or maintain stream habitat and channel forming processes such as natural flow regime, meander migration, sediment transport, recruitment and storage of large wood, and floodplain interactions with the stream.

All stream and riparian activities will occur within state and federal guidelines with regard to timing of spawning, incubation, and rearing of aquatic organisms, and breeding and nesting of terrestrial organisms.

The practice shall be protected from livestock grazing and trampling to the extent necessary to ensure that it will perform the intended purpose(s). Manage livestock to sustain a healthy stream corridor and associated habitats.

NOTE: This summary does not address all requirements and considerations in the VA Stream Habitat Improvement and Mgt Conservation Practice Standard (VA-395). Consult the Conservation Practice Standard for further details.

If needed, an aerial view or a side view of the practice can be shown below. Other relevant information, complementary practices and measures, and additional specifications may be included.

Scale 1"= _____ ft. (NA indicates sketch not to scale: grid size=1/2" by 1/2")

