

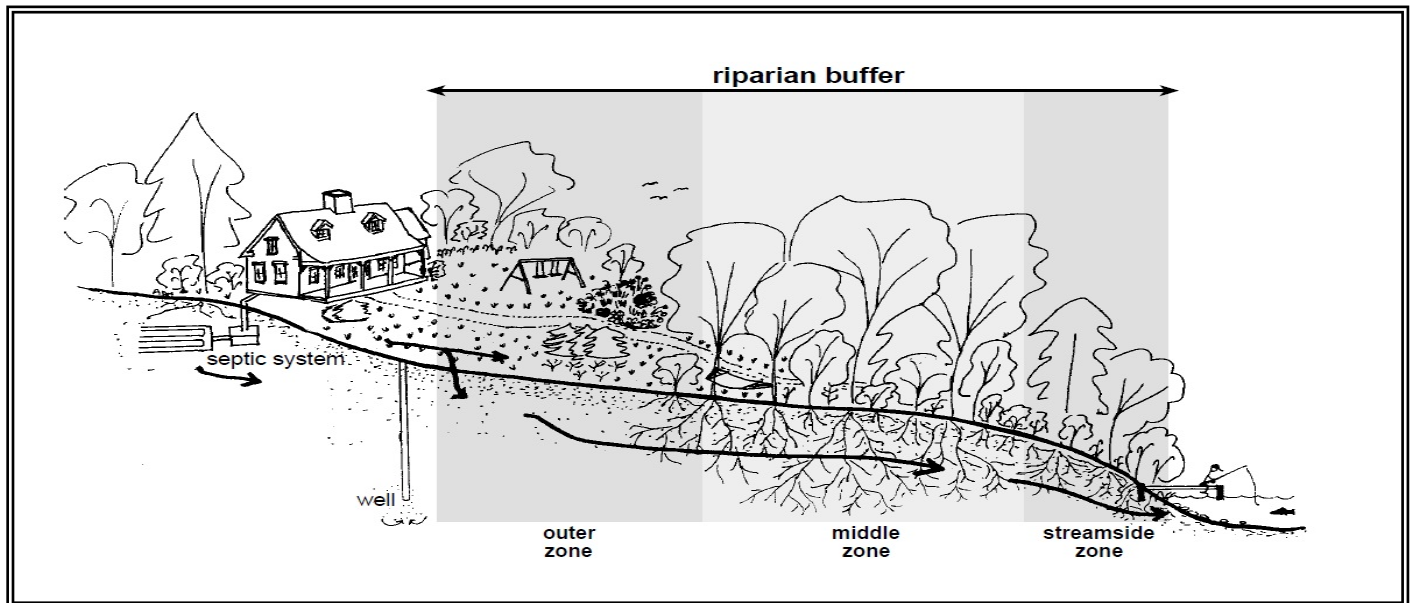


Backyard Buffers

An Introduction to Riparian Restoration for the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord River

What are Riparian Buffers?

Riparian buffers are the streamside trees, shrubs, and other plants that link the river to the land. Whether your waterfront is a large river or a small headwater stream, the water is affected by what happens on the abutting land. Water flowing over roads, lawns, and yards picks up sediments, lawn fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, heavy metals, and other pollutants that are harmful to their waterways. Landowners have long park-style yards with neatly trimmed grass. But disturbing waterfront buffers to expand a lawn, create a view of a river, or build a boat landing invites many costly troubles.



Riparian buffers are one of the most effective means of river protection in this part of Massachusetts. These strips of native grass, shrubs, and trees along the banks of rivers and streams filter polluted runoff and provide a transition zone between water and human land use. Buffers are also complex ecosystems that provide habitat and improve the stream communities they shelter.

Natural riparian buffers have been lost in many places over the years. Restoring them will be an important step forward for water quality, riverbank stability, wildlife, and natural aesthetics here in the MetroWest. Residential landowners, local governments, farmers, and conservation organizations can all help restore and protect the riparian buffers, which in turn restore and protect the quality of our streams.