



Field Visit Form

Property Assessment Tool

The following property assessment and recommendations are based on commonly accepted best management practices (BMPs) for riparian areas that protect the health of streams and adjacent land. See the Stream Wise Assessment Protocol & Evaluation Criteria for further information and clarification of the following questions. The goal of the Stream Wise Program is to protect and enhance natural vegetated stream buffers and encourage other practices that benefit water quality, aquatic and riparian habitat, and increase flood resiliency. This is a voluntary program. Sites that are awarded the Stream Wise sign represent model, stream-friendly properties. **Thank you for your participation!**

Stream Wise uses Fulcrum to record data - get the app on [iTunes App Store](#) and [Google Play](#). [Contact LCBP](#) for login information.

Date _____

Evaluator _____

Host Org _____

Stream / River _____ Basin _____

Property owner(s) _____

Mailing address (year-round) Street _____ Apt/Suite _____

Town/City _____ State/Province _____ ZIP/Postal Code _____

Site Assessment Address Street _____ Apt/Suite _____

Town/City _____ State/Province _____ ZIP/Postal Code _____

Phone number _____ Email address _____

Property ownership (check one): Own Rent How long (years)? _____ Year-round Seasonal

Permission to use name(s)? Yes No Photo release? Yes No Owner initials/approval _____

What does the property owner value in riparian area? (Fishing, swimming, wildlife, boating, aesthetics, etc.) / Notes:

Award Status: A property must meet Stream Wise standards in **all three categories** to become Stream Wise and be given a Stream Wise Award.

Category	Meets	Does Not Meet
1. Buffer Width		Summary Report complete
		Technical Assistance Follow Up required? Yes No
2. Buffer Zones		Next Steps communicated (if applicable)
3. Buffer Vegetation		Stream Wise Award Yes No Sign provided



1. Buffer Width

Meets Does Not Meet

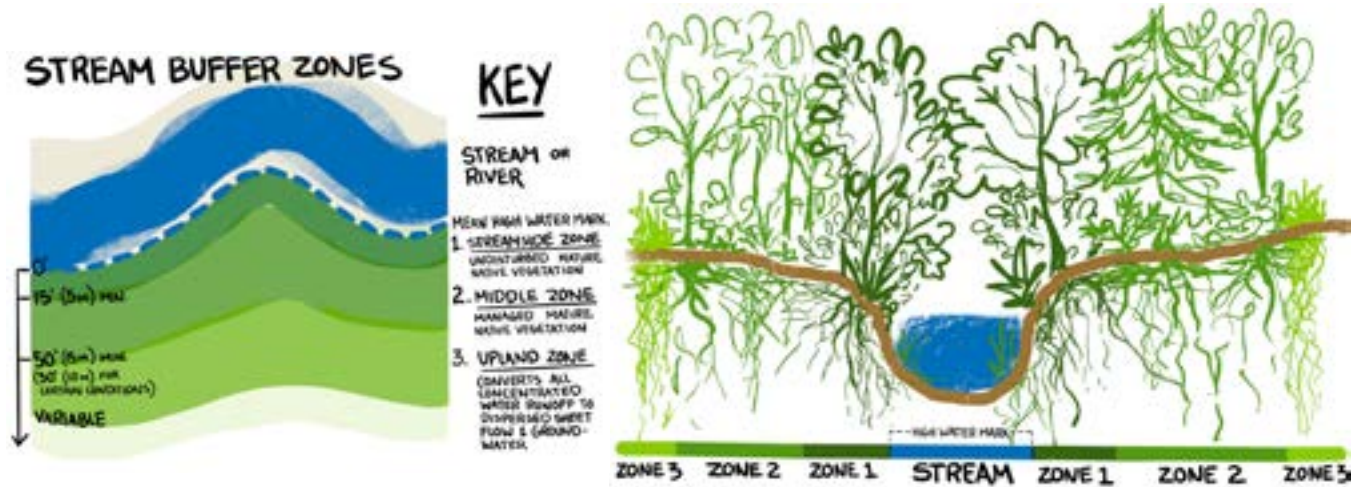


Criteria	Meets	Does Not Meet	NA
<p>1a. There is a 50' (15m) minimum vegetated buffer OR 30' (10m) minimum if property is 1 acre (0.4 hectares) or less and has existing infrastructure that prevents a 50' (15m) buffer. See exceptions to the rule (p.3, Assessment Protocol).</p>			
<p>1b. There is a maximum of 10% of the minimum buffer area that is in existing impervious or pervious development, including lawn, structures, decks, patios, or other non-naturally vegetated areas. This development is AT LEAST 15' (5m) FROM MEAN HIGH WATER MARK (not in the Streamside Zone). This 10% does not include access paths.</p>			
<p>1c. All surface water runoff from developed areas within the buffer is captured and infiltrated or converted to dispersed sheet flow (not concentrated runoff points).</p>			
<p>1d. Foot paths or stairs are 6' (2m) wide or less and are minimized (e.g., remove unnecessary paths).</p>			
<p>1e. Vehicle access is 12' (4m) wide or less.</p>			
<p>1f. Access points are pervious and infiltrating water or are hydrologically disconnected (all water runoff is diverted into vegetated areas, spread out, and infiltrated using switchbacks, water bars, crowned roads, turnouts, rock aprons, etc.).</p>			



2. Buffer Zones

Meets Does Not Meet



Criteria	Meets	Does Not Meet	NA
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2a. Streamside Zone (min. 15' or 5m from mean high water mark): There is no disturbance, clearing, or development in this zone, except for access paths and some limbing up for views (3e). Vegetation has all natural community tiers (3a) present and provides a stable root system to hold the streambank soil and prevent erosion.

2b. Middle Zone (from Streamside Zone to min. buffer edge): There is limited human-caused disturbance (3d) and clearing in the Middle Zone (3e); 70% of canopy cover (or naturally occurring canopy cover) and vegetation below 3', including the duff layer, is maintained. Limited development is allowed in the Middle Zone, with a maximum area of 10% of the total buffer area.

2c. Upland Zone (beyond minimum buffer edge): Converts all channelized or concentrated stormwater runoff flows (pipes, rills, ditches, etc.) to dispersed sheet flow or groundwater through infiltration before entering the buffer area. Natural topography, vegetation, and stormwater management practices (rain gardens, infiltration trenches, vegetated swales, etc.) slow upland runoff, spread it out, and soak it into the ground.

2d. Streambank is stable. There is no erosion, channelization, or unnaturally bare soil caused by *upland runoff* above the mean high water mark. If there is erosion above the mean high water mark caused by in-stream/river flows (e.g., bank undercutting, scouring, sediment deposits), the property is still eligible for an award, but technical assistance is recommended to help restore and stabilize the streambank. Erosion occurring within the stream channel - below mean high water mark - is outside of the Stream Wise criteria.

There is no hard-armoring (rip rap, retaining walls) that is not *also* stabilized with a strong and extensive root system underneath made up of woody vegetation.



3. Buffer Vegetation

Meets

Does Not Meet

Five Tiers of a Multi-Layered Forest



Criteria	Meets	Does Not Meet	NA
<p>3a. All vegetation tiers normally associated with the predominant local natural community are present, unless lack of vegetation tier is outside landowners control, e.g. deer grazing, microburst, or other natural causes. Some communities may not have all five tiers naturally present, such as an evergreen forest with little understory, wetland marsh/meadow, woody shrub swamp, rocky ledge with no duff, etc.</p> <p>1. Canopy Layer: Tall, mature deciduous and evergreen trees that create structure and canopy cover</p> <p>2. Understory Layer: Saplings/sufficient replacement trees (e.g., in the case of a dying canopy, ability of forest to bounce back) replacement trees, small understory trees and tall shrubs</p> <p>3. Shrubs Layer: Low-growing deciduous and evergreen woody shrubs</p> <p>4. Groundcover/Herbaceous Layer: Herbaceous vegetation (perennials, annuals, biennials), including native grasses, sedges, flowers, ferns, and mosses</p> <p>5. Duff Layer: Organic material on forest floor – leaves, twigs, dead plant material, woody biomass, mushrooms, etc.</p>			
<p>3b. Native plant species comprise 75% or greater of the buffer area</p>			
<p>3c. Invasive species comprise 25% or less of the buffer area. (Remove invasive species physically where possible, seek technical assistance for other solutions)</p>			
<p>3d. Limited cutting for views and firewood/coppice is allowed in the Middle Zone, but not the streamside zone; Limbing up trees for views is allowed in both zones, e.g., prune lower 1/3 of branches instead of cutting tree or topping tree - leave branches on the ground. There is a minimum 70% or naturally occurring canopy cover; There is no removal of vegetation (or duff) below 3' (1m) (removal of hazardous trees is allowed)</p>			
<p>3e. There is no pesticide or herbicide use on the property unless recommended by a professional to remove invasive species</p>			