Field Assessment Form

Stream Wise

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.

The goal for a Stream Wise property 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.

Background Information

Stream or River Name_____ Basin_____

Evaluator_____ Date_____

Property Owner(s)_____

Year-round mailing address_____

Site Assessment Property's Address_____

Phone Number_____

E-mail Addresses_____

Property Ownership (circle one): **Owned / Rented** For how long (years)?_____
Year-round / Seasonal

Permission to use Name in Outreach Materials? **Yes / No**

Photo Release to use images in Outreach Materials? **Yes / No** Signature_____

What do you value in your riparian area? E.g., fishing, swimming, wildlife, boating, aesthetics, etc.

_____

_____

Stream Wise Status

A property needs to meet Stream Wise Standards in all three categories to become Stream Wise.

Category	**Meets**	**Does Not Meet**
Buffer Width	_____	_____
Buffer Zones	_____	_____
Buffer Vegetation	_____	_____
Stream Wise	**_____**	**_____**

Technical Assistance Follow Up & Next Steps Required? **Yes / No**

Desktop Assessment

This Desktop Assessment Protocol uses the Stream Wise Atlas hosted by the Lake Champlain Basin Program (for parcels in Quebec, use the 'Free' option on this site).

Answer all applicable questions. Some may not apply to all sites. Use best estimate; the intent is to prepare for the site assessment, but all measurements shall be checked and confirmed or changed on-site.

Mapping

Average or Range of Riparian Buffer Width (note ft/m)_____

Estimate of Riparian Buffer Canopy Cover (%)_____

Parcel Size - Over 1 acre (0.4 hectares) | Under 1 acre (0.4 hectares)

Are there structures within 50' (15m) of the stream/river that make up more than 10% of the buffer and would inhibit the establishment of a 50' (15m) vegetated buffer? YES NO

If yes, then a 30' (10m) minimum buffer is acceptable instead of a 50' (15m) minimum buffer.

Approx. area (acres/hectares) of impervious surface within the buffer area (roofs, patios, pavement, etc.) _____

Approx. area (acres/hectares) of pervious surface within the buffer area (lawn, decks, gardens, etc.) _____

Does pervious and impervious development make up 10% or less of the area within the buffer?

YES NO

If yes, then this property could potentially qualify as Stream Wise as long as it meets other criteria.

Hydrologic Soil Type (circle all that apply):

VT / NY: A / A/D / B / B/D / C / C/D / D / Not rated

QC: A / A-B / AB-B / A-BC / B / B-BC / B-C / BC / N.D. (NO DATA)

Mapped floodplain? Yes / No 1 year / 2 year / 10 year / 100 year

Mapped wetlands? Yes / No Classification (if applicable)_____

Polluted or Impaired Waters? Yes / No Pollutant of primary concern_____

Town_____

Local Municipal Stream Buffer Regulations, Ordinances, or Bylaws?_____

Materials to bring in the field

- ✓ Camera
- ✓ 50'+ measuring tape
- ✓ Plant ID resources (native and invasive)
- ✓ Assessment Protocol
- ✓ Certificate of Participation Form
- ✓ Stream Wise Award sign

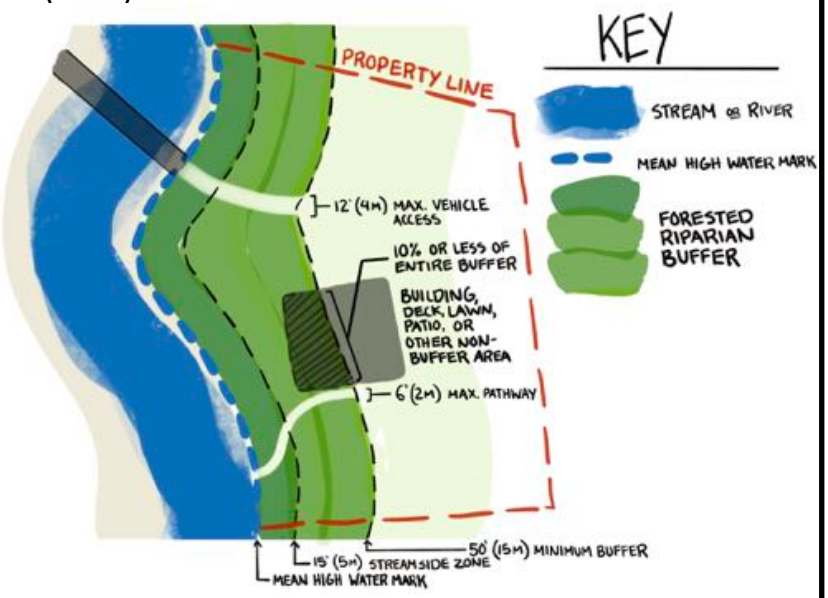
_____

Notes:

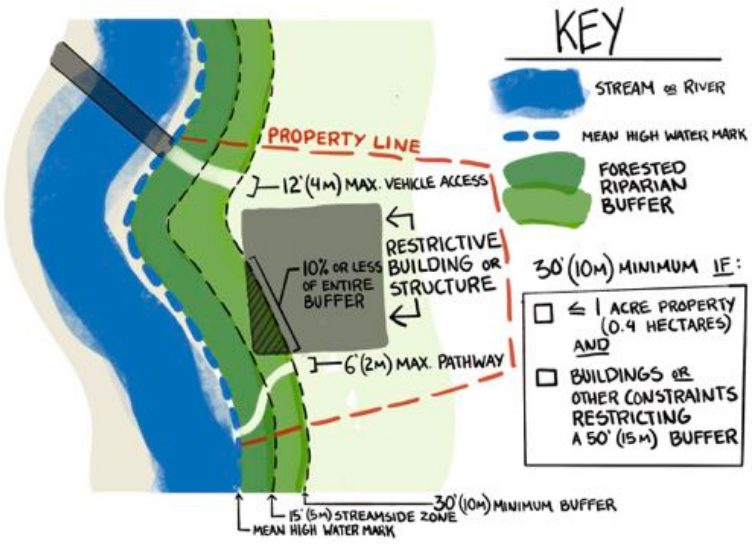
Category 1. Buffer Width

❑ MEETS ❑ DOES NOT MEET

50’ (15m) Buffer Minimum



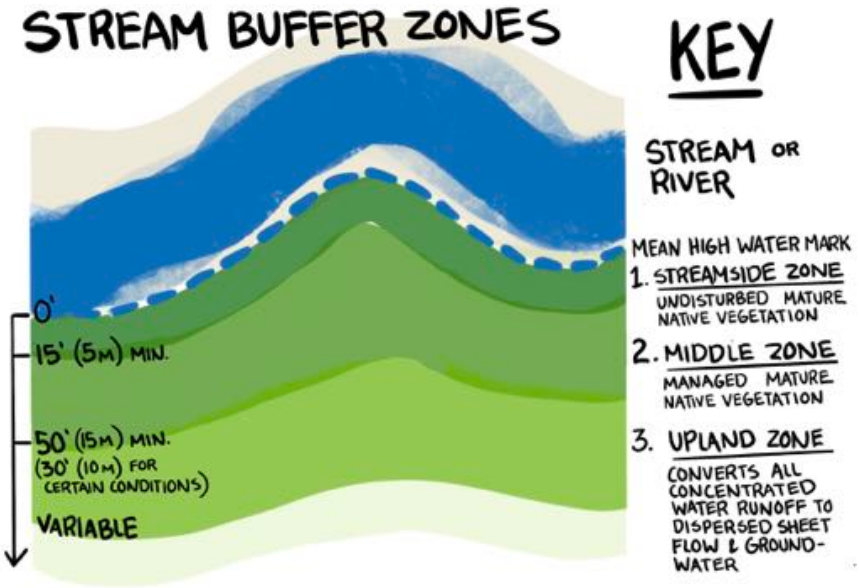
Conditions for 30’ (10m) Buffer Minimum

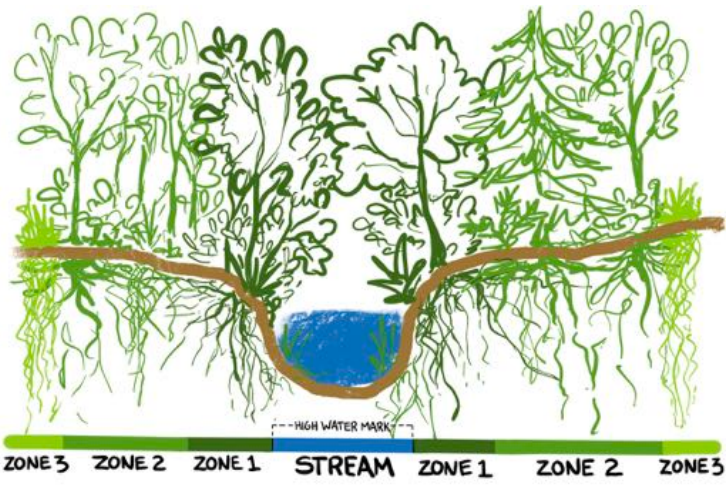


Criteria	Meets	Does Not Meet
1a. There is a 50’ (15m) minimum vegetated buffer *OR* 30’ (10m) minimum if property is 1 acre (0.4 hectares) or less *and* has existing infrastructure that prevents a 50’ (15m) buffer.	❑	❑
1b. There is a maximum of 10% of the minimum buffer area that is in existing impervious 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.	❑	❑
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).	❑	❑
1d. Foot paths or stairs are 6’ (2m) wide or less and are minimized (e.g., remove unnecessary paths).	❑	❑
1e. Vehicle access is 12’ (4m) wide or less.	❑	❑
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.).	❑	❑

Category 2. Buffer Zones

❑ MEETS ❑ DOES NOT MEET





Criteria	Meets	Does Not Meet
2a. Streamside Zone (min. 15' or 5m from mean high water mark) is undisturbed mature native cover and/or densely planted vegetation that is stabilizing the streambank with a secure root system and providing aquatic habitat (e.g., shading over shallow water, woody debris). There is no disturbance, clearing, or development except access points.	❑	❑
2b. Middle Zone (from Streamside Zone to buffer edge) is established multi-layered vegetative cover to capture, filter, and store nutrients, sediments, and pollutants (coming from upland runoff and flooding). There is limited clearing (minimum 70% canopy cover) and development (maximum 10% of entire buffer).	❑	❑
2c. Upland Zone (beyond minimum buffer edge) converts all channelized or concentrated water flows (pipes, rills, etc.) to dispersed sheet flow so that all stormwater runoff entering the buffer is sheet flow or groundwater using herbaceous filter strips or other stormwater management practices to slow runoff and infiltrate or spread out flows (rain gardens, infiltration trenches, vegetated swales, etc.).	❑	❑
2d. Streambank is stable; There is no erosion, channelization, or bare soil from upland erosion above mean high water mark (okay if there is naturally occurring erosion within the stream channel – below mean high water mark - that is outside of landowner's control); No hard armoring (rip rap, retaining walls) that is not also densely vegetated.	❑	❑

Category 3. Buffer Vegetation ❑ MEETS ❑ DOES NOT MEET

Criteria	Meets	Does Not Meet	
3a. 5 Tiers are present unless lack of tiers is outside of the landowners control, e.g., deer grazing or natural occurring plant community does not have all 5 tiers, such as evergreen forest with little understory, wetland marsh/meadow, woody shrub swamp, rocky ledge with no duff, etc.	❑	❑	
1. Canopy: tall, mature deciduous and evergreen trees that create structure and canopy cover	❑	❑	**N/A**
2. Understory: saplings/replacement trees, small understory trees and tall shrubs	❑	❑	**N/A**
3. Shrubs: low-growing deciduous and evergreen woody shrubs	❑	❑	**N/A**
4. Groundcover/Herbaceous Layer: Herbaceous vegetation (perennials, annuals, biennials), including native grasses, sedges, flowers, ferns, and mosses	❑	❑	**N/A**
5. Duff: organic material on forest floor – leaves, twigs, dead plant material, woody biomass, mushrooms, etc.	❑	❑	**N/A**
3b. Native plant species should comprise 75% or greater of the buffer area.	❑	❑	
3c. Invasive species do not dominate the understory or threaten to dominate (Remove invasive species physically where possible, seek technical assistance for other solutions)	❑	❑	
3d. Disturbance in the buffer is minimized; it is not mown, raked, or weed whacked; woody debris (dead trees, branches), leaves, and other organic matter are left (removal of hazardous trees is allowed)	❑	❑	
3e. Limited cutting for views and firewood/coppice is allowed in Middle Zone, *not* Streamside Zone, e.g., limb branches up on lower 1/3 of tree for views instead of cutting entire tree; There is a minimum 70% canopy cover; There is no removal of vegetation (or duff) below 3' (1m) (removal of hazardous trees is allowed)	❑	❑	
3f. There is no pesticide or herbicide use on the property unless recommended by a professional to remove invasive species	❑	❑	