



WATER RESOURCE CENTER

FACT SHEET

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission WATER RESOURCE CENTER

Mission To promote regional collaboration on water topics; be a leader in facilitating coordination and education; and provide technical assistance to its member governments.

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PROTECT RIPARIAN AREAS NON-STRUCTURAL STORMWATER BMPS

Protect / Conserve / Enhance Riparian Areas (PCERA) is a non-structural best management practice (BMP) that preserves and enhances vegetated areas that are adjacent to streams and rivers. While this BMP focuses on stream and river riparian areas, it should be noted that riparian buffers around other waterbodies such as lakes, ponds, and wetlands are also very valuable. Riparian areas perform important stormwater and ecosystem functions. Stormwater management functions of riparian areas include water quality protection and improvement, runoff volume reduction, groundwater recharge, stream bank and channel stabilization, and some peak runoff rate control. Ecosystem functions include providing a food supply, habitat, and thermal protection for fish and other wildlife.

Table with 2 columns: Category and BMP Profile. Rows include Name, Type, Grouping, Stormwater Management Benefits, and Potential Applications.



Preserving and enhancing riparian areas is one of the most effective ways to manage stormwater and protect Pennsylvania's waterways.

Key Considerations of Protect / Conserve / Enhance Riparian Areas

- Maximize buffer widths to maximize stormwater and ecosystem benefits
In Pennsylvania, riparian areas are forested under undisturbed conditions
Forested buffers are the most effective for stormwater management and wildlife habitat
When enhancing a riparian area that has been degraded by past practices, native trees, shrubs and plants should be used
Municipal zoning and ordinances can be used to establish riparian buffer requirements

This information was adapted from the Pennsylvania Stormwater Best Practices Manual. Check out SPC's other fact sheets to learn more about specific BMPs, flooding, and more.

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