

What is a Water Quality Riparian Buffer?

A water quality riparian buffer is a permanent strip of natural perennial vegetation, adjacent to a stream, river, wetland, pond, or lake that contains dense vegetation made up of grass, shrubs, and/or trees.

Why are they Important?

These buffers filter pollutants from surface runoff, preventing fertilizers, pesticides, and sediment from entering the waterway. They stabilize stream banks, reduce erosion, and provide critical habitats for wildlife, supporting biodiversity. Additionally, riparian buffers improve aesthetic values and recreational opportunities, making them vital for environmental sustainability and community well-being. Their preservation and restoration are key strategies for maintaining clean water and mitigating the impacts of land development on natural waterways.

Where are Riparian Buffers Located?

Riparian buffers are designated along all waters of the state and various types of streams as determined by the city, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), or the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

Required Buffer Widths

Waters with available parameters for siltation /sedimentation or unassessed waters:

Average Buffer Width = 30'

Exceptional Tennessee Waters or waters with unavailable parameters for siltation/sedimentation:

Average Buffer Width = 60'



<https://riparian.utk.edu/>

Permissible Land Uses & Plantings

The water quality riparian buffer is to remain undisturbed for the minimum required buffer except as authorized by an Aquatic Resource Alteration Permit (ARAP). The following land uses are permissible within the remaining buffer subject to approval by the city's engineering director on a case by case basis:

- Select landscaping and/or habitat improvements to repair erosion, damaged vegetation, or other problems

Select planting are allowed in the riparian buffer. A detailed permissible planting list can be found in the Urban Riparian Buffer Handbook found at <https://www.tn.gov/environment/program-areas/wr-water-resources/nutrient-management-in-tennessee/resources/riparian-buffers.html>

Possible Penalties and Fines for Non-compliance

Failure to comply with these regulations is a serious matter and could result in enforcement actions, including but not limited to fines or legal proceedings.

More Information

More detailed information about these regulations can be found under Chapter 56 of Brentwood's stormwater management, erosion control and flood damage code.

Get in Touch

🌐 <https://www.brentwoodtn.gov/departments/engineering>

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WATER QUALITY RIPARIAN BUFFERS

The City of Brentwood

