

RESTORING STREAM BUFFERS

TOOLKIT FOR MUNICIPALITIES

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



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Credit: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

STREAM BUFFERS

WHAT IS A STREAM BUFFER?

Stream buffers are areas along rivers, streams, and other bodies of surface water that are designated by humans to help protect the water body.

WHY SHOULD THESE BUFFERS BE RESTORED AND/OR EXPANDED?

Expanding stream buffer areas and restoring vegetation, especially native trees and shrubs, helps to store water during droughts and helps protect people and property from the impacts of flooding. Healthy vegetated stream buffers intercept rainfall, filter runoff, capture sediment, absorb excess floodwaters, provide shade (which reduces water temperatures), and reduce erosion.

Restoring vegetated buffers is important in flood-prone areas, but also in upstream areas to reduce the speed and potentially the volume of floodwaters. Healthy stream buffers also offer habitat benefits and contribute to ecosystem resiliency.

ABOUT

Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribes provides free native New York seedlings to help protect streams, which in turn:

- *Protects water quality*
- *Reduces erosion and flooding*
- *Creates fish and wildlife habitat*

WHERE:

Property along streams and waterways within the Hudson River Estuary Grant Program boundary in Orange and Ulster Counties.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR FREE TREES?

- Landowners
- Property managers (in partnership with the landowner/s)
- Municipalities, community groups, and non-profit organizations (with permission from the landowner)

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District is available to assist those interested in participating in this program for 2025 with:

- Determining eligibility
- Submitting an application
- Customizing planting plans
- Technical support on site preparation and planting assistance
- Volunteer recruitment

Application Deadline for Spring Plantings: March 1st, 2025

Application Deadline for Fall Plantings: August 1st, 2025

It's never been easier to participate! Contact Cooper Hernsdorf to learn more at Cooper.Hernsdorf@NY.nacdnet.net or by calling (845) 883-7162 X3

HOW MUNICIPALITIES CAN HELP

TAKE THE LEAD: Partner with local conservation advisory councils, civic groups, and other entities on a Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribes planting in your community. If your municipality has a tree commission, encourage one of its members to serve as a liaison for the this program. This individual/s would be tasked with identifying and helping to implement a potential project.

SPREAD THE WORD: Engage the community about this important program by utilizing the provided content on pages 4-5.

COMPLETE A MUNICIPAL RIPARIAN ASSESSMENT: Complete a riparian assessment as part of Climate Smart Communities! This assessment identifies and prioritizes sites for conservation and revegetation of buffers.

HOST A TREE PLANTING: If your municipality owns property that may qualify for Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribes, Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District staff can help determine your eligibility. [Contact us](#) to get started!

HOST A PUBLIC WORKSHOP FOR LANDOWNERS: For 2025 only, Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District is offering municipalities free workshops for landowners to learn more about the importance of riparian restoration, management and stewardship best practices, and more. [Contact us](#) for more information.

By signing on to at least 3 of the actions listed above, Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District will recognize your municipality on www.ucswcd.org and social media. [Be sure to let us know!](#)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



SUGGESTED BLURBS FOR NEWSLETTER, WEBSITE, AND SOCIAL MEDIA:

A. Do you own land along a stream? If so, you may qualify for free native trees and shrubs through the Hudson Estuary Trees for Tributaries program.

By adding a vegetative buffer along stream banks, you can help reduce erosion, mitigate flooding, and do your part to protect water quality!

If you are interested in participating or learning more, please visit:

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/oceans-estuaries/hudson-river-estuary-program/hudson-estuary-trees-for-tribs>

B. Free native trees and shrubs for streams!

Landowners with property along streams and waterways may be eligible for free trees and shrubs through the Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribes program. This vital program aims to stabilize streambanks, reduce erosion, and mitigate flooding issues, while protecting water quality and enhancing habitat for fish, birds, and pollinators.

Contact Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District to learn more at Cooper.Hernsdorf@NY.nacdnet.net or call (845) 883-7162 X3.

C. Are you interested in doing your part to protect <Name of Village, City, or Town>'s streams? Consider participating in the Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribes program with Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District!

Eligible landowners with frontage along streams can receive free native trees and shrubs to help restore a healthy and functional riparian buffer, which can improve water quality, fortify streambanks, and reduce erosion.

Community organizations, civic groups, schools, and private landowners can apply! Contact Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District to learn more at Cooper.Hernsdorf@NY.nacdnet.net or (845) 883-7162 X3.

MATERIALS:

There are a number of educational handouts and fact sheets about Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribes. Check out some examples below:

[Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribes Fact Sheet](#)

[Stream Buffer Fact Sheet](#)

[Managing Invasive Plants in Riparian Areas](#)

MARKETING PHOTOS:



This work is in partnership with the NYS Water Resources Institute at Cornell University and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, with support from the NYS Environmental Protection Fund.