

stream habitat. Hundreds of tons of valuable topsoil are lost each year to bank erosion that could easily be remedied by riparian restoration. **Riparian restoration** involves replacing the native riparian vegetation that has been removed from a degraded stream. Riparian restoration not only increases the ecological value and overall health of a stream, but it also increases the aesthetic value of the entire stream corridor.



Photo courtesy of CEC

Livestock Exclusion Insensitively managed livestock operations can have a negative impact on water quality. Unrestricted livestock access often results in excessive sedimentation from trampled banks, nutrient loading from livestock waste, as well as the elimination of in-stream habitat and riparian vegetation. **Livestock exclusion**

involves protecting streams from unrestricted livestock access in areas where their presence has significantly degraded the stream. Livestock exclusion is often accomplished by constructing fences with limited-access crossings and providing landowners with alternative off-stream watering systems.



Photo courtesy of CEC

..... **PROJECT SELECTION**

The TSMP funds only projects that have been approved by the SMRT. Preference is given to larger mitigation projects providing the greatest ecological benefit. Often, these projects will include publicly owned lands or multiple privately owned lands. Projects are selected, approved, and funded based on the following criteria:

- Preference is given to projects in the same Level III Ecoregion (Griffith, G.E., et al., 1997), six-digit HUC, or, ideally, same eight-digit HUC as the impacts.
- Projects will generally be located on streams within one stream order of the impact streams.
- The ratio of urban to rural streams impacted should be generally replicated in project locations.
- All other factors being equal, priority should be given to 303(d) streams for which stream mitigation efforts may provide a means to alleviate the causes or sources of water quality and/or habitat impairment.

..... **CONSERVATION EASEMENTS & LANDOWNER BENEFITS**

The TSMP provides numerous benefits to participating landowners. The most direct, measurable benefits are the restoration of a degraded stream, the repair of eroding stream banks, and the reclamation of a riparian buffer. TSMP mitigation projects stop the wasteful erosion that carries away valuable land and prevent participating landowners from watching helplessly as their riparian property washes downstream. TSMP projects increase both the monetary and aesthetic value of riparian lands and allow tax incentives for participating landowners. The TSMP is required to protect every mitigation project with a conservation easement. **Conservation easements** can ensure that the mitigation projects are protected in perpetuity by prohibiting certain activities or land uses within the designated area, while allowing landowners to retain ownership of the property. Additionally, landowners may deduct the value of the donated easement as a charitable contribution.

..... **CONTACT THE TSMP**

The TSMP encourages landowners, environmental groups, and others to submit proposed mitigation project sites that will be evaluated against the mitigation requirements within a given watershed and the project selection criteria. Interested parties may obtain project applications directly from the TSMP or local NRCS offices. For more information, including downloadable applications in PDF format, visit the TSMP website.



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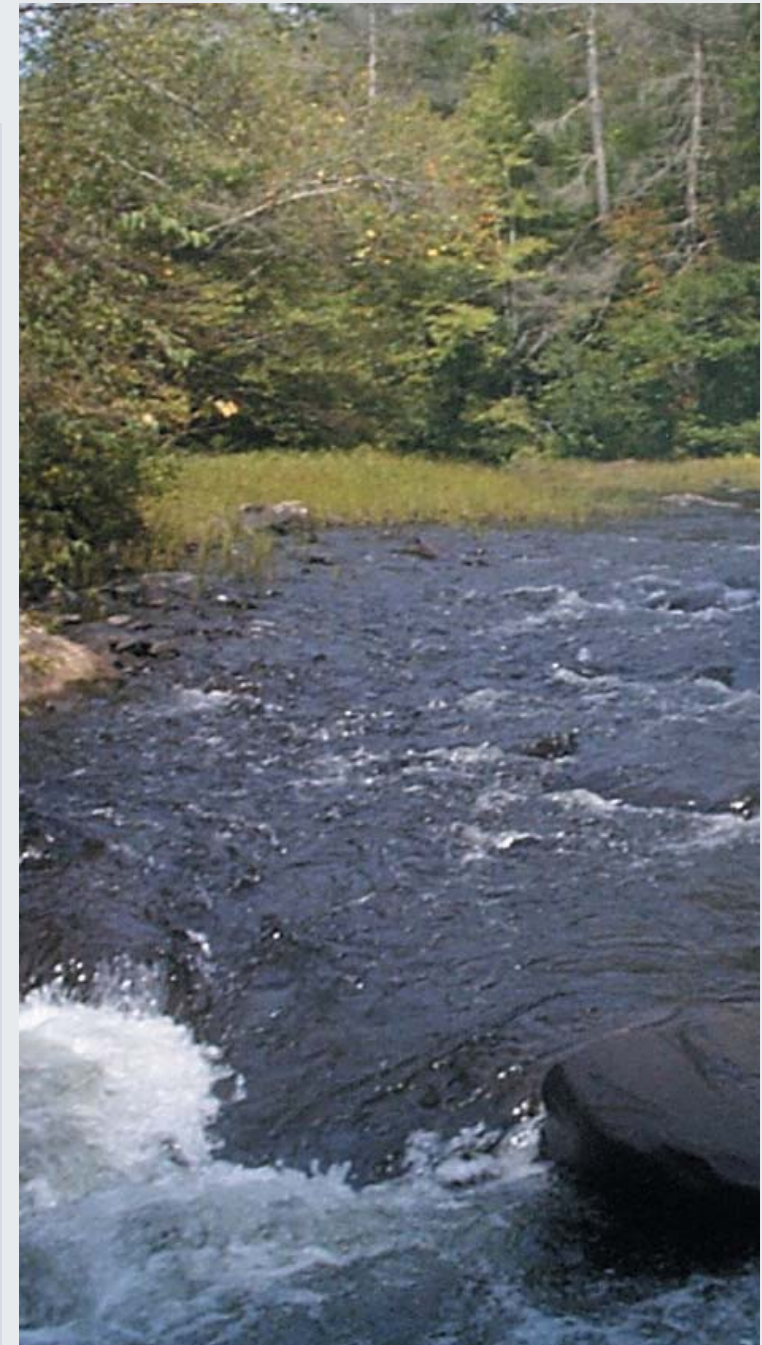


Photo by Jonathon Burr, TDEC



