

Protecting Our Living Streambanks



**Catskill Streams
Buffer Initiative**

At the Root of Streamside Protection



Living streamside can have its challenges. And sometimes, although unintentionally, we contribute to the problem. Our actions strip away nature's inherent protectors, reducing forest cover and increasing storm water runoff and pollutants from fertilizers, pesticides or road salts. Over time, these can have damaging repercussions. But working together, we can take steps to revegetate sensitive areas, reduce stream bank erosion and improve the quality of our natural environment and the overall health of our community and streams.



A Collaborative Approach to Streamside Health



The Catskill Streams Buffer Initiative (CSBI) was created through a collaborative effort of local nonprofits and environmental organizations to fill a gap for streamside property owners. While other programs are available to owners of larger streamside parcels used for forestry or farming, no similar resource existed for smaller parcels. CSBI provides residential landowners along stream banks in the Catskill/Delaware watershed a reliable resource for individualized assistance and financial support to help you protect property from damage and ensure a healthy, stable riparian* area.

Our experienced staff helps you protect your property and preserve natural habitat using vegetation native to the Catskill region. We work with you to understand your specific situation, diagnose streamside-related problems, protect forested buffers and recommend solutions that help you stabilize and effectively manage your streamside property.

CSBI a partnership between:

- New York City Department of Environmental Protection
- County Soil and Water Conservation Districts

With input and collaboration from:

- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Catskill Watershed Corporation
- Watershed Agricultural Council
- Catskill Center for Conservation and Development

*Riparian area, also called streamside, is the land adjacent to creeks, streams and rivers.



Supporting Landowner Efforts

In addition to identifying mature, forested riparian areas to preserve, part of CSBI's mission is to help property owners distinguish between healthy and potentially harmful practices that could be contributing to increased erosion, property damage and poor water quality. What does this mean for you?

- **Access to environmental expertise and individualized assistance from experienced**

CSBI coordinators – at no cost to you. Each of the five counties in the Catskill/Delaware region has a designated CSBI coordinator responsible for working with local residents. These coordinators work with you – sharing their knowledge, answering questions, and visiting properties to help diagnose problems, identify areas to protect and propose solutions. Our coordinators provide ongoing support from your initial contact to post-project follow-up. We help you navigate any necessary permitting processes, share successes from other landowners, and help you monitor the health of your streamside property.



www.catskillstreams.org/CSBI





• **Opportunities to learn about current issues affecting the entire streamside system and what you can do to better protect your streamside property.** We offer a number of educational workshops, events, and resources that provide you with critical information about living streamside. You have the opportunity to participate in programs with other landowners and learn from their experiences, share ideas and concerns, explore characteristics of specific Catskill native plant species, and contribute to improving the overall health of our riparian communities.

• **Financial support for streamside projects through the CSBI grant program.** Until now, streamside landowners with small parcels have had limited access to financial support for proactive planting projects that can help create, enhance or protect riparian buffers, in turn reducing erosion, eradicating invasive plants, and improving habitat for regional Catskill Mountain wildlife. Application-based CSBI grants are awarded annually and can help with financial, labor and material support.

CSBI Offers

- Environmental Expertise
- Materials and Resources
- CSBI Grant Program
- Educational Workshops
- Stream Management Events
- Ongoing Individual and Community Support
- Identification of Healthy Streamsidess
- Preservation Options



Interested in applying for a CSBI grant?

Basic eligibility requirements include:

- The township where the property is located must have an adopted Stream Management Plan
- Property must be within the Catskill/Delaware NYC Watershed area
- Projects to be implemented must meet approved best practices
- Projects cannot already be covered under another watershed program (e.g. Watershed Forestry, CREP, CWC Stream Corridor Protection Program, etc.)
- Landowners must contribute to project installation either monetarily or in-kind.

Visit

www.catskillstreams.org/CSBI
to learn more.



Streamside Health Check

1. Do you have lawn to the edge of your stream?
2. Do you have a single row of trees along your stream bank?
3. Do you have new or small populations of an invasive species (such as Japanese knotweed or purple loosestrife) that was recently introduced to your property?
4. Have you noticed a small amount of erosion on your stream bank?
5. Are you interested in learning about appropriate best management practices for living streamside?
6. Do you have a well forested, intact riparian buffer that you would like to protect from future development?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, please call your CSBI Coordinator.



The Power of Planting

Carefully cultivating a natural streamside buffer will help protect you from property loss due to flooding and erosion, and will create a healthier habitat for native aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. Deep and dense root structures of native plants can tremendously increase the strength of stream banks and reduce erosion from storm flows. Healthy streamside vegetation can filter out sediment, absorb excess nutrients and break down pollutants that impair water quality.

What makes a good buffer? Take a good look at your streamside property. Is the lawn mowed all the way to the water's edge? Has yard waste been deposited along the stream bank or in the stream? Have trees or shrubs been cut back along the stream?

These might seem like minor things, but they can seriously undermine the stability and health of your stream bank. The shade provided by riparian trees and shrubs keeps water temperatures cool, improving the stream's habitat for fish. Allowing natural vegetation to grow along the stream bank also provides greater resistance to water runoff and helps remove pollutants and sediment. This helps reduce flood damage downstream and keeps water cleaner.

Get Involved. Make a Difference.

Become a part of the CSBI community and help us spread the word. There are many ways to get involved. Contact your local CSBI Coordinator or visit our website at www.catskillstreams.org/CSBI and sign up to receive free information and updates about stream projects, current issues and opportunities for financial support. Working together, we can make a difference.

Contact New York City Department of Environmental Protection or your local CSBI Coordinator by calling:

NYC DEP	845-340-7852
Delaware County	607-865-5223
Greene County	518-622-3620
Schoharie County	518-234-4092
Sullivan County	845-292-6552
Ulster County	845-883-7162



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