

# Ribbons of Life: Healthy Buffers Mean Healthy Streams



## A Home for Many

Cardinals take advantage of the forest edge habitat created by vegetative buffers. Wooded streamside buffers provide habitat for many types of wildlife including songbirds, mink, otter, reptiles and amphibians. (Photo courtesy USFWS.)

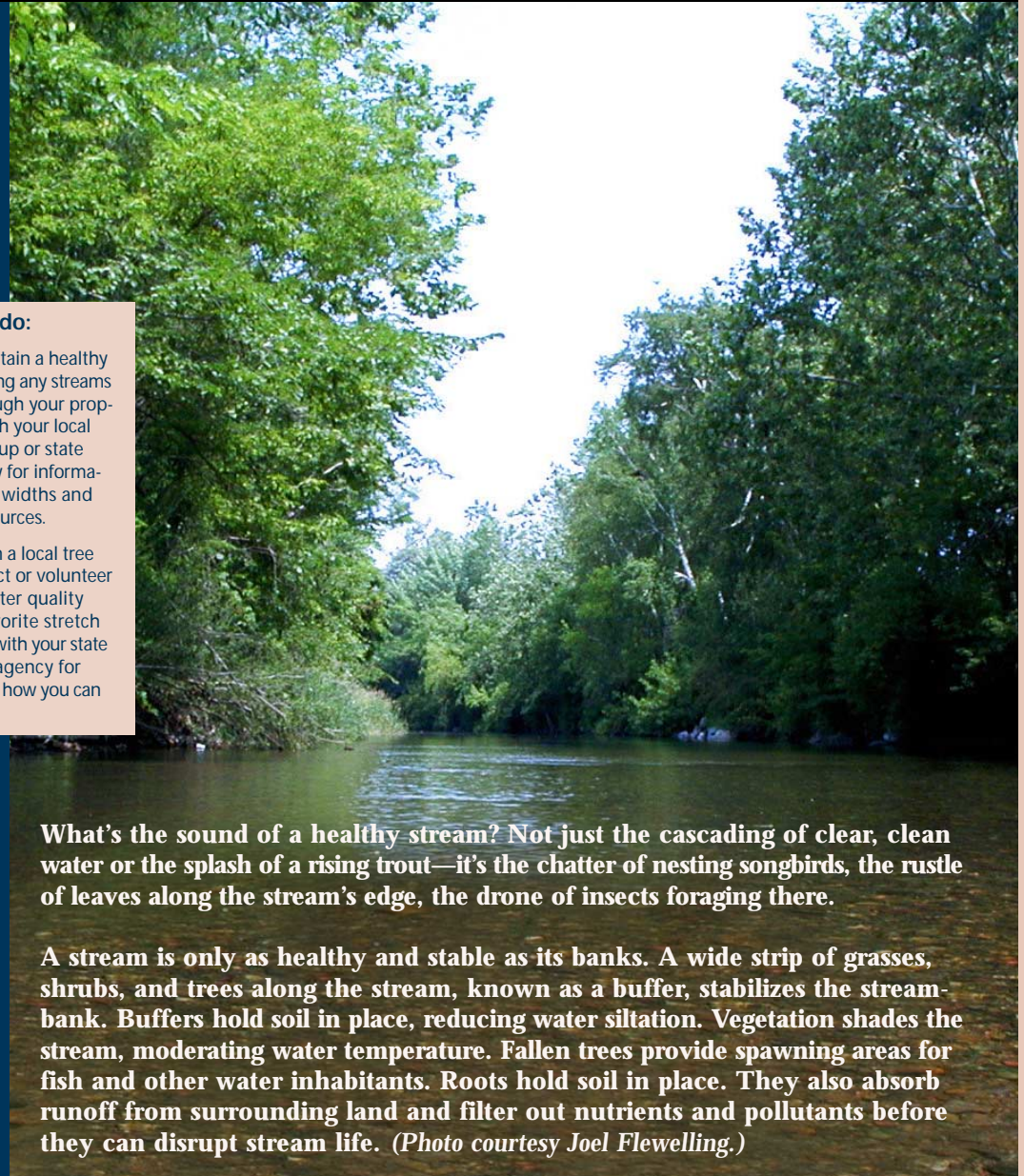


## Protecting the Banks

Volunteers help plant willow saplings along a stretch of the Mettawee River near the New York border. These willows will help protect the streambank during floods and also provide wildlife habitat. (Photo courtesy Joel Flewelling.)

## What you can do:

- Create or maintain a healthy buffer strip along any streams that pass through your property. Check with your local watershed group or state wildlife agency for information on buffer widths and native plant sources.
- Get involved in a local tree planting project or volunteer to monitor water quality along your favorite stretch of river. Check with your state conservation agency for information on how you can take part.



**What's the sound of a healthy stream? Not just the cascading of clear, clean water or the splash of a rising trout—it's the chatter of nesting songbirds, the rustle of leaves along the stream's edge, the drone of insects foraging there.**

**A stream is only as healthy and stable as its banks. A wide strip of grasses, shrubs, and trees along the stream, known as a buffer, stabilizes the stream-bank. Buffers hold soil in place, reducing water siltation. Vegetation shades the stream, moderating water temperature. Fallen trees provide spawning areas for fish and other water inhabitants. Roots hold soil in place. They also absorb runoff from surrounding land and filter out nutrients and pollutants before they can disrupt stream life. (Photo courtesy Joel Flewelling.)**