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Cliff Lane—Commissioner—Secretary/Treasurer
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Vision: The Conservation District is the steward of McKean County’s natural resources and embraces environmentally responsible decisions.

Mission: The Conservation District provides leadership and stewardship to ensure the protection and sustainability of McKean County’s natural resources by fostering public and private partnerships.



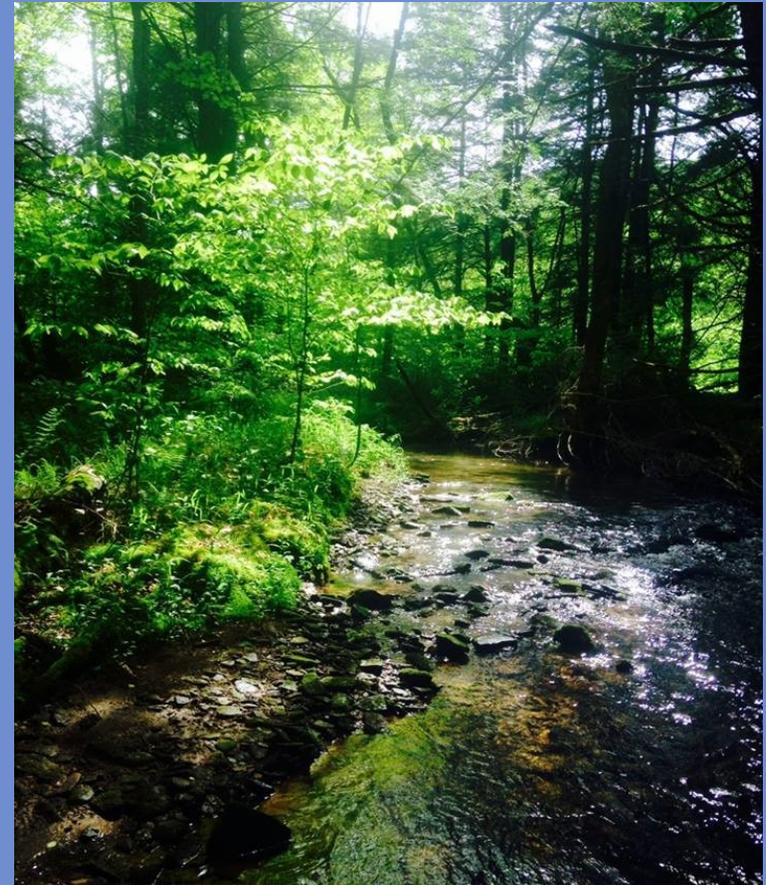
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www.mckeanconservation.com



Riparian Conservation: Protecting Streams

Plant, Restore, Maintain
Enhance, & Protect Streamside Land



**MCKEAN COUNTY
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Conserving Natural Resources for Our Future

What is a Riparian Area?

Riparian areas are lands near a stream, river, pond, or lake. McKean County, Pennsylvania has over 1,900 miles of streams and many riparian areas along them.

Riparian areas are important to stream health and wildlife. Healthy riparian areas are a living filter for erosion and pollutants. Roots and plants naturally protect stream banks and hold soil in place. Many wildlife species use riparian areas for feeding, shelter, and breeding. Trees and shrubs shade the water in the stream. This provides cooler water which is important for water life, especially cold water species of fish, such as trout.

Protect and enhance riparian areas on your property.

Most riparian areas historically acted as floodplains, allowing flood waters to absorb back into the land. Development near waterways and long term sedimentation of streams has led to many steep, eroded streambanks and can make flooding a problem. Providing as wide a riparian buffer as possible can allow it to function as floodplain during high water events. without damaging property.



Stream Protection



Streambank stabilization project and tree and shrub planting

Many practices can be used to improve riparian areas. Improvements include stabilizing the streambank to prevent soil loss, planting native trees, shrubs, and other native plants, fencing the stream to keep livestock from damaging banks, identifying and removing invasive plants. Landowners can obtain technical assistance from conservation organizations to complete many of these practices. Financial help is also available through U.S. Department of Agriculture programs.

Sometimes the first step to protect a riparian area is to stop mowing or removing weeds and vegetation near the stream. Grass has no deep roots needed to hold the soil. Planting shrubs and trees which tolerate water will further stabilize and protect the area and stream. Allow natural plants to grow and appreciate these hardy native species. Monitor the species growing in your riparian buffer and watch for invasive species.

Riparian Plantings

There are many plants, trees and shrubs that grow well in riparian areas. Most of these can survive in damp or wet soil. The ideal riparian buffer is forested with mature trees, which also shade and cool the water. Sometimes a riparian seed mix is a good choice to supplement shrubs and trees. Depending on the location, some trees mixed with shrubs and other plants may better suit the site.



Elderberry left, Silver Maple above

Riparian Trees and Shrubs

- Silver maple
- Swamp White Oak
- Sycamore
- Black Willow
- Red Maple
- Pin Oak
- Redbud
- Blackgum
- Shagbark Hickory
- White Pine
- Sassafras
- Red or Black Chokeberry
- Winterberry Holly
- Arrowwood Viburnum
- Elderberry
- Silky Dogwood
- Shadblow Serviceberry
- Maple-leaved Viburnum
- Nannyberry Viburnum



Landowners can apply for technical and financial assistance through the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service. Programs support and help fund conservation practices including riparian work. Contact the local USDA office in Coudersport at 814-274-8166 ext. 3 to learn how to apply.