

WETLAND BUFFERS: THE BASICS



A buffer is an area surrounding a wetland, pond, stream, or lake where plants are allowed to grow. When turfgrass or only rock surround a waterbody, pollution and sediment are easily washed into them. Buffers help trap sediments and nutrients, keeping them on land before they can get to the waterbody. This benefits people in the form of clean, secure water resources and replenished groundwater for the future. If you live next to a waterbody, you're the first and best protector of that resource for everyone downstream.

VLAWMO staff and grant programs are available to help design and install buffers that beautify your property while also supporting the greater watershed.

Why maintain a buffer?

- Provide clean water by filtering and storing pollutants such as phosphorus.
- Support efficient drainage systems from culverts to streets. Buffers help reduce sediment build-up downstream and the need for costly dredging.
- Help prevent flood damage by enhancing storage during large rain events.
- Promote groundwater recharge instead of sending runoff to a neighbor.
- Enhance aesthetics and property value.
- Provide pollinator habitat and support the aquatic food chain.

BUFFER SIZES:

Wetlands have different classifications depending on vegetative diversity and size. These factors create different recommendations for buffer sizes.

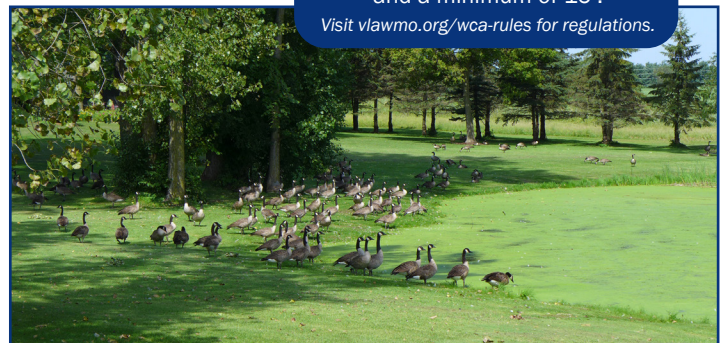
EXAMPLE:

Most small wetlands and stormponds call for a buffer with an average of 20' vegetative width and a minimum of 16'.

Visit vlawmo.org/wca-rules for regulations.



Buffers and shoreline restorations are great ways to protect water quality.



With a clear view and easy access to water, Geese can become a nuisance when no buffer exists.

