

# Best Management Farming Practices for Water Quality Protection

## Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)

**BMP: Protect ditches and banks from concentrated flow and runoff. Detain or filter eroded sediment leaving the operation. Protect creeks, streams and rivers from sediment.**

### **NRCS Practice Standard: Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)**

Developing and managing zones of buffer vegetation between farmed and non-farmed seasonal or perennial aquatic areas (streams, creeks, rivers, ponds or lakes). Herbaceous buffers consists of grasses and grass-like plants and forbs that can tolerate intermittent inundation. Helps stabilize stream banks and shorelines.



### **Riparian Herbaceous Cover (NRCS Conservation Practice Code 390)**

**Definition:** Grasses, sedges, rushes, ferns, legumes and forbs tolerant of intermittent flooding or saturated soils, established or managed as the dominant vegetation in the transitional zone between upland and aquatic habitats.

#### **Purposes:**

- Provide or improve food and cover for fish and wildlife
- Improve and maintain water quality
- Reduce erosion and improve stability to stream banks and shorelines
- Dissipate stream energy and trap sediment
- Enhance stream bank protection as part of stream bank soil bioengineering practices.

#### **Consider this:**

*Establish riparian buffers by October 15 and maintain.*

*Make certain channel and stream bank stability is adequate to support this practice.*

*Select plants that are adapted to site and hydrologic conditions and provide diversity preferred by fish and wildlife. Plants must be able to endure saturation and inundation.*

*Select native species that provide a deep binding root mass to strengthen stream bank and shoreline.*

*Select species that have stiff stems and high stem density near the ground surface.*

*If mowing is necessary it should occur outside of the nesting season.*

*Control concentrated flow erosion in the up gradient area prior to establishment of the riparian herbaceous cover.*

For more information contact your local NRCS office or visit our website at <http://efotq.sc.ea.gov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx>

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