

## BENEFITS OF BUFFERS

- ✓ **Improves water quality** downstream
- ✓ **Provides natural filtration** to absorb nutrients and pollutants
- ✓ **Provides shade**, increasing dissolved **oxygen** available to aquatic life
- ✓ **Reduces the impact of floods** and **stormwater runoff** caused from urbanization
- ✓ **Creates wildlife habitat** for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife
- ✓ **Trees hold soil** in place to help **maintain ditches** so they do not fill in through erosion
- ✓ **Improves aesthetic value** of landscape
- ✓ **Provides organic material** as **food for local wildlife**

## Your Penn Cove Watershed

The aerial photo of Central Whidbey at right shows the area of Penn Cove Watershed defined in shaded light green.



## Further Information

WICD Penn Cove Website:  
[www.whidbeycd.org/penn-cove-nta](http://www.whidbeycd.org/penn-cove-nta)

WICD Native Plant Sales:  
[www.whidbeycd.org/native-plants](http://www.whidbeycd.org/native-plants)

WICD Water Management:  
[www.whidbeycd.org/water-management](http://www.whidbeycd.org/water-management)

WA Department of Ecology/  
Stormwater & Runoff:  
<https://bit.ly/2S1bSgW>

National Marine Fisheries Services/  
Riparian Ecology and Management:  
<https://bit.ly/2NY8byX>

Island County / Natural Resources:  
<https://bit.ly/2NZnzGL>

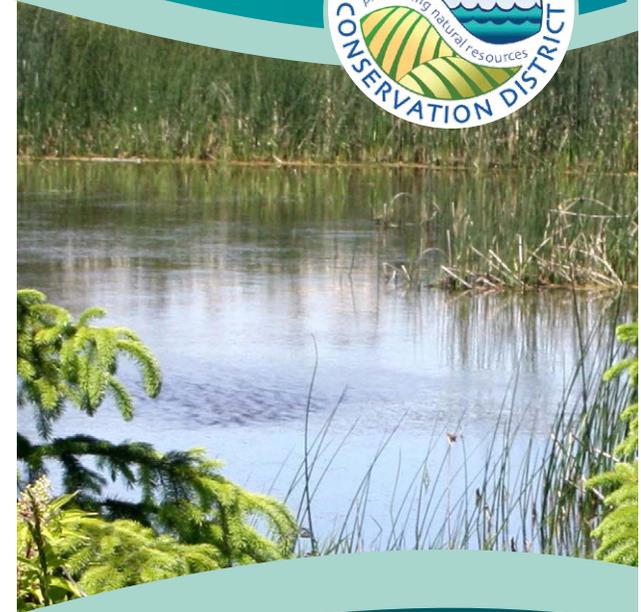
For more information contact:  
**Whidbey Island Conservation District**  
Ask for Gwendolyn  
**360-678-4708**

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# Plant Your Way to Better Water Quality

A GUIDE FOR BUFFER IMPLEMENTATION

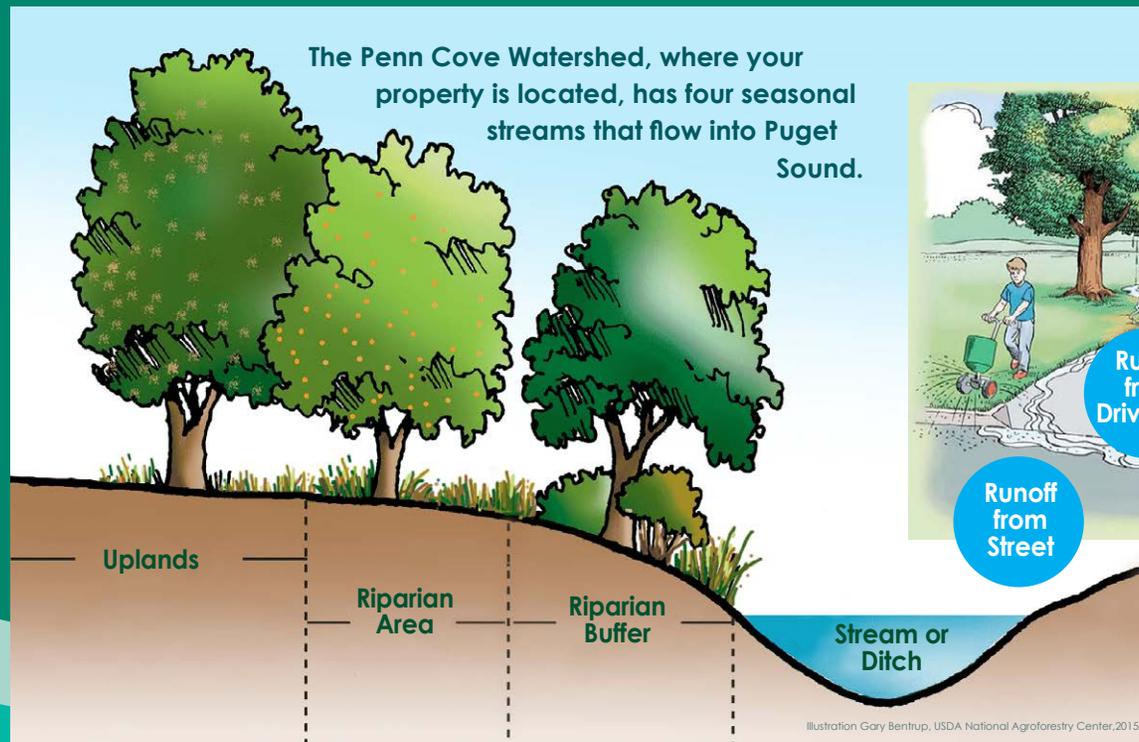


I ❤️ PENN COVE

In Association with:  
**Penn Cove Watershed:**  
**Water Quality & Best Management Assistance**

# What is a Riparian Buffer?

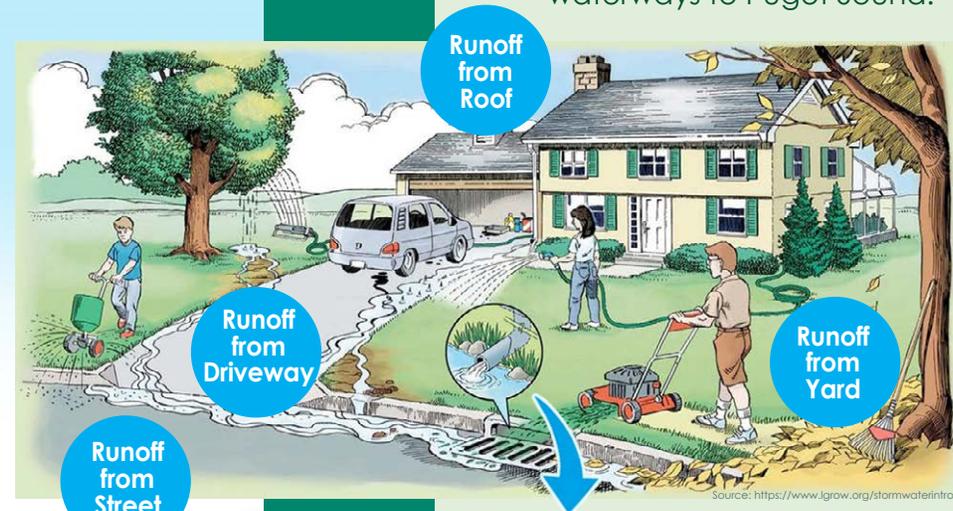
RIPARIAN BUFFERS are the strips of grass, shrubs, and, ideally, trees and shrubs along the banks of streams and ditches. They serve as a buffer between our uses of the land nearby and the water itself, and are the last line of defense for water quality. They filter nutrients and other pollutants, lower water temperature and improve aquatic habitat, stabilize stream banks, and enhance the area for recreation and wildlife. Riparian buffers are the single most effective means of protecting water resources. Streams guarded by a healthy forested riparian buffer run far cleaner and cooler and are more stable than a stream without any kind of buffer.



**HOW A RIPARIAN BUFFER WORKS** - Runoff from agricultural fields, lawns, and roads is deposited in the buffer rather than being allowed to enter Penn Cove. Plant roots help stabilize the bank, further reducing sedimentation. The tree canopy provides shade for the stream, keeping the water temperature cool enough for fish. As the trees shed their leaves in the fall, the leaves build up in the stream and provide food for wildlife.

## The Basics of Stormwater Runoff

When rain falls on hard or impervious surfaces such as roofs, roads, parking lots, and driveways it creates stormwater runoff. This runoff collects pet waste, leaves, fertilizers, motor oil, detergents, and trash and carries them through our streams, ditches, and waterways to Puget Sound.



**Stormwater runoff carries pollutants into our waterways.** This pollution can cause irreversible damage to aquatic species, forcing the closure of shellfish beds, and adversely impacting the local economy.

**Need help planning your buffer?**  
Contact Whidbey Island Conservation District  
360-678-4708 Ask for Gwendolyn