



VEGETATIVE STREAM BANK STABILIZATION



The Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District is a subdivision of state government and is funded primarily by the City of Indianapolis / Marion County government. The District works to assist county residents and others with a host of natural resource issues and concerns. These Conservation Fact Sheets are provided to assist people to better care for the land.

What is Vegetative Stream Bank Stabilization?

Vegetative stream bank stabilization is establishing and maintaining vegetative cover on channel banks, berms, and associated areas. This helps stabilize the banks, reduce erosion and sedimentation, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and maintain overall environmental quality.



Establishment of Vegetation:

1. Slopes should be cleared of unwanted materials and smoothed or shaped for planting. Topsoil should be added if necessary.
2. Plant material should be selected that is appropriate for the soil and moisture conditions. See the table below for recommended species.
3. Techniques should be used to prevent erosion and plant uprooting. This may include mulching, using sediment barriers, or laying erosion control fabric.
4. Fertilization should be used only when necessary and when potential for runoff and leaching is low.
5. Maintenance should be completed as necessary to manage the vegetative growth. This may include mowing, applying pesticides, or using fertilizer.

Considerations:

- Do not disturb stable, overhanging banks that are providing shade and cover for fish.
- If you are working in a constructed channel, consider the eventual size of vegetation so as not to restrict the capacity of the channel or conflict with other uses. You will also need to check for local easement restrictions.
- To further improve water quality and wildlife habitat, consider expanding the slope stabilization to include filter strips or riparian buffers.
- Planting a diversity of species will help combat disease and provide more wildlife value than a single species planted over the entire length of the stream.

Recommended Species:

- Big Bluestem
- Side-Oats Gramma
- Rough-Clustered Sedge
- Canada Wild Rye
- Switch Grass
- Little Bluestem
- Indian Grass
- Black Willow
- Buttonbush
- Red-osier Dogwood
- Silky Dogwood
- Flowering Dogwood
- Green Ash
- Sycamore
- Bald Cypress
- River Birch
- Eastern Cottonwood

(This is not a complete list of species.)



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