In addition to providing ecological benefits, vegetated riparian buffers also provide important economic benefits that shouldn’t be overlooked. The implementation of buffers helps to mitigate costs linked to water quality, storm and flood protection, erosion control, and health issues.

Riparian buffers provide great benefits to the water quality of the waterway and for flood reduction. By using buffers to gain these benefits naturally, less money needs to be spent on human engineered systems to achieve water quality standards and prevent or reduce flooding. Additionally, fewer and less severe floods result in fewer dollars needed for flood damages and recovery services.

According to a study by ECONorthwest in 2018, one acre of riparian buffer provides monetized benefits of over $10,000 per acre per year. Buffers also provide many benefits to the community that are difficult to monetarily assess, such as lives saved, health costs reduced, and sick days avoided. These positive economic impacts demonstrate that riparian buffers are vital to the well-being of both the community and economy.
Did you know?

- Drinking water standards can be achieved at lower costs through the use of riparian buffers than through human engineered treatment.
- Both residents and planners prefer riparian buffers in both suburban and rural landscapes.
- Riparian buffers provide air pollution reduction benefits and improve water quality.
- Buffers provide great hiking, birding, camping, fishing, boating, hunting, picnicking, swimming, and wildlife viewing areas for the public.
- The aesthetic value of riparian buffers can have a direct economic impact through increased property values, increased business sales, and increased livability.
- By providing shade, windbreaks, and winter cover, riparian buffers can reduce heating and cooling costs for homes and buildings.
- Economic benefits from riparian buffers come in the form of cost savings and cost avoidance.
- Riparian buffers reduce erosion, thereby reducing the costs associated with erosion control, and minimizing the harms associated with sedimentation downstream.
- Flooding costs decrease with riparian buffers by decreasing flood frequency, eliminating the need for expensive stormwater infrastructure, and reducing flood damages.

The information in this handout is compiled from *Vegetated Riparian Buffers: Economic Service Providers*, a white paper from the Delaware Riverkeeper Network that looks at the role of streamside buffers in healthy ecosystems. Contact the Delaware Riverkeeper Network to request the full paper. When you contact us, be sure to ask about our other resources on riparian buffers.