

An aerial photograph of a lush green landscape. In the foreground, there is a large, open field with a grid-like pattern, possibly a plantation or agricultural field. To the right, a dense forest of tall, green trees stretches across the middle ground. The background shows rolling green hills under a clear sky. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

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Federal Wetland Mitigation
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Tampa, FL*

Vegetated Buffer Guidance

Definition

Buffer – Upland &/or riparian area
that protects aquatic resource
functions at mitigation sites
from disturbances or adjacent
land uses

A Footnote

Riparian Area(s)

- Transitional between terrestrial & aquatic ecosystems
- Connect aquatic ecosystems w/ adjacent uplands through surface & subsurface hydrology.
- Adjacent to streams, rivers, lakes, & estuarine-marine shorelines.

Riparian areas & Buffers can enhance/provide functions including:

- Sediment removal/erosion control
- Excess nutrient/metal removal
- Stormwater runoff moderation
- Water temperature moderation
- Habitat diversity
- Reduction of human impact on aquatic resources



Existing Guidance

- 2000 Nationwide Permits
- Corps Regulatory Guidance Letter 02-2
 (“Guidance on compensatory mitigation projects...”)



Recommendations

- **Design Considerations – when & how large**
- **Crediting Vegetated Buffers (including Riparian Areas)**



Recommendations:

Design Considerations

- When necessary to protect aquatic resource functions at mitigation site from disturbance or adjoining land use
- Primary function to protect integrity of mitigation site
- **Width requirements**
 - 50-100 feet for water quality
 - 95-330+ feet for habitat



Potential Revisions:

Design Considerations

- When necessary to protect quality, sensitivity, or functions of aquatic resource from disturbance or adjoining land use
- Primary function to protect/enhance integrity of aquatic resource
- **Width requirements**
 - minimum width necessary to perform targeted function

General Riparian Area/Buffer Width Guidelines *

Recommended Function

Width

Water Quality Protection

16 to 98 ft

Riparian Habitat Buffers

98 to 1640 ft

Stream Stabilization

33 to 66 ft

Flood Attenuation

66 to 500 ft

Detrital Input

10 to 33 ft

* Synopsis of literature values adapted from Fischer & Fischenich 2000

Design Considerations cont.

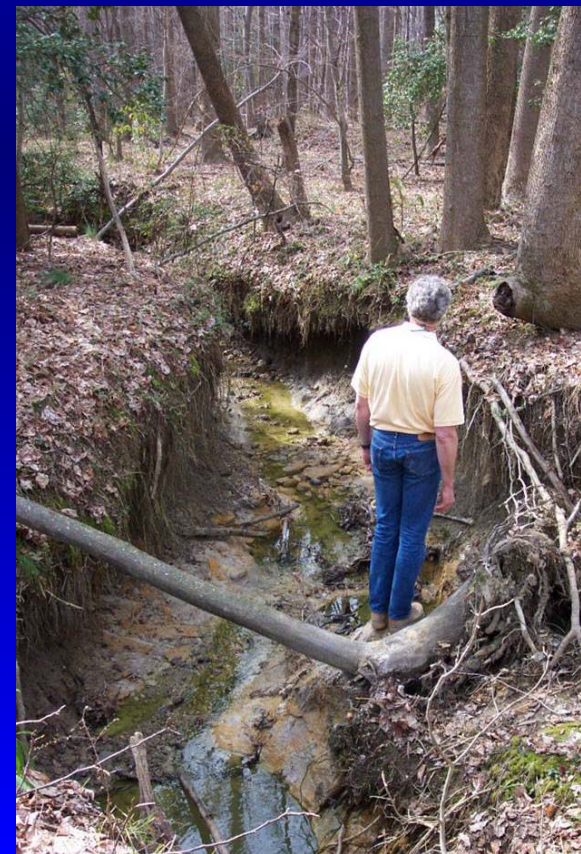
Width Requirements – Consider:

- **Adjacent land use**
- **Type of aquatic resource**
- **Size & shape of resource protected/enhanced**
- **Soil Conditions**
- **Slope**
- **Vegetation**



Credit for Riparian Areas & Buffers:

- To extent enhances aquatic resource function & function of mitigation site or other aquatic resources in watershed
- If best for aquatic environment on a watershed basis
- If associated aquatic resources:
 - 1) Perform important functions to region
 - 2) Under demonstrable threat of loss or degradation
- May be limited if compromised or questionable value due to width, shape, condition, etc.



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. The scene is divided into several distinct areas: a large green field in the upper left, a dense dark green forest in the center, and a prominent red soil area in the lower right. The text "Questions/Feedback?" is overlaid in a white, italicized serif font across the center of the image.

Questions/Feedback?