

# Stream Management in Pennsylvania

## Stewardship Opportunities for Private Landowners



Wood turtle (WPC)

Western Pennsylvania stream (WPC)

## What is a Stream?

Running waters, or streams, are known locally by different names depending on the region, and in PA are commonly referred to as a branch, brook, creek, lick, river, or run.

Streams are critical to the water cycle and help recharge groundwater. Land directly adjacent to streams, known as the “riparian zone”, is important for water quality and fish habitat and serves as wildlife migration corridors.

## Status of Streams in Pennsylvania

Water quality and instream habitat are important features of stream health. Western Pennsylvania Conservancy’s (WPC) Watershed Conservation Program is focused on the condition of streams and is poised to locate, evaluate, and develop a site-specific management plan to protect and restore streams.



Little Mahoning Creek, Indiana, PA (WPC)

## Stream Habitats in Need of Protection

Priority species associated with streams and rivers are imperiled by loss of habitat.

Clean water is vital to the survival of fish, turtles, salamanders, mussels, and other

invertebrates found in streams. Other wildlife that are dependent on riparian areas and streams, also are affected where waterbodies are degraded.



Hooded merganser (WPC)

Threats to stream water quality and habitat include:

- Poor agriculture practices
- Abandoned mine drainage
- Stormwater runoff from parking lots and roads
- Municipal point source pollution
- Failing septic systems
- Dirt and gravel road runoff

Proper best management practices can alleviate these threats.



Streambank stabilization (WPC)

## What Assistance May be Available to Landowners?

**Technical Assistance** to improve streams includes:

- In-stream habitat & streambank stabilization
- Streambank fencing
- Riparian buffer restoration
- Management of invasive plant species
- Township assistance for dirt and gravel roads

A professional biologist can help you develop a habitat management plan that benefits water quality and meets *your* property and wildlife management goals (see contact information).

**Stream Management Assistance** may be available to implement the habitat management plan for your property, contingent upon availability of funding.

**Habitat Protection** funds for long-term protection, such as conservation easements, may be available for *your* land. Contact a technical assistance partner.



Eastern Brook Trout  
(PA Fish and Boat Commission)



Freshwater Mussels,  
Jeremy Deeds, (WPC)

## Life Goes with the Flow of Healthy Streams

Streams vary in size and water flow; some run year-round, while others are intermittent and often dry during late summer. Regardless, all streams are important for many reasons:

- People depend on streams to supply drinking water for both themselves and for livestock
- Aquatic life needs healthy streams to thrive
- Wildlife utilize streams and adjoining riparian corridors for cover, nesting, and raising young

## Best Management Practices

The primary management actions for streams include:

- Protection from sediment and erosion
- Maintenance of riparian corridors
- Improving in-stream habitat
- Removing invasive plant species
- Repairing dirt and gravel road drainage
- To view pictures of these practices visit: [www.WaterLandLife.org](http://www.WaterLandLife.org)



Native wildflowers and warm-season grasses (WPC)



Streambank fencing (WPC)

## What Can You Do?

Private landowners play a key role in the conservation of stream water quality and surrounding habitat by protecting streambanks and allowing for the establishment of a natural buffer. Contact a resource professional for assistance.

## Technical Assistance Partners

### Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Division of Habitat Management

Phone: 814-359-5119

For PFBC Regional Habitat Biologists, visit:  
[http://www.fish.state.pa.us/dir\\_habitat.htm](http://www.fish.state.pa.us/dir_habitat.htm)

### Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Watershed Conservation Program

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[www.WaterLandLife.org](http://www.WaterLandLife.org)



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