



**OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE**



Healthy streamside look different throughout the state. Here a variety of grasses, shrubs, and trees make up the streamside area.

Achieving Healthy Streamside

As farmers and ranchers, you care about stewardship of Oregon's natural resources. Rivers and streams are a big part of Oregon's natural resources. These streams and rivers need to be healthy in order to provide the uses we all require: irrigation, kayaking, fishing, and more. To be healthy, each stream and river needs a robust streamside.

Oregon's streamside are incredibly diverse and so are the plants in these areas. At the same time, some common traits are shared by healthy streamside around the state. Healthy streamside include few weeds, diverse plant species, and a mix of young and old plants.

Achieving healthy streamside vegetation often involves very simple changes. It can be as easy as pulling cropping activities back a few feet from the top of the stream bank. Fencing out an area to permanently or temporarily exclude livestock to allow streamside vegetation to thrive is a great management tool.

Compliance with Water Quality Laws

Compliance with Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) water quality regulations is a first step to achieving a healthy streamside area. In Oregon, farmers and ranchers are required by law to allow streamside vegetation along rivers and streams to establish in order to stabilize stream banks, shade streams, and filter surface runoff before it flows into streams. While compliance with this vegetation regulation is required, how landowners comply may vary depending on farm operation strategies. Many farmers and ranchers are already meeting the requirements by allowing streamside vegetation to establish and develop naturally.

What do healthy streamsides look like?



This healthy streamside is being protected with fencing. Vegetation consists of a mixture of grasses and willows.



This landowner has managed for a healthy streamside. This site is in compliance with willows, and grasses.



This landowner chose to plant trees in the streamside area to shade out weeds, like reed canary grass, and received cost share to do so.

Some farmers and ranchers are going further to meet Oregon agriculture's commitment to better water quality by planting vegetation and controlling noxious weeds in streamside areas. In areas where noxious weeds are a problem, planting vegetation and controlling weeds can help achieve healthy streamside vegetation more quickly.

Some streamside areas along agricultural lands still lack adequate and appropriate streamside vegetation. ODA is working with our partners to help ensure that all agricultural lands bordering streams meet the vegetation requirements and achieve healthy streamside vegetation along agricultural lands.

ODA wants to help make the requirements clear to Oregon's farmers and ranchers so you are able to tell whether you are in compliance and choose how you intend to achieve or maintain compliance on your own. At the same time, technical advice and financial assistance is available if you would like help meeting compliance or "jump-starting" a healthy streamside plant community. ODA staff, as well as local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Watershed Councils, OSU Extension, and agricultural organizations are ready to help.



Benefits of a Healthy Streamside

- Stable streambanks
- Cooler summer water temperatures
- Higher summer flows
- Filtration of excess nutrients, bacteria, and sediment
- Wildlife habitat
- Fish and amphibian habitat
- Improved forage production
- Spray drift buffer to keep pesticides out of water



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