



# Vegetative Stream Bank Stabilization



Photo courtesy of: [www.nativesodsolutions.com](http://www.nativesodsolutions.com)

## 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.

### Considerations:

- Before beginning any project, check homeowner association covenants, as well as local and county ordinances. Do not work in a drainage, utility, or other easement without the proper permits.
- 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 and permit 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.

### Establishment of Vegetation:

The below steps are for informational purposes only. When stabilizing an eroding stream bank, consult the Hamilton County SWCD or the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for technical expertise specific to your site. For severely eroded sites, vegetation may not be sufficient, and other engineering materials such as coir logs or a-jacks may be necessary.

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.

### 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

Contact the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District for more information, a site evaluation, contractor info, etc.

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(This is not a complete list of species.)