

POND & WETLAND BUFFERS



A buffer is an area surrounding a wetland, pond, stream, or lake where plants are allowed to grow. When turf grass or rock surround a water body, water from storms, snowmelt, and sprinklers carry pollution and sediment into them. Buffers help replenish groundwater, and trap sediments and nutrients before they can get to the waterbody. This benefit circles back around to people in the form of clean, secure water resources and clean, efficient streets. If you live next to a water body, you're the best protector of that resource. So *what can you do?* Let a buffer grow naturally, or contact VLAWMO for help designing an aesthetically pleasing buffer. Ponds and wetlands have official classifications and buffer requirements. Descriptions and buffer charts are available from VLAWMO staff, vlawmo.org/agencies, or from your local city or township.

Why keep a buffer around your pond or wetland?

- Provide clean water by filtering and storing pollutants such as phosphorus.
- Keep streets clean and save money. Buffers keep drainage systems functioning, reducing sediment build-up and the need for dredging.
- Prevent flood damage by storing water during large rain events.
- Promote groundwater recharge instead of increasing surface runoff.
- Enhance aesthetics and property value.
- Provide places for wildlife to eat, sleep, hide, and nest.

EXAMPLE:

Wetlands have different classifications depending on vegetative diversity and health. A "manage 3" is generally a low-quality wetland with high human impact.

MANAGE 3:

average 20' width
minimum 16'



Buffers and shoreline restorations are great ways to protect water quality.



With a clear view and easy access to water, Geese can become a nuisance when no buffer exists.

