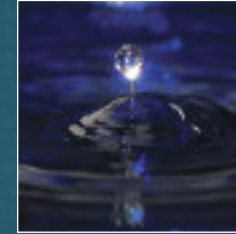


Montana's rivers and streams need  
**ROOM TO ROAM**



**Your future depends  
on clean water.**

Enjoyment of your new Montana home depends on the future health of Montana's fish, wildlife, and natural areas.

Montana's fastest growth is in rural places near rivers, lakes, and forests.

Today, people like you want to live near water, and areas nearest to Montana's rivers, streams, and lakes are among the most popular rural development sites in Montana.

Rivers, streams, and wetlands make up less than five percent of Montana's landscape, yet contain 75 percent of the state's plant and animal diversity.

**Most agree that's worth protecting.**

It makes sense to protect the natural values that you want to enjoy as you consider your new home site.

Stream setbacks offer you an intelligent solution that protects your water, your privacy, your budget, and the natural landscapes that harbor the fish and wildlife everyone enjoys.



***Protecting Your Natural Environment***

**A New Home Builder's Guide  
to Responsible Development  
Near Rivers, Streams, and Wetlands**

Visit  
<http://water.montana.edu/setback>  
to discover how stream setbacks  
can improve your quality of life.

Produced by the Governor's Task Force  
for Riparian Protection

Information on the cost of this publication can be obtained by writing to the Montana Department of Administration. Copyright ©2006 by the State of Montana. All rights reserved. Designed and produced by the Governor's Task Force for Riparian Protection. Luke Duran, art director.  
Cover photo by Chuck and Gale Robbins



Long-time Montanans and newcomers alike are attracted to the state's unspoiled outdoor recreation opportunities.



Bank erosion, flooding, introduction of pollutants, and loss of critical habitat are all effects caused by building too closely to water's edge.



Constructing your home with a stream setback helps maintain a natural setting, and provides room for fish, wildlife, and vegetation to thrive.



Your natural neighbors depend on a buffer between your home and the water.



**Stream setbacks bring Montana's future into focus. When you build your new home, remember:**

- your comfort and well-being depends on clean water.
- your enjoyment depends on maintaining a natural environment.
- your outdoor lifestyle depends on access to wild fish populations, abundant wildlife, and the recreational activities that define the Montana experience.

**A well-designed stream setback:**

- provides a natural area between the stream and your home and buildings.
- reduces the risk of losing your investment to flooding and erosion.
- increases your property value.
- filters pollutants that can harm fish, wildlife and water quality.

#### **Setbacks reduce flooding**

Stream setbacks reduce property damage and downstream flooding because streams overflow onto their natural floodplains.

#### **Setbacks reduce pollution**

Vegetation within stream setbacks filters and traps pollutants, and helps to maintain Montana's water quality.

#### **Setbacks reduce stream bank erosion**

Vegetated stream setbacks protect against erosion by slowing runoff and stabilizing stream banks.

#### **Setbacks protect fish and wildlife habitats**

Stream setbacks provide habitats for Montana's fish and wildlife. Setbacks protect fish and wildlife cover and provide shade that cools the water.

#### **Setbacks provide economic benefits**

Stream setbacks increase property values and provide economic benefits by reducing the need to combat flooding, repair eroding stream banks, and replace damaged property.

#### **Setbacks provide recreation benefits and privacy**

Montana's stream access law offers everyone the ability to enjoy Montana's waterways. Stream setbacks provide homeowners privacy from anglers and floaters while protecting our traditional relationship with Montana's natural resources that makes Montana such an attractive place to live, work, visit, and play.

#### **What can you do?**

Remember, stream setbacks provide you with personal assets that are economical, efficient, and sustainable.

- Build on higher ground, outside of the floodplain, and back from streams and wetlands.
- Leave streamside and wetland areas intact.
- Never dig, cut native vegetation, or build within 300 feet of streamside or wetland areas.
- Storm water rapidly runs off hard surfaces, so keep things like driveways, concrete patios, and rooftops to a minimum and direct runoff away from riparian and wetland areas.
- Install septic systems outside riparian areas and the flood plain.
- Join your local watershed group or contact Montana's Watershed Coordination Council.
- Don't apply fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides near a stream, lake, or wetland.
- Ask your county commissioners to adopt rules and regulations that preserve, protect, and restore streamside areas.
- Provide stream setback education and outreach programs and materials to your neighbors, your builder, your real estate agent, and others.
- If you already live near a stream or river, consider improving your property with native landscaping to provide a buffer between your home and the stream.

#### **Montana watershed groups**

**Montana Watershed Coordination Council**  
<http://water.montana.edu/watersheds>

**Watershed protection and restoration Center for Watershed Protection**  
<http://www.cwp.org>

**State laws, rules, and regulations**  
**Montana Department of Environmental Quality**  
<http://www.deq.state.mt.us/wqinfo>

**Streamside and wetland information**  
**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**  
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps>

**Information, resources, and education**  
**Montana Water**  
<http://water.montana.edu>

**Technical and financial assistance**  
**Natural Resource and Conservation Service**  
<http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov>

**Riparian and wetland management**  
**Montana Conservation Districts**  
<http://www.macdnet.org>

