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Trees Forever Iowa Buffer Initiative

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Abstract
This article is the last in a series about riparian buffer systems—buffers of trees, grasses, and shrubs around streams, creeks, and waterways. The technology has been researched and proven at the Bear Creek National Buffer Demonstration Model site in Story County. A nonprofit group called Trees Forever is working on a 5-year program (initiated in 1998) to develop awareness about the technique.

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This article is the last in a series about riparian buffer systems—buffers of trees, grasses, and shrubs around streams, creeks, and waterways. The technology has been researched and proven at the Bear Creek National Buffer Demonstration Model site in Story County. A nonprofit group called Trees Forever is working on a 5-year program (initiated in 1998) to develop awareness about the technique.

Trees Forever staff is working on installing flexible models of riparian buffers throughout the state of Iowa. Their goal is to demonstrate—especially for farmers and landowners—the riparian buffer system of trees, shrubs, and grasses developed by the Agroecology Issue Team of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University. The project, called the Trees Forever Iowa Buffer Initiative, is working to increase awareness through a 5-year program. For each of the 5 years, 10 demonstration projects will be developed in areas that are very accessible and visible to the public and other landowners. And farmers, landowners, and youth will be invited to buffer field days at the demonstration sites to see how planting trees, shrubs, and grasses improves water quality.

Also, 10 projects will be developed each year in areas of high need, whether visible to the public or not. These projects are intended to apply the natural system in places where it can provide immediate benefits to water quality.

The 20 projects currently established were selected on their ability to demonstrate riparian buffer technology on differing terrain and soil types. On each site, Trees Forever staff work with the landowner on the process—planning through planting. Trees Forever also will help identify resources in cost share and technical help that are available, and answer any other questions.

The Trees Forever Iowa Buffer Initiative also is developing a network of technical experts on riparian buffers. Through workshops, field days, and direct assistance to landowners, Trees Forever helps hundreds of people in the fields of conservation and agriculture understand the principles of riparian buffer systems. Once trained, these people can tell others about the flexibility and value of using trees, shrubs, and grasses as buffers around streams, creeks, and rivers.

By using flexible design of riparian buffer technology in several demonstration sites across the state, Trees Forever will demonstrate the roll that landowners and farmers can play in improving water quality.

At the Iowa-based Farm Progress Show in September, show-goers will have an opportunity to see one of the Trees Forever Iowa Buffer Initiative demonstration sites on the Farm
Progress Show grounds. *Trees Forever* has been working with Farm Progress Show host Amana Society Farms on establishing a demonstration riparian buffer along the creek that flows through the property. During the show, experts will be on hand to answer questions about riparian buffer systems.

For other sites, check your local newspaper for the announcement of a *Trees Forever Iowa* Buffer Initiative Field Day in your area, and go see what's happening. Attending a field day can be a learning experience for people at any level of understanding about riparian buffers.

**Trees Forever Iowa Buffer Initiative Field Days 1999**

- June 30, Hardin County
- July 10, Des Moines County
- Sept. 28-30, Farm Progress Show
- Others will be announced

**Iowa counties with a demonstration and project site in 1998**

Buena Vista          Clarke
Calhoun               Clayton (2)
Crawford              Davis
Greene (2)            Hardin
Iowa                  Johnson
Lucas                 Montgomery
O'Brien               Polk
Plymouth              Washington
Winnesheik            Woodbury

**Iowa counties with a demonstration and project site in 1999**

Adams                 Buchanan
Calhoun               Chickasaw
Clinton               Crawford
Delaware              Des Moines
Dubuque               Fayette
Franklin              Grundy (2)
Hamilton              Humboldt
The work of Trees Forever is supported by several partners:

Key sponsoring partners

- Novartis Crop Protection, Inc.
- Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources Environmental Protection Division
- United States Environmental Protection Agency
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service

Key research partner

- Agroecology Issue Team of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, ISU

Cooperating partners

- Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, ISU
- Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources Forestry Division
- Iowa Department of Transportation
- Iowa State University Department of Forestry
- National Soil Tilth Laboratory-USDA
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- Conservation Districts of Iowa

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