STREAM CORRIDORS

GOALS

1. Provide opportunities for a variety of recreational activities within stream corridors, including wilderness and developed recreational activities.
2. Protect riparian fish and wildlife habitats.
3. Protect water quality to support domestic uses, fish and wildlife production, and recreational activities.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

a. Buffers

Width of buffers along a stream will vary according to management intent for the stream and adjacent uplands. In addition, the buffer width for any given stream may vary along the stream course depending on topography, vegetation, adjoining land use, and land ownership. The following factors may be considered in establishing buffer widths: recreational activities to be accommodated, fish use and their habitat requirements, habitat protection and management, noise abatement, visual quality, water quality, and prevention of riverbank erosion (in which case the buffer should be widened to compensate).

b. Guidelines for Establishing Widths

Although buffer widths may vary from stream to stream, a basic level of consistency is necessary to avoid confusion about the width of public use and access areas along the state's many streams; also fieldwork and site analysis to establish separate buffer widths for each stream corridor would be prohibitively expensive. The following guidelines are intended to establish a reasonable degree of consistency in buffer widths used by the department when disposing of an interest in state land.

Standard Buffer Width: 100 to 200 feet. A standard minimum buffer width of 200 feet should generally be established landward from the ordinary high water mark on each bank unless the use or activity is water-dependent or water-related. This width may be reduced to a minimum of 100 feet on each bank in individual cases when consistent with the management intent for the area. The width of the buffer will be adequate to maintain public access to riparian areas and protect water quality in accordance with water quality standards established by the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Forest Practices Act.

d. Uses Allowed in Buffers

Water-dependent structures, such as docks and boathouses, may be allowed within publicly owned buffers. If a structure would block public access, the Division of Land will require an applicant to provide alternate access. Commercial or industrial uses and activities that are neither water-dependent nor water-related may be considered on a case-by-case basis provided that the applicant can demonstrate public need and lack of suitable alternatives. If, because of topography or adjacent land ownership, it is not practical to maintain a buffer adjacent to fish habitat, public water supplies, or recreational waters, other measures will be used to mitigate the impacts.

e. Alteration of the Hydrologic System

Channelization, diversion, or damming that will alter natural hydrologic conditions and have a significant adverse impact on important riverine habitat should be minimized.

f. Soil Erosion

Soil erosion will be minimized by restricting the removal of vegetation adjacent to streams and by stabilizing disturbed soil as soon as possible. Projects to stabilize a streambank require an authorization from DNR. Please see ***Resort Development Guideline 3, Revegetation and Erosion Control,*** in this chapter.