

“ Fabulous program!  
Helped improve  
wildlife habitat,  
increase native  
plant diversity, and  
decrease erosion  
potential. ”

*Eric and Angela Funk  
2011 & 2012 Illinois Buffer  
Partnership landowners  
Tazewell County, Illinois*



**Water.** It's the most valuable natural resource we have on Earth. Yet the availability of clean, healthy water has become a major concern for many.

Runoff from farm fields, city streets, parking lots, and lawns degrades our lakes and streams and erodes our soils. Every year in Iowa and Illinois we lose, on average, five tons of topsoil per acre. Wildlife habitat also continues to decline as more trees and native plants are removed from the landscape.

At Trees Forever, we care about the land and the people who work and live on it – today and tomorrow. Our vision is a future with clean water, healthy farms and communities, and a resilient environment that can sustain future generations.

### Conservation Practices & Benefits

Strategically placed buffers and conservation plantings of perennial trees, shrubs, prairie grasses, and flowers are proven to help:

- **Reduce sediment runoff into streams and other waterways.** According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), buffers can reduce sediment runoff by up to 75 percent.
- **Reduce and filter fertilizer and pesticide runoff.** The NRCS reports that buffers can remove up to 50 percent or more of nutrients and pesticides from runoff.

*(continued)*



Trees Forever has partnered with Iowa State University researchers to install more buffers across the landscape. Above are before and after views of the National Bear Creek Riparian Zone Restoration Project in Story County, Iowa.

(Conservation Practices & Benefits, continued)

- **Improve soil quality.** Permanent root structures and reduced tillage promote microbial activity benefiting soil structure and quality.
- **Improve fish and wildlife habitat.** Native plantings along streams and waterways can provide food, cover, and migration corridors for wildlife.
- **Provide additional income through agroforestry practices.** Growing chestnuts, hazelnuts, aronia berry, pecans, and black walnuts, for example.

## Trees Forever Water Quality Initiatives

(1997-2013)

488: Project & demonstration sites

8,056: Acres of buffers & conservation plantings

161.5: Miles of streams protected with buffers

1,750,777: Trees & shrubs planted

61,036: Volunteer hours logged

## What Can You Do?

### Communities, Farmers, and Landowners

Consider installing buffers on your land adjacent to vulnerable waters. The experienced Trees Forever staff can assist in selecting appropriate conservation practices, finding funding resources, and guiding the installation and maintenance of the buffer. We also offer cost-share assistance, project signs, and the opportunity to host a field day to highlight your project.

Applications are accepted throughout the year for our Iowa program, *Working Watersheds: Buffers & Beyond™* and in Illinois, the *Illinois Buffer Partnership*. Information and application forms are available by contacting Trees Forever.

### How We All Can Help Improve Water Quality

- Plant native trees, shrubs, prairie grasses and flowers to intercept rainwater, improve infiltration, and create wildlife and pollinator habitat.
- If you must use herbicides or pesticides on your lawn, trees or plants, follow all directions carefully. Consider hand-weeding when possible.
- Only fertilize lawns if a soil test shows it is needed. Follow all directions. Consider building soil health with aeration and compost application.
- Collect rainwater from your roof to use for irrigation later. Plant rain gardens to keep stormwater runoff from reaching city storm sewers.
- Volunteer with your community tree or conservation group. Or start one!
- Consider a donation to Trees Forever in support of water quality initiatives.



THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

Join Trees Forever on its mission to plant and care for trees and the environment by empowering people, building community and promoting stewardship.

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(319) 373-0650 • (800) 369-1269  
www.treesforever.org  
770 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue • Marion, IA 52302