

# The Basics of Riparian Buffer Maintenance



## Common maintenance activities:

✓ Check shelters, stakes, and bird nets



Apply herbicide

\*Some sites prohibit herbicides – substitute hand-pulling or mechanical methods



Mow between rows



Invasive species management



Replace trees as needed

### 0-6 months



Leaning shelters can damage trees. Late winter is a good time to check your shelters, stakes and bird nets. Remove wasp nests or other debris.



Eliminating vegetation near trees in the spring and fall takes away groundcover and food for pests like voles, which can damage and kill young trees.



Mowing in the summer controls noxious weeds as well as reducing vole habitat. It also makes accessing your tree shelters easier.



Best control strategies vary by species. Ask your conservation professional what methods would be appropriate for your site.



Replace dead trees as needed to meet project objectives, making sure to correct the cause of the initial tree's death first.



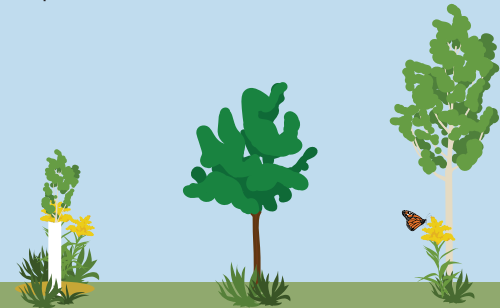
### 1-3 years



If self-removing, shelters should begin to separate along their seam as the tree grows. If not, shelters can be cut vertically in the spring if they are causing tree damage. In either case, the split shelters and/or stakes should be left in place to prevent damage from buck rub.



Widespread mowing should not be used as a primary management strategy after year 3.



### 5-10 years



Without mowing, natural tree regeneration may be able to fill in gaps left by failed plantings.



### 10+ years



While an established buffer with mature trees requires much less maintenance, you will likely still have to watch for and manage invasive species, especially if they impact project objectives.



# Top Tips for Buffer Success



- 1 Create walking trails through your buffer project, so you can stay connected, watch plants grow, and learn to identify new plants!
- 2 Remove bird nets before the tree branches get to the top of the tube. Throw nets away.
- 3 Hammer loose stakes and replace broken ones.
- 4 Replace or repair zip ties and/or tubes if they have been damaged/chewed by wildlife.
- 5 Remove weeds growing inside the tube, especially if they're growing taller than the seedling and out-competing the planted seedlings for light, water, and nutrients.
- 6 Replace dead trees by replanting with species that are happily growing in the buffer (under the JRBP, tree replacement after year three is not required, but may help the buffer fill in and maintain diversity).
- 7 Suppress invasive species with targeted herbicide usage and/or by using other techniques.
- 8 Steward and encourage the natural regeneration of native species within the planted buffer areas by reducing mowing or not mowing.
- 9 When the tree starts to split the perforated edge on the tube, help it along by making a cut down the entire length of the tube to create more airflow and continue to protect the tree without girdling it.
- 10 Remove and recycle plastic shelters when the tree is mature enough to withstand buck rub.

