

## Description

Buffer strips of preserved natural vegetation or grass help protect waterways and wetlands from land disturbing activities. Vegetated buffers improve stormwater runoff quality by straining sediment, promoting infiltration, and slowing runoff velocities.



**Photograph VB-1.** A vegetated buffer is maintained between the area of active construction and the drainage swale. Photo courtesy of WWE.

## Appropriate Uses

Vegetated buffers can be used to separate land disturbing activities and natural surface waters or conveyances.

In many jurisdictions, local governments require some type of setback from natural waterways. Concentrated flow should not be directed through a buffer; instead, runoff should be in the form of sheet flow. Vegetated buffers are typically used in combination with other perimeter control BMPs such as sediment control logs or silt fence for multi-layered protection.

## Design and Installation

Minimum buffer widths may vary based on local regulations. Clearly delineate the boundary of the natural buffer area using construction fencing, silt fence, or a comparable technique. In areas that have been cleared and graded, vegetated buffers such as sod can also be installed to create or restore a vegetated buffer around the perimeter of the site.

## Maintenance and Removal

Inspect buffer areas for signs of erosion such as gullies or rills. Stabilize eroding areas, as needed. If erosion is due to concentrated flow conditions, it may be necessary to install a level spreader or other technique to restore sheet flow conditions. Inspect perimeter controls delineating the vegetative buffer and repair or replace as needed.

Vegetated Buffers	
<b>Functions</b>	
Erosion Control	Moderate
Sediment Control	Yes
Site/Material Management	Yes