



SYSTEM DIMENSIONS	CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL	BIOLOGICAL COMPONENTS	HUMAN USES
Extent Pattern	Nutrients, Carbon, Oxygen Contaminants Physical	Plants and Animals Communities Ecological Productivity	Food, Fiber, and Water Recreation and Other Services

? Stream Bank Vegetation

What Is This Indicator, and Why Is It Important? This indicator will describe the percentage of miles of stream (stream-miles) in urban and suburban areas that are lined with trees, shrubs, and other plants.

The amount of vegetation along a stream bank strongly affects both water quality and the kinds of fish and other animals that live in and along the stream. Plants lining a stream bank shade the stream, making it cooler in summer, and they serve as habitat for animals. Plants drop leaves and branches into the stream, providing food and habitat for stream animals; they also trap sediments and pollutants washing in from adjacent areas, preventing them from reaching the water and helping to maintain good water quality.

Stream Bank Vegetation

Indicator Development Needed

Why Can't This Indicator Be Reported at This Time? Reporting on this indicator would require agreement on a standard approach for defining and measuring streamside vegetation, including the minimum width of plant cover for a stream to be considered “vegetated,” and agreement on whether and to what degree “unnatural” plant cover such as lawns should be counted. Once such definitions are established, data sources could be evaluated. These include satellite-based measures, which currently cannot distinguish very small landscape features, and locally generated information, which can be quite detailed, although it may be incompatible from location to location and very expensive to obtain.

There is no technical note for this indicator.