

As a landowner of stream front property, you are probably aware of the ever-changing nature of your stream. From day to day and season to season, your stream is constantly adjusting to changing conditions. Urbanization changes the stormwater runoff characteristics and increased streambank erosion throughout DuPage County. These changes can have significant impacts on your property if the proper preventative measures are not taken. This brochure is intended to outline some of the major issues you may encounter owning stream front property and to provide general information on how to properly address them.

Stream Maintenance

A stream can transport amazing types and amounts of debris. While some of this debris is natural (e.g., leaves, branches, etc.), some is not (e.g., fast food litter, tires, etc.). In addition, some landowners store potential debris (e.g., scrap lumber, firewood, etc.) in stream side areas where it may be washed into the stream during floods.

In small amounts, debris may be unsightly but harmless. If the debris is allowed to build up, it can cause jams which can restrict the water flow and increase water levels. This can lead to increased erosion of the streambank and, if left unchecked, flooding during heavy rains.

In June of 1991 the Stormwater Management Division of DuPage County implemented a Countywide stream maintenance program. The goal of the program was to reduce localized flood damages associated with debris jams and restore the natural flood storage and conveyance of the streams. Over the last 20 years, maintenance activities were completed to clean the nearly 360 miles of DuPage County streams.. This completed maintenance does not supersede the property owners' responsibility to maintain their sections of stream (i.e., removal of debris and blockages). Periodic maintenance by homeowners to prevent debris jams from accumulating is the best approach. Also, the DuPage Countywide Stormwater and Floodplain Ordinance prohibits

homeowners from storing landscape waste or certain other items along streams and in the regulatory floodplain where they can wash away during heavy rains.

The County does intervene in unique circumstances where there is a blockage that affects multiple property owners or can cause flooding, such as with felled trees from a storm. If there is a situation you believe warrants County assistance, please email Stream.Maintenance@dupageco.org or go to www.dupageco.org/dec for additional information.



Streambank Stabilization

Streambanks are a part of a homeowner's property, and homeowners can maintain and improve their property values by being good stewards and addressing erosion on their property. As it is difficult to design a project that will reclaim portions of property eroded away or to protect remaining property from streambank erosion, property owners should seek professional guidance on possible stabilization techniques and the need for permits before initiating any project. Permits may be required from local, state or federal agencies, depending upon the magnitude of the project.

The use of vegetation, rather than concrete, rock,

or wooden ties, as the primary means of stabilizing an eroded streambank is, in many cases, a cost-effective alternative. By reintroducing native species of trees, shrubs, wildflowers and grasses along DuPage County streams, a living system of stabilization will be created. For more information refer to the Division of Environmental Concern's brochures "Maintenance & Management of Naturalized Areas: A Homeowners Guide," "Streambank Stabilization" and the "Streambank Stabilization Program Streamlined Permit Packet."

In certain areas, the County did undertake some streambank stabilization projects for the public benefit. In these situations, any initial maintenance easement that may have been acquired has likely been turned back over to the property owners.

The County funds certain eligible streambank stabilization projects, along with other projects to improve water quality, through Water Quality Improvement Grants. For information on this Grant Program, and the above noted brochures, please visit www.dupageco.org/swm for more information.

Yard Waste

The disposal of yard waste along or in a stream is strictly prohibited by law. Many people illegally dispose of yard waste along or in their streams. This is undesirable for a number of reasons:

1. Grass clippings act as a mulch, killing off any underlying vegetation that could otherwise help stabilize the streambank.
2. Nutrient-rich clippings entering the stream can cause nuisance algae and odor problems and reduce the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water, killing fish and other aquatic organisms.
3. Placing woody brush into or near a stream sets the stage for a debris jam to occur, with streambank erosion or localized flooding the likely result.

If landscape waste is disposed of illegally on a streambank, the landowner may be subject to a fine. Many units of government now offer assistance in disposing of yard waste. For more information on yard waste disposal, contact your municipality, township office, or the DuPage County Division of Green Initiatives (630) 407-6700.

Beaver Damage

Beaver are found in many of the streams in DuPage County. Because of their nocturnal habits, most stream front landowners may not even realize beaver are present until a tree in their yard is felled or a downstream beaver dam begins backing water onto their property.

In areas where the only problem is the loss of trees, it is possible to wrap the base of trees with hardware cloth (steel wires) that prevents the beaver from chewing on the tree. Another deterrent is spraying the bark of the tree with a repellent. This leaves an offending taste to the bark of the tree, which generally discourages the beaver from chewing. Since the spray eventually washes off, repeated applications may be necessary. If all else fails and beaver damage becomes excessive, it may be necessary to have the animal removed.

For more information on wildlife management, contact the **Forest Preserve District of DuPage County** or the **Illinois Department of Natural Resources**.

Adopt-a-Stream

DuPage County encourages groups to formally adopt a section of stream to clean and monitor twice a year.

This program is designed to be comprehensive so groups may choose to: remove debris; monitor water quality; remove and treat non-native nuisance vegetation; plant native trees, shrubs, grasses or aquatic vegetation; and/or help property owners protect stream side vegetation from animals.

For more information on the Adopt-a-Stream Program, contact **DuPage County Stormwater Management Division**.

For more information on stream management, contact:

DuPage County
Stormwater Management Division
(630) 407-6700

Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
(630) 933-7200-4900

Kane-DuPage Soil & Water Conservation District
(630) 584-7961

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
(847) 381-2253

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
(847) 608-3100

Natural Resources Conservation Service
(630) 851-3254

For more information on yard waste disposal, contact your local municipality, township office, or:

Division of Green Initiatives
(630) 407-6700

To report stream pollution, contact:

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Emergency Response Unit
1 (800) 782-7860
(708) 338-7900
or
(217) 782-3637

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Living On A Stream



**DuPage County
Stormwater Management Division
630-407-6700**

