

# THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL

## Farm Stewardship Committee

### **Protect Local Streams** Source: Maryland Department of Agriculture Office of Resource Conservation

Maryland's nutrient management regulations require regulated horse operations to install pasture management practices under the guidance of local soil conservation districts to protect streams from livestock impacts. But it's a good idea for all horse operations—large and small—to keep animals away from streams. Contact your soil conservation district for free help in designing stream protection measures for your operation.

#### **KEEP HORSES OUT**

Exclusion fencing and crossings prevent horses and other livestock from trampling streambanks, destroying vegetation, and stirring up sediment in the streambed.

- Crossings provide a safe, easy way for horses to ford streams.
- Fencing encourages horses to use the crossing instead of the streambed to navigate the waterway. This allows vegetation to stabilize streambanks and reduces sediment pollution.
- Cost-share assistance is available to install stream protection practices for operations with 8,000 pounds or more of live animal weight. Contact your soil conservation district for details.

#### **PLANT STREAMSIDE BUFFERS**

Maryland's nutrient management regulations require a 10 to 35 ft. "nutrient application setback" adjacent to surface waters and streams. Contact the Nutrient Management Program for guidance. Maryland's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) provides qualifying landowners with attractive land rental payments and financial incentives to establish buffers that are 35 ft. or wider next to waterways. Ask your soil conservation district if you qualify for CREP.

There are many benefits to establishing buffers. Native trees, shrubs, grasses, and groundcovers planted along streams and around animal confinement areas help trap and absorb pollution-laden runoff before it reaches streams or groundwater. In addition, streamside buffers:

- Slow excessive flows and reduce erosion and soil loss
- Provide food, cover, and habitat for fish, birds, and wildlife
- Keep water cooler in the summer

#### **INSTALL A WATERING TROUGH**

Selectively placed watering troughs can make pasture management easier. Watering troughs prevent erosion and water pollution by excluding horses from streams, springs, and other environmentally sensitive areas. Contact your local soil conservation district to enquire about cost-share assistance.

Watering troughs:

- Provide a clean, reliable, easily accessible water supply for your horses.
- Allow you to divide large pastures into smaller units and rotate horses from one pasture to another to maintain good forage quality.
- Can help reduce erosion from messy or muddy areas resulting from horses having uncontrolled access to springheads or streams.
- Can reduce hoof problems by providing water in dry pastures

**FOR A LIST OF MARYLAND'S SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, VISIT [EQUIERY.COM](https://equiery.com)!**

**<https://equiery.com/farm-stewardship-marylands-soil-conservation-districts/>**

#### **MORE TIPS**

- Use farming practices that reduce soil erosion and increase water infiltration such as filter strips and grassed waterways.
- Do not mix, apply, or dispose of weed control chemicals, used motor oil, or other toxic substances onto the soil or where they can leach into groundwater. Contact your Extension office or the Maryland Department of Agriculture for the best method of disposal in your area.
- Plant and maintain native trees, shrubs, and groundcovers along streams and around animal confinement areas to trap and absorb pollution-laden runoff before it reaches streams or groundwater.
- Locate livestock sacrifice areas away from streams and the downslope of your well.
- Avoid excessive fertilizer and pesticide applications that may cause plant disease and become a potential source of groundwater and surface water pollution.
- Have your soil tested to develop a nutrient management plan that reflects the nutrient needs of your pasture.



**Your local soil conservation district can provide free technical assistance to design stream protection measures for your operation.**

**Learn more at [MDA.MARYLAND.GOV/HOW](https://MDA.MARYLAND.GOV/HOW)**