Buffer restoration is an easy, fun way to help protect the area’s waterways from pollution and erosion. By converting lawn to landscape beds, and planting salt tolerant shrubs, trees, perennials and non-turf grasses along the water’s edge, you can help filter pollutants and sediment from stormwater runoff, provide habitat and food for wildlife and lowers your overall yard maintenance efforts.

Simple Activities
to help restore your buffer area that do not require a permit may include:

- Creating landscape beds up to 2,500 square feet in the area of your yard which is landward of the adjacent wetland area
- Planting a mixture of trees, shrubs, perennials and non-turf grasses to replace lawn areas
- Using organic mulch, 3” – 4” deep
- Removing poison ivy, and invasive plants, vines and shrubs, preferably by hand. For a current list of invasive plants for our region see www.invasive.org/eastern/ or www.dcr.virginia.gov and search “invasive plants”.
- Replace invasive plants with the recommended buffer plants highlighted in this bulletin or for more information, visit www.acb-online.org and search for the document “Backyard Buffers” or http://info.ag.vt.edu/vaes, following the link to the Hampton Roads AREC and click on the “Buffer Zone Demonstration Garden” link; from this document click on the link to the “Buffer Zone plant list”.
- Filling low areas, re-grade or construct drainage improvements
- Terracing the yard either with earth or paving
- Removing trees

Finally, activities that are usually not beneficial to buffer restoration and would require the City of Virginia Beach to permit and review include:

- Using heavy equipment or vehicles to alter landscape (clearing, compaction, etc.)
- Building or installing any structures including sheds (prefab or permanent), decks, patios, driveways, gazebos, pools, building additions, etc.
- Removing the natural vegetation and forest floor (leaf litter and pine needles)
- Removing or grinding stumps on sloped areas

Other Landscape Practices
may require a permit and review through the City of Virginia Beach Planning Department. Check with your local planning department for details before starting these projects. Such activities may include but are not limited to:

- Filling low areas, re-grade or construct drainage improvements
- Terracing the yard either with earth or paving
- Removing trees

For additional information about projects requiring approval and permitting, please contact the Virginia Beach Planning Development Services Center (DSC) at 757-385-8277.

For planting information and ideas, contact the Virginia Beach Master Gardeners’ “Grow Line” at 757-385-8156 or visit http://plants.usda.gov.

Additional information can be found by visiting www.lrnow.org or www.vbgov.com.
Buffer Restoration is an easy fun way to help protect the area’s waterways from pollution and erosion. By converting lawns to landscape beds and planting the trees, shrubs, perennials and ground covers on this list along the water’s edge, you can help filter pollutants and sediments from storm runoff and provide habitat and food for wildlife. The plants on this list are very hardy and do not require much fertilizer or pesticides.

**Backyard Buffer Plant List**

**Trees:**
- Acer rubrum - Red Maple
- Betula nigra - River Birch
- Carpinus caroliniana - American Hornbeam
- Cercis canadensis - Eastern Redbud
- Chionanthus virginicus - White Fringe Tree
- Fraxinus pennsylvanica - Ash
- Magnolia virginiana - Sweetbay Magnolia
- Pinus palustris - Longleaf Pine
- Pinus taeda - Loblolly Pine
- Pinus virginiana - Virginia Pine
- Platanes sp. - Sycamore
- Quercus alba - White Oak
- Quercus phellos - Willow Oak
- Quercus prinus - Chestnut Oak

**Perennials:**
- Amsonia tabernaemontana - Bluestar
- Asclepias incarnata - Swamp Milkweed
- Aster dumosus - Aster
- Baptisia australis - False Indigo
- Chelone glabra - Turtlehead
- Coreopsis verticillata - Coneflower
- Echinacea purpurea - Purple Coneflower
- Eupatorium maculatum - Joe Pye Weed
- Gaillardia grandiflora - Blanket Flower
- Iris x 'Louisiana' - Louisiana Iris
- Lobelia cardinalis - Cardinal Flower
- Osmunda cinnamonea - Cinnamon Fern
- Solidago virgaurea - Goldenrod
- Zephyranthes atamasco - Atamasco Lily

**Shrubs:**
- Amelanchier canadensis - Shadbush Serviceberry
- Aronia arbutifolia - Red Chokeberry
- Baccharis halimifolia - Saltbush
- Callicarpa americana - Beautyberry
- Cephalanthus occidentalis - Buttonbush
- Clethra alnifolia - Summersweet Clethra
- Cornus amomum - Silky Dogwood
- Cornus sericea - Red Osier Dogwood
- Fothergilla gardenii - Dwarf Fothergilla
- Hamamelis virginiana - Witch hazel
- Hibiscus moscheutos - Swamp Rose - Mallow
- Hypericum calycinum - St. John's Wort
- Ilex glabra - Holly
- Ilex verticillata - Winterberry
- Itea virginica - Virginia Snowbush
- Leucothoe axillaris - Coastal Leucothoe
- Myrica cerifera - Southern Waxmyrtle
- Potentilla fruticosa - Bush Cinquefoil
- Rhododendron maximum - Blue Balm
- Viburnum dentatum - Hamamelis
- Viburnum prunifolium - Blackhaw

**Non-Turf Grasses & Grass-like Plants:**
- Festuca ovina glauca - Blue Sheep Fescue
- Juncus effusus - Rush
- Muhlenbergia capillaris - Muhly Grass
- Panicum virgatum - Switch Grass
- Paspalum vaginatum - Seashore Paspalum
- Schizachyrium scoparium - Little Bluestem
- Schizachyrium littorale - Shore Little Bluestem
- Uniola paniculata - Sea Oats

**Photos are © Copyright Mark Brand, 1997-2001; University of Connecticut Plant Database; www.hort.uconn.edu**