

Welcome to Exton Park



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Riparian Buffers

A riparian buffer is a vegetated area, usually forested, that serves as a buffer zone for a stream from adjacent land uses. The decline of many aquatic ecosystems due to agricultural practices has made riparian buffers a very common conservation practice to increase water quality and reduce pollution. Increased water quality can be seen in associated streams, rivers, and lakes.

Water quality benefits are due to the interception of sediment/nutrients/pesticides and bank stabilization. Habitat benefits come from increased biodiversity, the buffer acting as a corridor for fragmented species, and shading which increases aquatic productivity and habitat quality. Riparian buffers also provide economic benefits in the form of increased land value and production of profitable alternative crops.

Riparian buffers are usually created with three specific zones in mind. Zone 1, closest to the stream, functions mainly to shade the water source and act as a bank stabilizer. Zone 2 is usually made up of native shrubs, providing wonderful habitat for wildlife, including nesting areas for bird species. This zone also acts to slow and absorb contaminants that Zone 3 has missed. Zone 2 is an important transition between grassland and forest. Zone 3 is important as the first line of defense against contaminants. It consists mostly of native grasses and serves primarily to slow water runoff and begin to absorb contaminants before they reach the other zones. Although these grass strips should be one of the widest zones, they are also the easiest to install. Overall, it is recommended that native species are chosen for the buffer and that the buffer extends about 50 feet on both sides of the stream.

Sparrows at Exton Park



G. Tallman

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*

Our most regular sparrow, a year-round resident.

Description: (ca.6¼") Long tail • round head • mostly brown coarse streaking • central breast spot • striped head.

Habitat: Brushy, weedy edges of wetland and pond, low tree and shrub nester.

Behavior: Sings in the open, head pulled back. Takes insects during nesting, switches to seeds in winter.



K. Colgan-Azar

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*

Here in winter, migrates to Canada to breed.

Description: (ca.6½") Plump • reddish brown and gray • distinctive white throat • some white and yellow on head.

Habitat: Dense brush, woodland edges, thickets, fields, feeding along the path.

Behavior: Feeds on seeds on ground in small flocks, dives for cover into brush, sings "Oh, Canada" from brambles.



G. Tallman

Chipping Sparrow *Spizella passerina*

Here spring through fall, a breeder, migrates just south for winter.

Description: (ca.5½") Very small • gray & brown • pale breast without streaks or center spot • eye-line & rusty cap.

Habitat: Weedy fields, marsh edges, shrubs and thorns, sometimes conifers nester.

Behavior: Relatively tame, territorial male sings on high. Feeds some on seeds but takes insects during nesting.

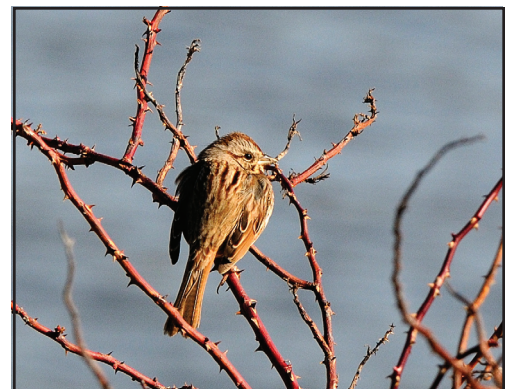
American Tree Sparrow *Spizella arborea*

A Chipping Sparrow look-alike; here in winter.

Description: (ca.5½") Very small • gray & brown • pale breast with tawny flanks • eye-line • rusty cap • bicolored bill.

Habitat: Weedy fields, marsh edges, shrubs and thorns.

Behavior: Actively feeds on ground for seeds, may fly off to higher perch when approached.



G. Tallman

Farming—From the Church Farm School to Now

The Church Farm School's land was not merely an investment in its future, but a means to an end. A working farm provided the students with sustenance as well as agricultural know-how. By toiling together, literally from dawn till dusk, the Church Farm School turned the debilitated land into a productive agricultural venture. Reverend Charles Wesley Shreiner, the founder of CFS, has a personal philosophy that called for the boys to use their hands as much as their minds; that adequate training in both spheres would prepare them to meet whatever the challenges the world presented. This proved true, as many alumnae attributed their success in later life to the lessons of hard work and doing a job correctly and thoroughly that they learned while laboring for the Church Farm School.

-Abridged from *Vision and Ability: A History of CFS: The School at Church Farm* by Mary Neighbour

Much goes into the farming that is now performed on the Exton Park site. In order to maintain a cropping system with soil loss below tolerable levels, high residue no-tilled crops such as corn, grain, or hay are added to the rotation of wheat and soybeans over 225 acres. To reduce sheet and rill erosion, transport of sediment, and other waterborne contaminants, contour farming is performed with tillage, planting, and other farming operations. To maintain the desired composition of plant species, control insects, diseases and weeds, as well as to maintain plant vigor, harvests are foraged in a high quality, timely, and economic manner. Additionally, special attention is paid to grassed waterways, nutrient management, and pasture and hay planting. This mindfulness affects aspects like gully erosion, water concentrations, ground water resources, water infiltration, water quality, etc. Clearly, from the time of CFS's ownership of this parcel to the farming of today, much care and value is placed on this land. Please respect these agricultural endeavors by keeping pets, children, etc. from setting foot on or otherwise disturbing the farmland.