

Upper Makefield *Township*

PRIVATE CREEK MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

Upper Makefield properties that contain portions of the three main creeks and associated tributaries (Houghs Creek, Jericho Creek, Pidcock Creek) as well as unnamed tributaries are mostly privately owned. That means individual property owners are responsible for creek bank/bed repairs and maintenance.

If you have a creek running through your property, please review these guidelines to know how to safely protect our Township waterways and when your activities may require a permit. With a little research and planning, you may be eligible for reimbursement.

Your goal for the areas directly adjacent to the creek banks, also called riparian corridors, should be to maintain with trees and high grasses, to prevent erosion, help cool the waters in the creeks and filter out harmful sediment.

Some creek-area activities can be more harmful than helpful. For example, removing vegetation from the creek banks and mowing the lawn right up to the top of the creek banks is harmful to a creek's health.

In addition, adding riprap (stone), placement of fill material, disturbance of stream banks and other activities fall under state and federal jurisdiction because creeks are considered "Waters of the U.S." The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have the authority under the Clean Water Act (section 404).

Managing Erosion, Tall Trees, Water Temperature and Sediment

In general, your maintenance concerns will relate to bank repairs and routine maintenance. At times, you may want to tap available resources to prevent erosion and sediment runoff by establishing or repairing a riparian corridor. Because your work protects our community from more damaging flash flooding and water contamination, we offer many resources to help you help us.

No Permits Needed

- Removing of trash or debris from the creek bank or in the creek bed.
- Minor trimming of vegetation on the creek bank.
- Maintaining tree canopy for optimal water shade.

Permits Needed

- Large scale debris removal
- Vegetation or tree removal
- Alteration of creek channel or bank
- Creek Bank Stabilization
- Dredging
- Any dumping of dirt, rocks, concrete or other material into the channel or along eroded banks.

Please call the Township office with any questions prior to starting any creek maintenance beyond mowing. We can alert you if any activities may fall under state and federal agencies. For plant selection local nurseries can help you select the best vegetation for a riparian corridor.

To get the details and view the Township's Preservation planning and resources for property owners, please visit our website pages on Preservation and Riparian Restoration. Here you'll also find out about our Tree Grant Program, which reimburses you for approved trees and deer-protective fencing. You can also call our Planning & Zoning office at 215-968-3340.

<https://uppermakefield.org/preservation/>
<https://uppermakefield.org/preservation/riparian-restoration/>