



## Riparian Forest Buffer Check Up

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions

Assess the health of a riparian forest buffer by following the steps below. You will gather information about five factors that determine buffer health and then give the buffer a pass/fail grade.

**Name of Stream:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1) Measure the width of the riparian forest buffer.

- Use the measuring wheel. (One click on the wheel = one foot.)
- Start at the stream edge. Walk at a 90-degree angle from the edge of the stream to the edge of the buffer. You are at the end of the buffer if you:
  - a) find no more trees
  - b) come to a sidewalk, path, or road

**Stream buffer width measurement:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2) Count the number of tree species.

- Use tree identification cards to determine the kinds of tree species in the riparian buffer. Write down the species that you find in the list below. If you find more than five species, use another sheet of paper to list additional species if you cannot fit them on this page.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of different species:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Riparian Forest Buffer Check Up (con't)

### 3) Evaluate other factors of riparian forest buffer health.

a) Use the invasive species guide to identify any invasive species in the designated area.

**Invasive species: Present** or **Absent** (circle one)

b) Use the ruler to measure the depth of leaf litter on the ground.

**Leaf litter: Less than 3 inches** or **3 inches or more** (circle one)

c) Observe the health of the tree roots along the stream bank.

**Tree roots: Exposed** or **Covered by soil** (circle one)

### Grade Your Stream

4) Use the following chart to give your stream a pass or fail grade. In the third column, write the data that you collected above. Compare your data to the second column to determine if your stream passes or fails each stream health factor.

Stream Health Factors	Healthy Streams Have:	My Stream Has:	My Stream: Pass Or Fail
Buffer width	A width of 35 feet or more		
Number of tree species	Five or more tree species		
Invasive species	No invasive species		
Leaf litter	Three inches or more of leaf litter		
Tree root exposure	Few or no exposed roots		

5) Name three actions you and your classmates can do to improve the health of your stream:

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

*This document is adapted from GreenKids, Audubon Naturalist Society*