

pollution has rendered large areas of seafloor useless as oyster habitat. Where oysters manage to survive, the silt impairs growth and causes twisted and misshapen shells, reducing market value.

A simple example illustrates the point that environmental protection is good economics. Our sport fish industry and our oyster industry are together worth about \$10 million annually.

6 If silt input were controlled by riparian buffer zones, it's not unreasonable to think that this value would double, for an increase of \$10 million. Removing a 10 metre riparian zone from agricultural production would decrease our agricultural land base by 1.4%.

7 This percentage applied to total PEI farm receipts is \$4.1 million.

8 So \$4.1 million goes in, and \$10 million comes back. That's good economics by any yardstick.

This example is simplistic, because buffer zones have many other economic values in addition to trout and oysters, and because no-one expects buffer zones to stop all silt pollution. But it underlines the point: environmental protection doesn't cost money - it makes money.

There's been much discussion about who would pay for the cost of protecting these buffer zones. The book of Exodus is quite clear - the owner of the ox that gores is responsible for confining it. In today's world, cars have catalytic converters. Catalytic converters and all the other emission control devices on modern cars add several hundred dollars to the price of the vehicle. The car's owner pays that money; no-one else pays it. The cost falls on the owner because he or she has an obligation to not damage the air that their neighbours breathe.

Based on the fundamental principle of not damaging other peoples' property, landowners have a clear responsibility to protect streams and the life forms they contain. It is simply not possible to do this without an effective buffer along stream banks. Therefore the central responsibility of fencing livestock away from stream banks, and allowing the stream side area to develop natural protective vegetation, falls on the landowner. Governments can and should help, but the core responsibility is the landowners' alone.

The Natural History Society believes that most landowners understand their responsibilities to their neighbours and the public, and we are encouraged that many are taking active steps to limit silt, manure, and other pollutants from entering streams. But there remain a few who need mandatory rules to ensure they meet their obligations. We hope that your committee will recommend the adoption of buffer zone rules which protect our natural heritage by ensuring that fundamental obligations, handed down from the time of Moses, are respected by all.

Sources:

1 The advantages of buffer zones are more fully described in Round Table on Resource Use and Stewardship. 1997. Cultivating Island solutions. Queen's Printer, Charlottetown, and in the brief of the Island Nature Trust to the Standing Committee.

2 Robert Costanza's findings are reported in Discover Magazine vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 104-105, 1998.

3 The estimate of economic contributions of the trout and salmon fishery is from Cairns, D. 1996. Effort, harvest, and expenditures of trout and salmon anglers on Prince Edward Island in 1994, from a mail-out survey. Canadian Manuscript Report of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences No. 2367.