

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SPRING INDEX PERIOD HABITAT DATA SHEET<sup>1</sup>

*Data entries for all Spring Index Period physical habitat variables are based on observations within or from the 75m site only. Use the yellow ropes for measurements.*

### **Station Identification**

Fill in your site number under "Segment ID", the name of the stream, the date, and your name(s).

### **Distance of Nearest Road to Site**

When practical, this variable should be measured with the rope or GPS to the nearest meter. If not practical, it can be estimated to the nearest 10m.

### **Trash Rating**

The trash rating is scored on a 0-20 scale based on criteria on the back of the form.

### **Riparian Vegetation**

a) **Buffer Width.** Measure the riparian buffer width to the nearest meter on each side of the stream. The left and right banks of the stream are determined while facing downstream. Record the average width of the buffer. Buffer breaks should not be considered when estimating the average buffer width as buffer breaks are recorded in a different portion of the data sheet (see below). If the average buffer width is greater than or equal to 50 meters, enter 50 for the buffer width.

b) **Adjacent Land Cover.** Using the codes for adjacent land cover types on the back of the form, record the type of land cover immediately adjacent to the stream buffer. If the buffer is 50 m or more, then the same code that was recorded for the buffer should be recorded for the adjacent land cover.

c) **Riparian Vegetation.** Using the codes for vegetation types on the back of the form, record the dominant vegetation types present within the 50m buffer of the 75m reach. As many as four types can be recorded. The vegetation types are recorded in order of their dominance within the buffer, with the most dominant recorded first (in the left most box for the bank where the buffer is being recorded). Stem density and canopy density should both be taken into consideration for determining density. However, stem density should take precedence over canopy density.

### **Buffer Break Types**

Examine both banks of the stream for the entire 75 m reach for buffer breaks. For each type of buffer break found, record its severity as M (minor) or S (severe) in the box for the appropriate bank of the stream.

---

<sup>1</sup> Based on the Maryland Biological Stream Survey.