

What is Riparian?

Riparian areas are the green zones around lakes and wetlands, the emerald threads of vegetation that border rivers and streams and the lush fringe in valleys. When we look at the green zone and what makes it green, there are three clues that help to define "riparian". Although riparian areas are rarely uniform and show much variation, the common factor is the interaction of water, soil and vegetation.

Clue 1

Lots of water is present, seasonally or regularly and that water is either on the surface or close to the surface.



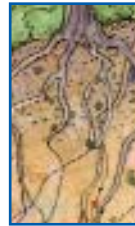
Clue 2

Vegetation is present that responds to, requires and survives in abundant water.



Clue 3

Soils have been modified by abundant water, stream or lake processes and by lush, productive vegetation.



Riparian areas produce forage, shelter, fish, wildlife and water. These areas are a buffer, an insurance policy especially useful to have when drought or flood occurs. They are part of a healthy, functioning landscape and form part of an extensive watershed. Riparian areas sustain us, our lifestyles and our businesses. The importance and significance of riparian areas is far larger than their size suggest.



Riparian areas are a unique piece of the landscape. These are some examples of the 2 - 5% of the landscape called riparian.

