

Foreword

This booklet has been written for those people who can most effectively influence lakeshores, stream and river banks, wetlands and other riparian areas with their use and management - farmers, ranchers, cottage owners, resource managers and others who work and play in the “green zone”. Consider this an introduction to the concept of “health” - how well are these productive, valuable and sometimes fragile green zones performing many critical ecological functions essential to our needs? To evaluate health you need some tools, and you need to understand how the tools are used.



Riparian areas include the moist green zones that surround lakes and wetlands.



The emerald threads of vegetation that border rivers and streams are the riparian areas.

This User’s Guide will take you from the checklists to the measuring sticks of riparian health. Riparian health evaluation forms part of a larger package of awareness about riparian areas, leading to choices on managing these vital landscapes. This work is part of the Cows and Fish program, a cooperative effort between many organizations and agencies concerned about the health and management of riparian areas. Cows and Fish works to foster awareness about riparian areas, and how improvements in management can enhance landscape health and productivity, for the benefit of landowners and others who use and value these green zones.