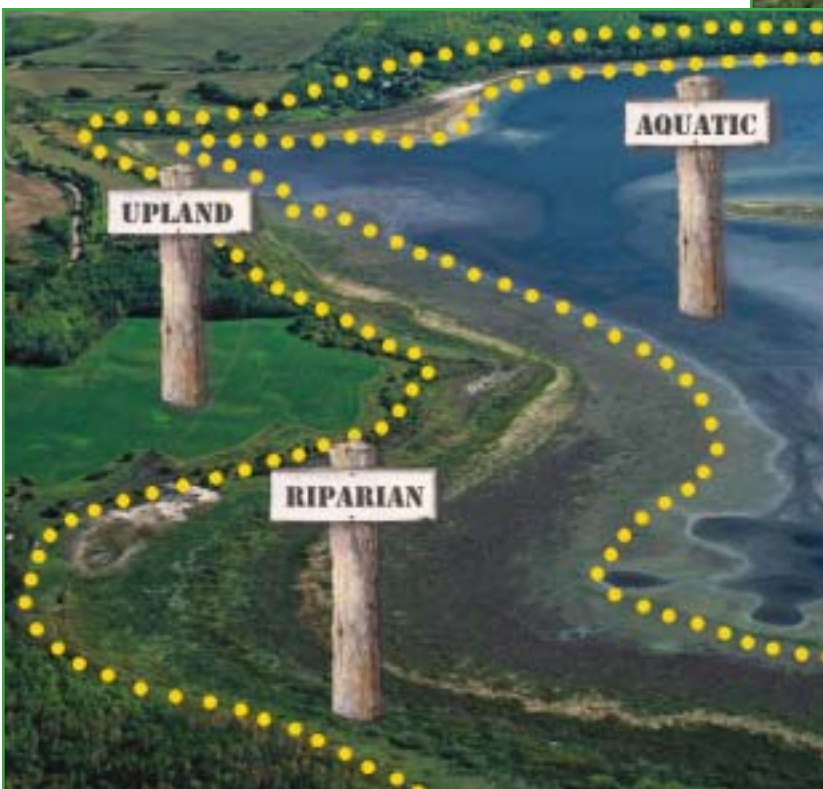
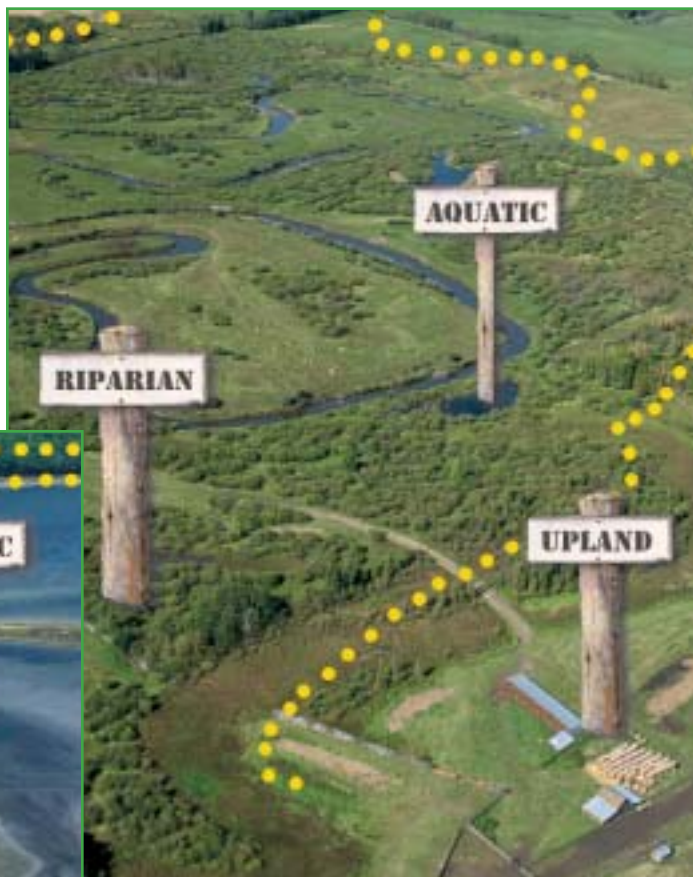




Riparian areas are part of a larger, continuous landscape that grades from wet to dry. They are the thin, green line in that landscape transition. Despite their small size (2-5%) riparian areas are a key piece of the landscape because they are the buffer, the edge and the border between uplands and the aquatic zone. Riparian areas buffer the impacts of uplands on the aquatic area as well as protect uplands from erosion. To measure the health of the riparian area and its ability to be the critical buffer, you need to understand what is "riparian".



*Riparian areas on streams and rivers can be quite wide, reflecting high ground water tables, flood history and the profile of the valley.*

*Riparian areas on lakes and wetlands include emergent vegetation like cattails, as well as the vegetation on the wetter portion of the shoreline.*



*Sometimes it isn't easy to determine precisely the border, edge and size of the riparian area, especially where land use has modified some of the clues.*

