

Working in Riparian Areas

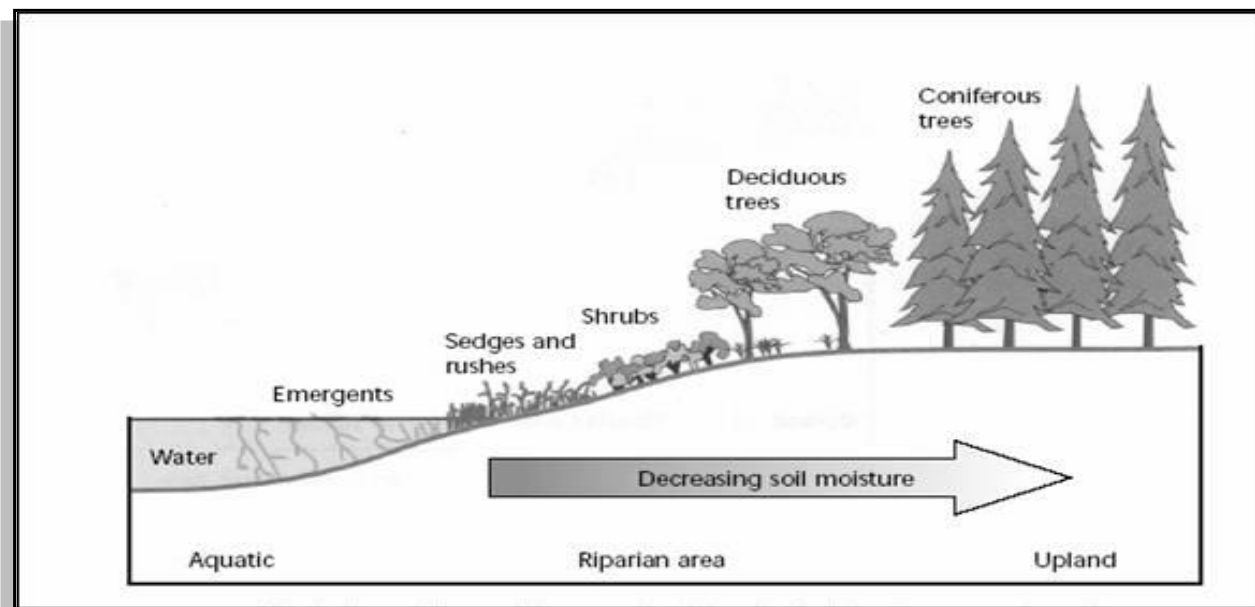


'Riparian' refers to the water-loving plants and trees that border lakes and rivers. These ribbons of green support a diversity of wildlife from birds to fish and are wildlife travel corridors. Most terrestrial species depend on riparian zones for their survival.

Healthy, well-vegetated riparian areas:

- stabilize banks, provide erosion control and protect water quality by filtering surface water runoff
- contributes food and nutrients in the form of insects and organic litter to aquatic environments
- supply shade and cover to aquatic wildlife-- many fish need cooler water temperatures and areas to hide from predators
- provide water and habitat to an estimated seventy-five percent of British Columbia's terrestrial wildlife species.

Because of their importance in maintaining fish habitat, riparian areas are protected by the Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR).



When planning work in riparian areas:

- ✓ Mitigate soil compaction that creates hard surfaces subject to water erosion, chemical and sediment runoff. Cover bare slopes and exposed surfaces with mulch, including leaves or straw, to provide erosion control.
- ✓ Minimize vegetation removal and restore vegetation to act as a buffer and contaminant filter between land and water habitats. Revegetate sites that have been degraded over time.
- ✓ Retain or replant riparian trees to provide shade and habitat for wildlife. Retain mature trees and dead snags that provide cavities for nesting birds, like owls and woodpeckers.

Okanagan species that depend on riparian areas:

Western Screech Owl



Protecting Screech owl habitat

Maintain and replant cottonwood and aspen woodlands. Retain or limb large standing dead snags that provide homes for owls and cavity nesting wildlife. Put up nest boxes to replace natural tree cavities.

Yellow-breasted Chat



Protecting Yellow-breasted Chat habitat

Maintain thick shrubby areas with willows, water birch and rose thickets. Avoid work in riparian areas in active nesting period from May to August.

Guidelines and Best Management Practices for Riparian Areas

BC Ministry of Environment:

- ✓ Riparian Areas Regulations
- ✓ Standards and Best Management Practices for Instream Work
- ✓ Best Management Practices for Hazard Tree and Non-Hazard Tree Limbing, Topping or Removal.
- ✓ Installation and Maintenance of Water Line Intakes

Invasive Plant Council of BC: *Local Government Toolkit for Invasive Plant Management* available at <http://www.invasiveplantcouncilbc.ca/resources/technical-reports>.

