

Protecting Streams: The Riparian Area

The land that borders a stream is known as a riparian area, it plays a vital role in the health of streams and rivers. The trees, shrubs, grasses and flowers that make up the riparian area serve as pollutant filters, bank stabilizers, habitat providers, wildlife highways and water coolers. When we make changes to the riparian area it has a negative impact on the stream and wildlife.

Importance of Trees

- Provide shade which helps lower water temperature
- Provide habitat for terrestrial animals
- Leaves and branches that fall into streams provide food and habitat for aquatic creatures
- Tree roots help hold soil in place resulting in reduced erosion

Importance of shrubs, grasses and flowers

- Provide habitat for animals
- Roots help hold soil in place resulting in reduced erosion
- Serve as filters for pollutants carried by stormwater runoff
- Slows the flow of water to allow water to soak into the ground reducing flooding
- Protects wildlife as it passes through by providing food and cover

A Healthy Riparian System



An unhealthy Riparian System



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