



Taking Care of Streams in Josephine County: A Guide to Riparian Areas

For more information:

Jackson County Rural Living Handbook: A Resource for Country Living and Land Stewardship. Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Stream and Wetland Enhancement Guide. Rogue Valley Council of Governments/Clean Water Services.
http://rvcog.org/pdf/Stream_and_Wetland_Enhancement_Guide.pdf

Oregon State University Extension Service publications.
<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/details.php?sortnum=0800&name=Natural+Resources>

2010 Bear Creek and Rogue Basin Riparian Planting Plan. Rogue Valley Council of Governments.
http://rvcog.org/MN.asp?pg=NR_Riparian_Planting_Plan_TOC

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Habitat Programs.
<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/>

Oregon Department of State Lands. Responsible for regulating wetlands. 503-378-3805
<http://www.oregon.gov/DSL/index.shtml>

For more information on developing a management plan contact:

Applegate River Watershed Council. 6941 Upper Applegate Road. Jacksonville, OR (541) 899-9982

Rogue Valley Council of Governments, Natural Resources Department (541) 664-6674
http://rvcog.org/mn.asp?pg=natural_resources

Illinois Valley Soil and Water Conservation District/Watershed Council (541) 592-3731
<http://www.ivstreamteam.org/>

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Taking Care of

Streams

in Josephine County

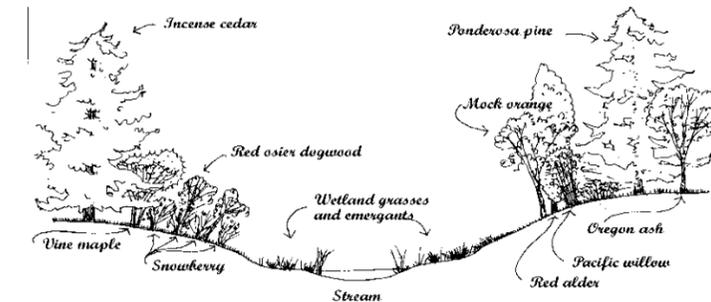


A Landowner's Guide to Riparian Areas in Josephine County, Oregon

As a landowner in Josephine County, you have a unique opportunity to help maintain and improve the health of streams and riparian areas.

What is a riparian area?

A riparian area is the area of land adjacent to a stream, lake, or wetland (see diagram below). Most healthy riparian areas have moist, fertile soils that support many types of moisture-loving plants. These plants provide food and shelter to numerous fish and wildlife.



Typical riparian corridor in Josephine County. Image courtesy of Applegate River Watershed Council and Clean Water Services.

Healthy riparian areas:

- Reduce the chance of flooding
- Improve water quality
- Provide habitat for fish and wildlife

Why do riparian areas matter?

Plants in healthy riparian areas

- Provide wood to streams, creating fish habitat and slowing the stream flow after storms.
- Shade streams in the summer. Cool water is healthier for salmonids and other native fish species.
- Help prevent erosion by holding soil in place with their roots.
- Filter sediment out of muddy runoff, keeping sediment from smothering fish habitat.
- Allow heavy winter rains to soak into the soil (infiltrate) instead of running into the stream. This allows water to be stored in aquifers and released slowly to the stream during the dry season.
- Filter out pollutants, such as fertilizers, pesticides, and animal wastes.
- Provide important food sources, homes, shelter, and travel corridors for wildlife, fish, and other aquatic organisms.

The bottom line is:

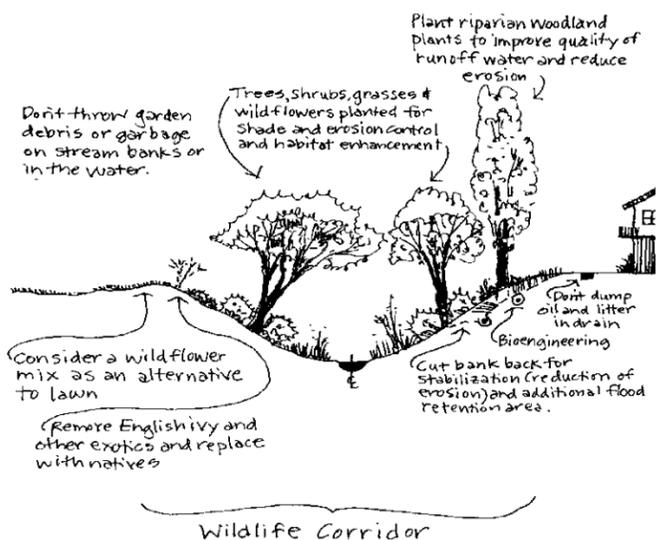
- Less flooding during and immediately after storms
- More water in the streams during the summer
- Cleaner and cooler water
- Homes and food for wildlife

It's all about plants

Healthy riparian areas include a variety of types and ages of plants, including trees, shrubs, grasses, and ground covers. Plants adapted to the conditions in Josephine County (e.g., rainfall, climate, insects, soil conditions) tend to be easier to care for because they need less water and pesticides.

In Josephine County, a few common native riparian plants are:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| -Alder | -Oregon Ash |
| -Black Cottonwood | -Oregon Grape |
| -Big Leaf Maple | -Ponderosa Pine |
| -Douglas Hawthorne | -Red flowering currant |
| -Douglas Spirea | -Red-osier dogwood |
| -Incense Cedar | -Serviceberry |
| -Mock Orange | -Snowberry |
| -Ocean Spray | -Willow |



How do people change riparian areas?

Removing or damaging plants through livestock grazing, timber harvest, construction, and landscaping practices, especially in the riparian area, **can harm streams**. Plants, particularly trees and shrubs near stream banks, provide shade and cool water essential for many fish species. They also can catch rainfall and allow it to soak slowly into the ground instead of running quickly into streams. Plants also help prevent the formation of gullies that can result when water flows across bare soils. When water runoff from storms reaches streams too quickly, more erosion and flooding occur downstream. More rainwater, pesticides, fertilizers and sediment reach the stream in areas without riparian plants to slow and filter water.

When streams and riparian areas are not healthy, people feel the consequences.

- Recreational areas are lost or degraded.
- Fish and wildlife decline, reducing opportunities for hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing.
- Increased flooding may cause erosion and property damage.

Riparian Area Requirements in Josephine County (Article

Riparian Corridor Setback Area

Article 72.040 ~ Special Setback Requirements

Stream Setbacks: No Structure, excluding fences, boat landings, docks, bridges, hydroelectric facilities, pumping, or water treatment facilities, shall be located closer than 50 feet to the banks of any Class 1 stream, or 25 feet to the banks of Class 2 water courses as defined by the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife:

1. This setback area shall be maintained, to the greatest extent feasible, in stabilized vegetation;
2. Streamside vegetation that provides shading of the surface waters shall be retained.
3. Existing streamside vegetation shall be maintained to the greatest extent possible during construction and development.

What Can You Do?

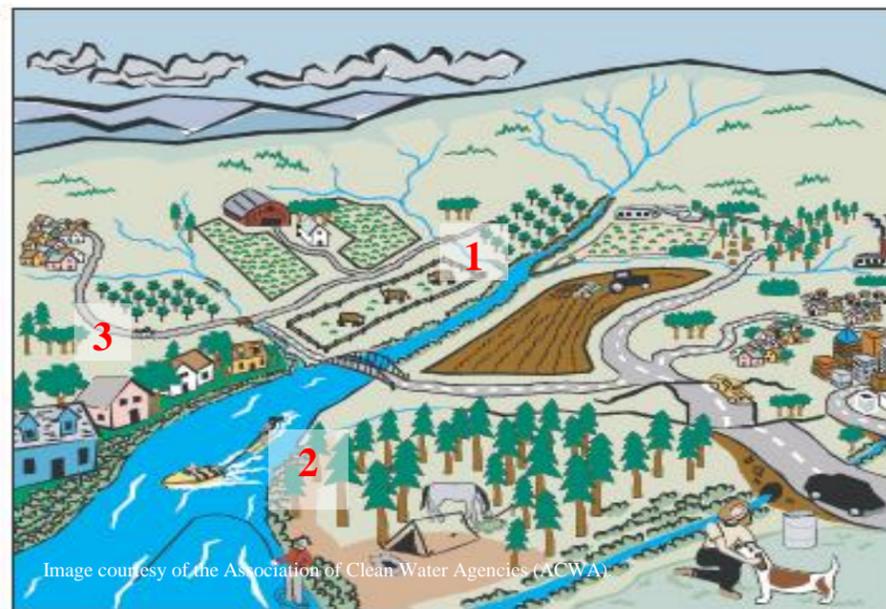


Image courtesy of the Association of Clean Water Agencies (ACWA)

1. Tend to your livestock and riparian areas

- Alternate grazing to allow vegetation to recover.
- Limit grazing of riparian areas by using fences or paddocks where possible.
- Provide water, shade, and salt in other areas to encourage livestock to graze and rest away from riparian areas.
- Limit or avoid grazing in riparian areas during the fall and winter when grasses are dormant and the chance of erosion from runoff is greater.
- Keep livestock out of streams, other bodies of water, and fragile riparian areas.
- Locate animal waste and compost piles on flat surfaces away from streams or drainage areas and cover them during wet periods.

2. Protect plants and the streamside.

- Promote dense vegetation to reduce runoff and trap contaminants.
- Learn about native plants and use them appropriately.
- Restore eroded streambanks with help from a professional.
- Leave wood and other natural materials in streams.
- Don't straighten channels or place rubble or rip-rap on streambanks.

3. Grow and maintain a stream-friendly garden and lawn

- Select appropriate plants. Native plants can be easier to care for because they are better adapted to local pests and rainfall conditions.
- Use natural alternatives to pesticides. Use compost instead of fertilizers or use slow-release fertilizers and apply at recommended rates, and don't apply fertilizers or pesticides next to streams.
- Locate compost piles on flat surfaces away from streams or drainage areas, and keep them covered during the wet winter months. Keep grass clippings away from streams.
- Apply compost and fertilizers to pastures and gardens only during the growing season.

Streamside plants help stabilize streambanks, moderate stream temperature, and provide habitat for fish and other wildlife.



Avoid clearing vegetation or use erosion prevention and sediment control measures on steep slopes and riparian areas.



Plant native species.



Protect riparian corridors and vegetation on stream banks to prevent erosion.

Things you can do around the house.

- Don't pour soapy water, automobile oil, paint, household chemicals, or pesticides down the storm drain. **Drains are connected to streams.**
- Direct gutters away from streams, pavement, and septic drain fields and into areas where water can seep slowly into the soil.
- Keep livestock, cars, and trees, away from your septic tank and septic fields.
- Inspect your septic system annually, and pump the tank as necessary. Keep pet waste away from streams, and riparian areas. Put pet waste in a bag and place it in the trash.
- Use less toxic or nontoxic household cleaners.
- Design, construct, and maintain access roads and stream crossings to minimize erosion.