



## Riparian Land

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# Riparian Land

## *What is Riparian Land?*

It is the land alongside or surrounding waterways such as creeks, rivers and lakes. It is the parts of the floodplain that receive water during times of higher River flows. The soils are moister than adjacent high grounds and can be areas of high productivity.

Reasons why a healthy riparian zone is important!

<p><b>1. Stock Management</b></p> <p>Stock can trample vegetation and cause erosion of creek banks.</p>	<p><b>2. Increase in Capital Values</b></p> <p>Improves monetary value of the property.</p>
<p><b>3. Improves Water Quality</b></p> <p>Healthy riparian plant communities can act as a trap for soil and nutrients moving off the land and into the water during rains.</p>	<p><b>4. Decreased Algal Blooms</b></p> <p>Riparian vegetation helps control Light and temperature of the water, and this helps to control algal blooms.</p>
<p><b>5. Healthy Ecosystems</b></p> <p>Riparian zones act as links between the land and the waterways. They provide shelter and food for many animals.</p>	<p><b>6. Maintaining River Courses</b></p> <p>Increased clearance of vegetation can cause rivers and creeks to change there courses and form new meanders or flood channels</p>
<p><b>7. Climate Protection</b></p> <p>They provide windbreaks and shelter stock from the sun and heat.</p>	<p><b>8. Absorption of nutrients</b></p> <p>The plants can absorb excess nutrients from the water and the run-off from upland areas.</p>
<p><b>9. Decreased Erosion</b></p> <p>Removal of the riparian zone and the clearing of the floodplain result in the stripping of topsoil and bank erosion during heavy rain.</p>	<p><b>10. Lower Water Tables</b></p> <p>Vegetation with roots that penetrate deep underground help soak up the underground water, thereby lowering the water tables.</p>
<p><b>11. Decrease in insect pests</b></p> <p>Riparian vegetation provides habitat for birds, which feed on insects. Healthy plants leads to more birds, which leads to less pest insects.</p>	<p><b>12. Increased Fish Stocks</b></p> <p>Healthy riparian vegetation provides good habitat for insects and the fish that feed on them.</p>

## Field Work

- Choose a couple of sites along the wetland edge and describe the riparian zones. Are the plants healthy?
- Is there a good range of different types of plants?
- If the riparian vegetation at your site appears to be healthy, which of the above points appears to be benefited?
- If the riparian vegetation at your site does not appear to be in good condition, which of the above points do you think needs to be improved?
- How could this be accomplished?