



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

For more information:

[Jackson County Rural Living Handbook: A Resource for Country Living and Land Stewardship](http://www.rvcog.org/pdf/Stream_and_Wetland_Enhancement_Guide.pdf). Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District.

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

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

[Bear Creek Riparian Planting Plan](http://rvcog.org/MN.asp?pg=NR_Riparian_Planting_Plan_TOC). Rogue Valley Council of Governments.

[Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Habitat Programs](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/).

[Oregon Department of State Lands](http://www.oregon.gov/DSL/index.shtml). Responsible for regulating wetlands. 503-378-3805

### For more information on developing a management plan contact:

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

Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District (541) 734-3143 or (541) 776-4263

Jackson County Development Services (541) 774-6900

Rogue Valley Council of Governments Natural Resources Department (541) 664-6674

Produced with the assistance of Oregon State University Extension Service. Information and layout based on OSU Extension's Taking Care of Streams brochure series.

# Taking Care of Streams in Jackson County

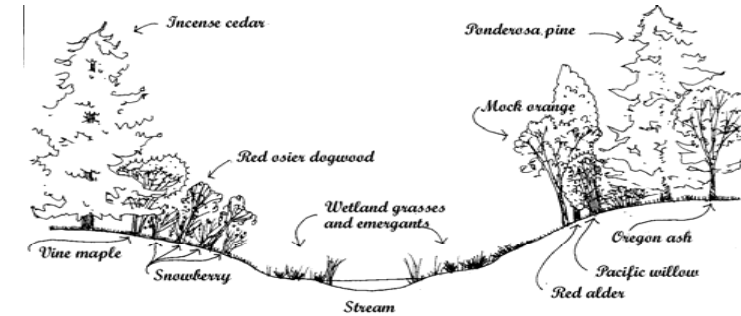


## A Landowner's Guide to Riparian Areas in Jackson County, Oregon

As a landowner in Jackson 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 Jackson County. Image courtesy of Applegate River Watershed Council (ARWC) 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 many 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 instead of running into the stream. This allows water to be 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:

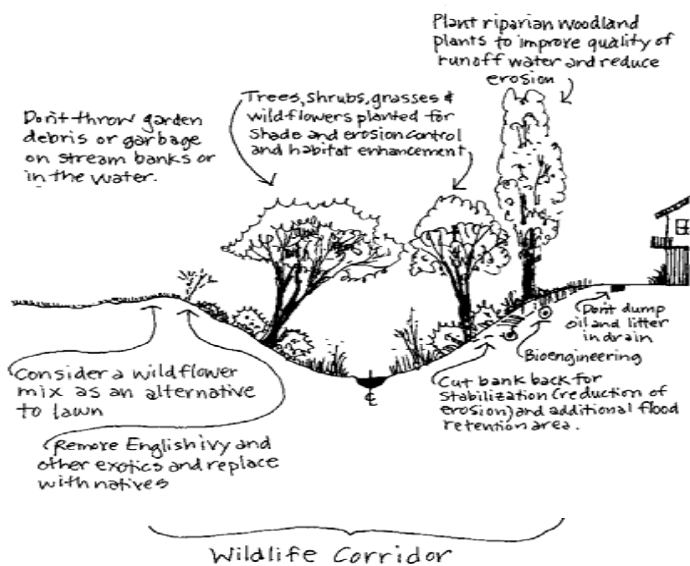
- Less flooding during and immediately after storms
- More water in the streams during the summer
- Cleaner water
- Homes and food for wildlife

### 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 Jackson County (e.g., rainfall, climate, insects, soil conditions, insects) tend to be easier to care for because they need less water and pesticides.

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

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

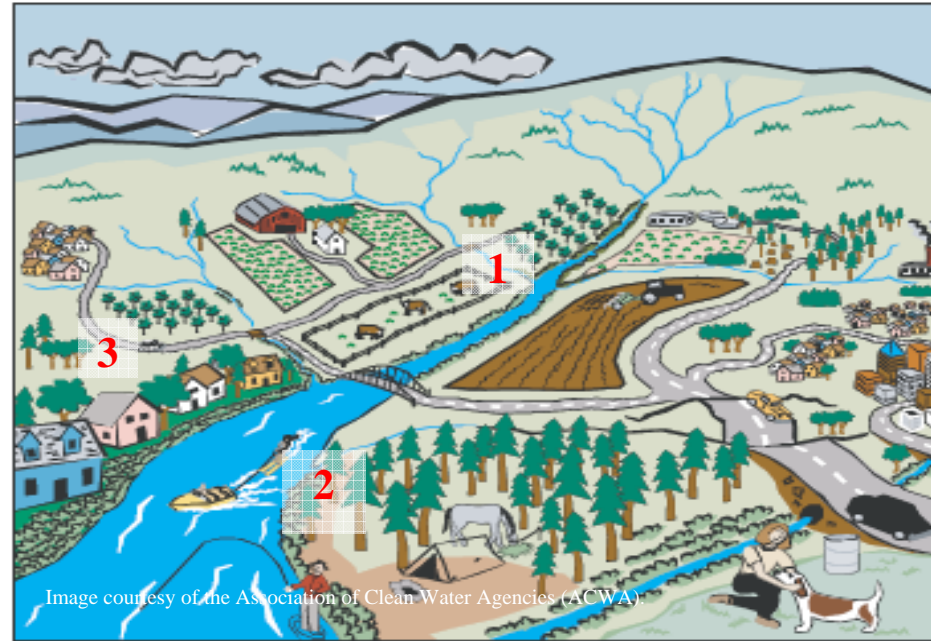
## Riparian Area Requirements in Jackson County (Chapter 8, Section 8.6)

- Setback Requirements (from top of bank):
  - Rogue River -75 feet
  - Streams, lakes, and ponds - 50 feet
- All vegetation and tree cover must be retained in the riparian setback. Non-native vegetation (e.g., Himalayan Blackberries) can be replaced subject to landscape plans approved by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- No development, including grading, is allowed within the setback.

**Note: These requirements are enforced.** For violations and fines, see Chapter 1, Section 1.8 of the Land Development Ordinance



# What Can You Do?



## 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 often connected directly to streams.
- Direct gutters away from streams, pavement, and septic drain fields and into 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.