

Riparian Zones and Their Importance



The word *riparian* comes from the Latin word *ripa*, which means bank. The *riparian zone* is the area of land found along rivers and streams. Since riparian zones have often been used for agriculture, logging, and development, many of the benefits from healthy riparian forests have been compromised, or lost all together.

Today, landowners, municipalities, businesses, community organizations, schools, and volunteers who understand the importance of riparian areas are working to conserve and restore these areas throughout the Lake Champlain Basin.



The elimination of riparian vegetation along many rivers and streams in Vermont has resulted in erosion and decline in water quality.



People throughout Vermont are protecting land and water resources by reestablishing riparian buffers one tree at a time.

Riparian forests provide many benefits to the natural and cultural landscape in Vermont, including:

- Erosion control
- Flood reduction
- Pollution and nutrient filtration
- Wildlife habitat and migration corridors
- Cooler and cleaner water for fish
- Aesthetics
- Enhanced property values
- Opportunities for public involvement and education

(Photographs courtesy of the Intervale Foundation.)