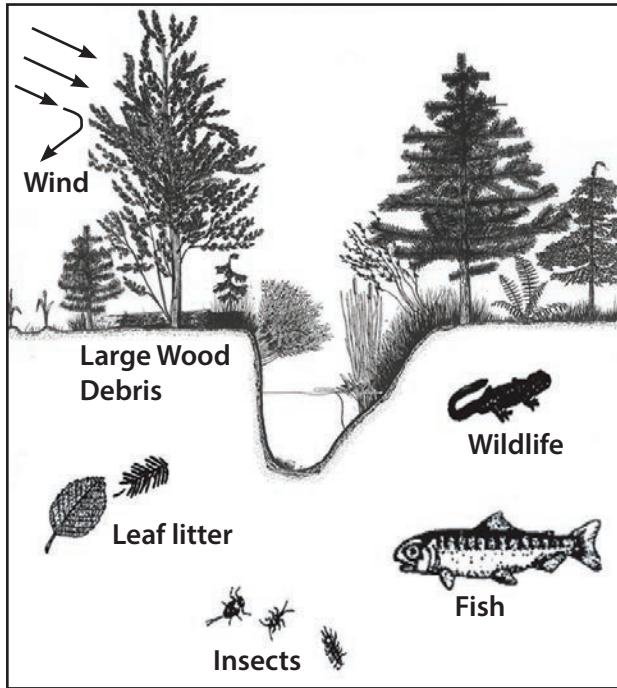


## What is a Riparian Area?

Riparian areas are the areas bordering streams, lakes and wetlands that link the land and the water. The riparian area generally consists of trees and shrubs that extend at least 100 feet from the shoreline.



*Trees in the riparian area stabilize stream banks, filter runoff, provide cover for wildlife, and improve aquatic habitat by adding nutrients and food for insects through leaf litter and cover habitat for fish through woody debris.*  
(Illustration courtesy of the Government of British Columbia)

## Why are Riparian Areas Important?

Rivers are dynamic – they naturally flood, change course, and erode their banks. A healthy riparian area acts as a buffer to changes in weather, temperature, flooding and pollution. They are resilient to extreme events, which is critical to reducing flood damage and enhancing fish and wildlife survival.

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**Fish Grow On Trees!**

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## Help for Landowners

Help is available from the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. Contact us to schedule a site visit, and to learn more about funding and incentive programs that may be available to you.

### Vermont Fish & Wildlife

Will Eldridge, Aquatic Habitat Biologist  
William.Eldridge@vermont.gov • (802) 485-7566

### Local Watershed Association

Watersheds United Vermont  
<https://watershedsunitedvt.org/>  
info@watershedsunitedvt.org • (802) 585-3569

### Local Conservation District

Vermont Association of Conservation Districts  
[www.vacd.org/](http://www.vacd.org/)



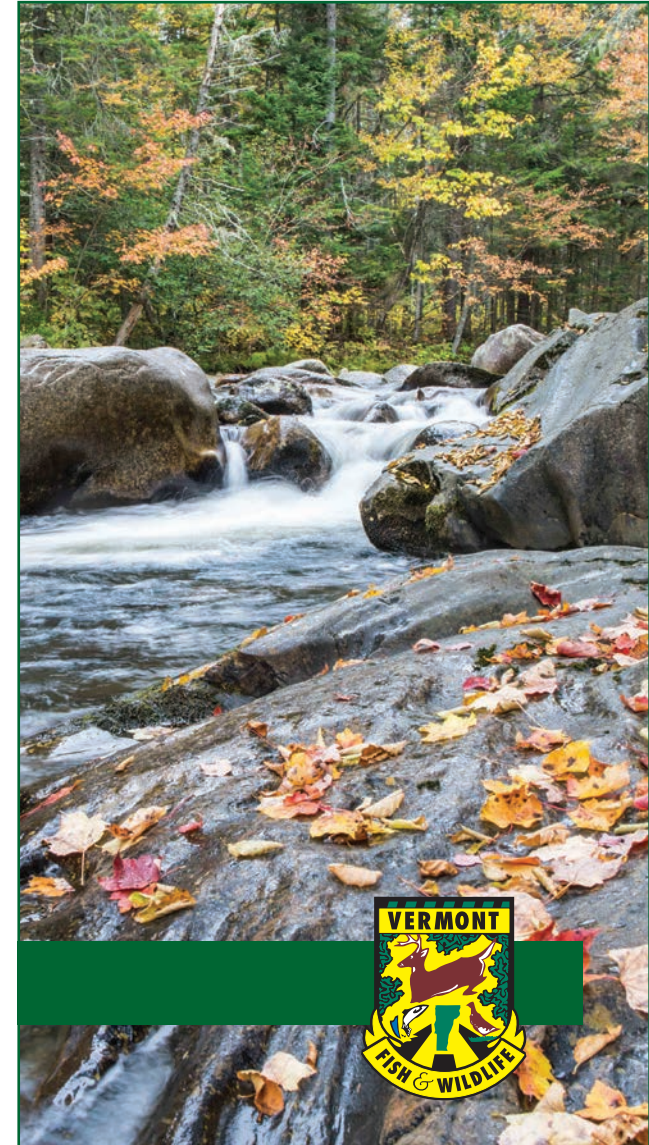
*Forested streams provide many fishing opportunities throughout Vermont.*

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department  
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2  
Montpelier, VT 05620-3702  
802.828.1000  
[www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com)



## Quick Guide for Waterfront Landowners

*If you have a stream, lake, or wetland on or beside your property, there are things you should know.*

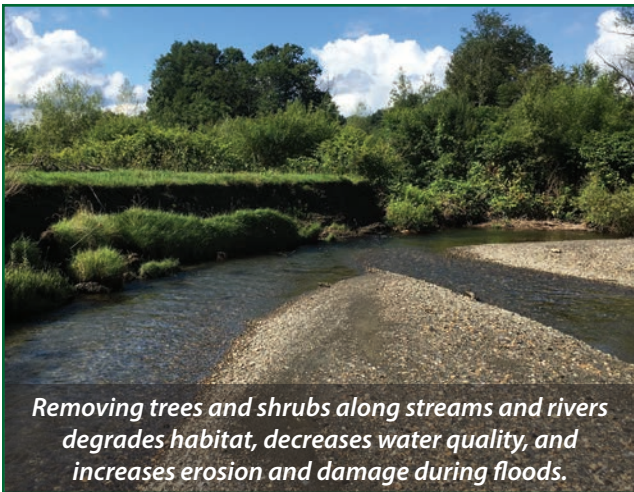




## Trees = Healthy Riparian Areas



- ◆ Trees help stabilize stream banks, filter runoff and pollutants, and provide habitat for fish and wildlife.
- ◆ Trees and shrubs reduce the amount of stormwater entering streams and provide shade that cools the water. Their roots take up excess nutrients and stabilize stream banks.
- ◆ Trees that fall into streams and rivers provide food and shelter for fish, trap sediment and slow down the flow of water during floods.



*Removing trees and shrubs along streams and rivers degrades habitat, decreases water quality, and increases erosion and damage during floods.*

## How You Can Help

Waterfront landowners can help improve the health of their watercourse by protecting their riparian area. A 100-foot wide forested riparian area protects the land, improves water quality and benefits fish and wildlife.

- ◆ Avoid removing trees from the riparian area. Protecting the riparian area is easier than restoring it.
- ◆ If trees have been removed, allow natural revegetation to take its course or re-establish the riparian area by planting native trees.
- ◆ Get your neighbors involved for a greater impact. The actions you take to protect your riparian area also benefit your neighbors downstream. It will take all of us working cooperatively in our communities to keep riparian areas healthy.
- ◆ Purchase a Conservation License Plate or Vermont Habitat Stamp to support aquatic habitat work statewide. Visit [www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com) for more information.



## Benefits for Fish, Wildlife and Your Community

A healthy forested riparian area has economic and ecological benefits:

- ◆ Improves water quality and aquatic habitat.
- ◆ Increases bank stability.
- ◆ Decreases flooding and erosion hazards.
- ◆ Lowers stormwater management costs.



*You can help re-establish riparian areas by planting native trees.*



*Forested riparian areas protect against flooding, improve water quality and are important for fish and wildlife.*