

**In Summit county, a rapidly urbanizing area, there is an excess in impervious surfaces which pose a threat to our local streams, lakes, and rivers. More runoff results in high rates of flow and an increase in volume which causes erosion and bank instability. In addition, the removal of native vegetation along the banks deteriorates the natural habitat even further.**

## **RIPARIAN ZONES**

are the lands along the banks of rivers and streams that separate the water from the surrounding landscape.



**SUMMIT**  
SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**NEED SOME  
GUIDANCE?**

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**LIFE AT**  
**WATER'S EDGE**



# WHY RIPARIAN SETBACKS?

Riparian areas are naturally vegetated lands along rivers and streams. Riparian setbacks are a tool local governments can use to maintain riparian area functions, such as:

- stabilize streambanks
- limit erosion
- reduce flood size flows
- reduce velocity of flood waters
- filter and settle out runoff pollutants
- provide habitat and community character
- regulate base flows

Riparian areas also include connected wetland and floodplain areas, which provide even more benefits!

- reduce flood impacts with natural absorption processes
- replenish groundwater sources
- provide room for natural meandering and lateral movement of stream channels

## BMPS (BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES)

### NO DUMPING!

Yard waste and other debris can block stream flows and cause flooding.

### SHORT GRASS WON'T CUT IT.

Replace turf grass with native plants - their long root systems absorb runoff and reduce soil erosion.

### KEEP IT NATURAL.

The natural vegetation along the sides of streams will reduce sediment and nutrient input into our waterways while also providing habitat.

### DON'T GUESS, SOIL TEST!

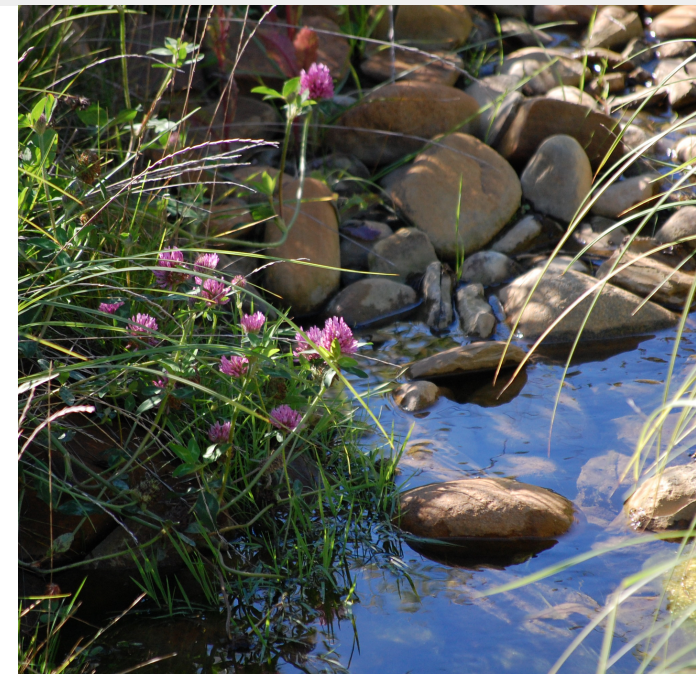
Reduce your fertilizer use by having your soil tested. Only apply what your soil needs.

### REDUCE WATER RUNOFF.

Install a rain garden, remove unused impervious surfaces, and collect water in rain barrels.

### LEND A HAND!


Volunteer in your community by participating in litter clean ups and stream monitoring programs.



## RESOURCES

 [Riparian Planting Guide](#) - quick guidebook to planting riparian buffers for healthy streams.

 [Soil Testing](#) - contact Summit SWCD for soil testing kits.

 [Community Riparian & Wetland Guidance](#) - detailed summary of preliminary plan submissions, riparian setback variances, and wetland functions.

 [Riparian Regulation Reference Sheet](#) - list of riparian setback ordinances by Summit County communities.