



Riparian Areas

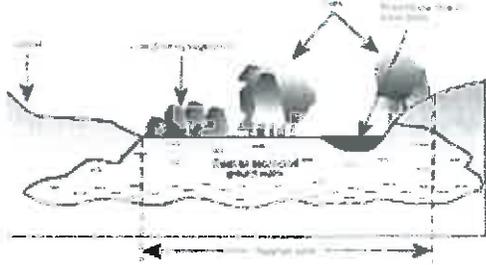


Photo Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture



01-0021-11



Riparian Areas

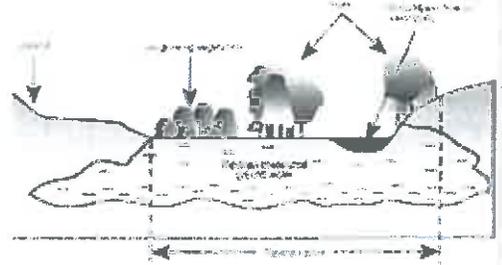


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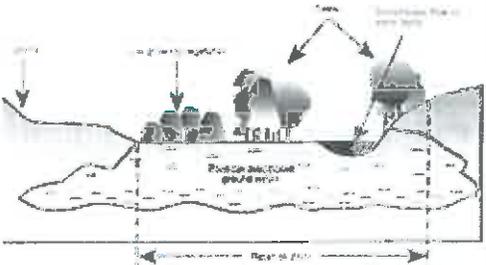


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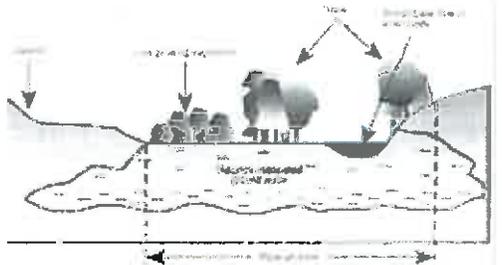


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Riparian Areas

When planning and constructing highway improvements, the Colorado Department of Transportation strives to minimize adverse impacts to riparian areas. Riparian areas are lands adjacent to streams, rivers, lakes, and other water bodies. Riparian areas have significantly different vegetation or more robust and vigorous growth than adjacent, drier land. Riparian areas provide a variety of ecological functions and services and help improve or maintain local water quality. "Riparian" is derived from the Latin word ripa, meaning river bank.

Riparian ecosystems are extremely productive and have diverse habitat values for wildlife. In the western United States riparian habitat comprises less than 1 percent of the total land area at some time of the year but supports most of the terrestrial wildlife, providing food, water and cover. Riparian areas are important as migration and dispersal routes and as forested connectors between habitats for wildlife.



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