

What is a Riparian Area?

A riparian area is the zone of transition between land and water. A healthy riparian area is essential for the protection of water quality.

Riparian areas should be well-vegetated, mainly with woody plants to filter water entering a stream, stabilize banks, and shade stream bed.



The mayfly (family Ephemeroidea), a native.

Everyone Working Together to Conserve Natural Beauty and the Environment in the Heart of Pennsylvania...

About ClearWater Conservancy

The ClearWater Conservancy of Central Pennsylvania, Inc. is a Centre County based nonprofit land trust and natural resource conservation organization that was formed in 1980.

The mission of ClearWater Conservancy is to promote the conservation and restoration of natural resources in central Pennsylvania through land conservation, water resources protection, and environmental outreach to the community.

ClearWater has conserved over 3,400 acres with conservation easements and through our conservation partnerships.

ClearWater places a high value on creating partnerships in the community to accomplish our conservation goals.

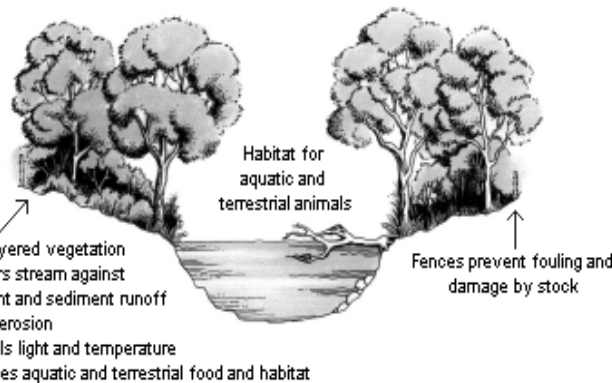
ClearWater Conservancy
2555 North Atherton Street
State College, PA 16803
(814) 237-0400
www.clearwaterconservancy.org

Photo credits to Bob Moul (www.PBase.com/rcm1840) and ClearWater volunteers!

Riparian Conservation Program



Promoting the Conservation and Restoration Of Natural Resources In Central Pennsylvania



mammals, songbirds, among others, that are adapted to life in this moist environment.

When people live or farm close to streams, vegetation in riparian areas is commonly disturbed or removed. This disturbance quickly begins to unravel the delicate balance that once existed between soil, water, plants and animals. Stream banks quickly become destabilized, streams become silted and warm, invasive plant species begin to colonize, and riparian-dependent wildlife disappears.

Leaves and twigs from overhanging riparian vegetation fall into streams. As they move downstream, these materials add important food sources and vital in-stream structures for macro-invertebrates that support fish. The unique habitat of riparian areas provides important food sources and refuges for many wildlife species - amphibians,

A vegetated riparian area.



The yellow warbler is a colorful native.

What can you do to protect Riparian Buffers?

Stream, wetland, and pond-side landowners are integral in protecting these water resources and associated wildlife. If you own property bordering water, consider improving or protecting your riparian area. You can:

- plant riparian buffers
- enhance existing riparian buffers with woody vegetation
- permanently protect riparian areas against future disturbances with conservation easements



Arbor Day Volunteers planting a buffer.

Riparian Restoration and Enhancement

ClearWater Conservancy can assist streamside landowners to restore or enhance their riparian areas in planting native trees and shrubs, establishing a native wildflower meadow, removing non-native species, and by installing streambank fencing.

Assistance is available for any type of land use (agriculture, residential, and commercial) and many landowners will qualify for financial assistance through existing riparian programs. ClearWater staff can help landowners in the enrollment and coordination of these programs.



The belted kingfisher thrives in a healthy riparian habitat.



Many species such as the monarch caterpillar rely on native species (in this case, milkweed) for survival and are threatened if riparian areas are not properly preserved.



A volunteer helping to restore a riparian area.

Conservation Easements

Important habitats like riparian areas can be permanently protected using a conservation easement – a legal agreement between a landowner and a qualified organization like ClearWater Conservancy. By entering into a conservation easement, a property owner voluntarily gives up some property rights, for example the right to subdivide, while retaining ownership and the right to continue to use the property.



Streambank fencing on agricultural properties helps protect riparian areas by preventing livestock from destroying vegetation and polluting the water.

Conservation easements are flexible land-protection tools that are tailored to the needs of the individual landowner. Landowners may apply conservation easements to their entire property or just to their riparian area. ClearWater Conservancy respects this flexibility and works with landowners to accomplish their goals for their property while protecting natural resources.



Dutchman's breeches is a common native species in riparian areas.

Contact Us!

Contact ClearWater Conservancy for more information regarding riparian buffer programs, financial assistance for plant material and fencing, recommended native riparian plants, and conservation easements.



Blue vervain is a vibrant inhabitant of healthy riparian areas.

Projects sponsored by: PA Department of Environmental Protection Growing Greener program, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Western Pennsylvania Watershed Program.



A Healthy Riparian Area. An Unhealthy Riparian Area.