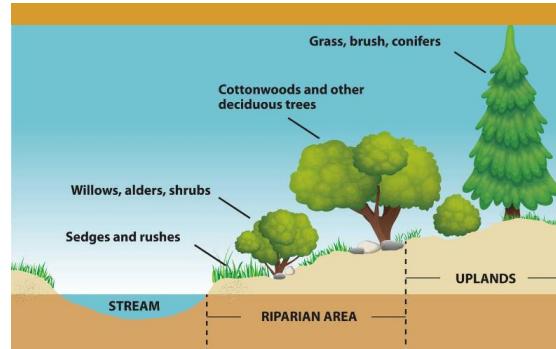


## WHAT IS A RIPARIAN AREA?

Riparian areas are the vegetated zones along lakes, wetlands, streams, and rivers, forming a boundary between water and land. They are vital for providing clean water, healthy fish populations, and flood protection.



## BENEFITS OF RIPARIAN AREAS:

### Protect Property

Plant roots and large pieces of wood naturally occurring along streams, lakes, and wetlands help to stabilize banks and protect against erosion.

They help defend homes, roads, and other buildings from floods by absorbing excess rain and slowing water flow.

### Maintain Water Quality

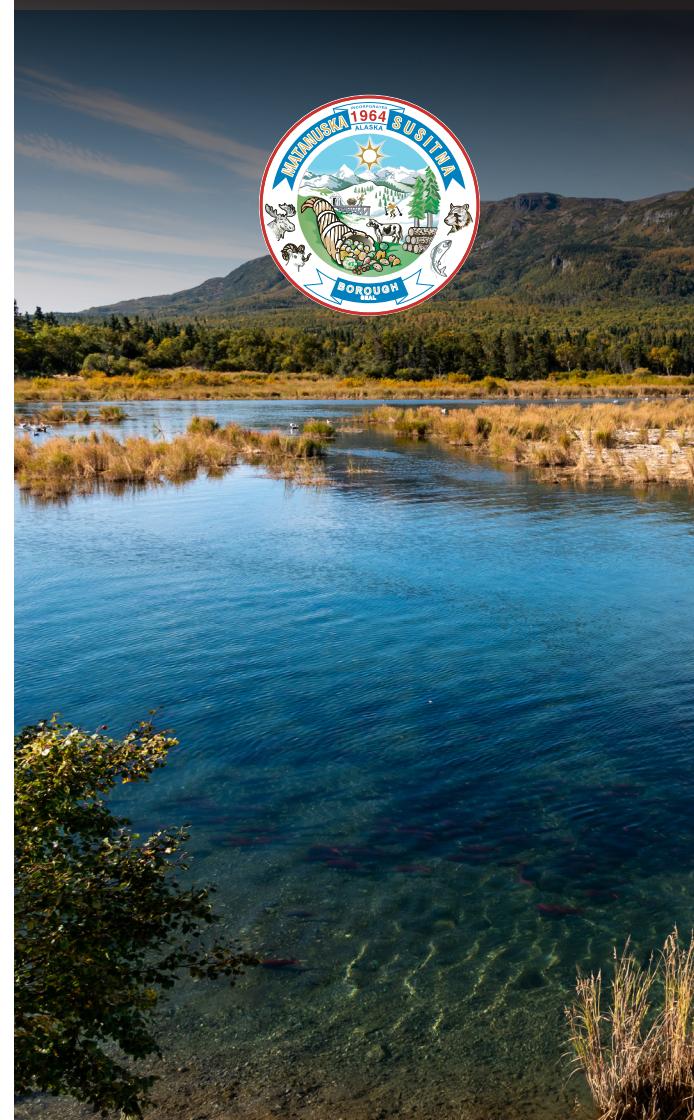
Riparian vegetation acts like a sponge by absorbing water from rain and snow, filtering sediment and polluted runoff before it can enter a water body.

Leaves and other organic matter from vegetation enter the water and provide a healthy amount of nutrients.

### Sustain Biodiversity

As transition areas between water and uplands, riparian areas support a wide variety of plants and animals.

Vegetation and woody debris in or along water bodies can keep water cooler and create habitat for insects, fish and wildlife.



Get in touch to learn more or share at your next event!

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PHONE: (907) 861-7822



SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION.

<https://healthywatershed.matsu.gov/>

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# Healthy Mat-Su Watershed Initiative



Bradley Carper MSB



## MSB CODES RELATED TO RIPARIAN HEALTH

Chapter 17.55.020

**(A)** Except as provided in subsection **(B)** of this section, no structure or footing shall be located closer than 75 feet from the ordinary high water mark of a body of water. Except as provided otherwise, eaves may project three feet into the required setback area.

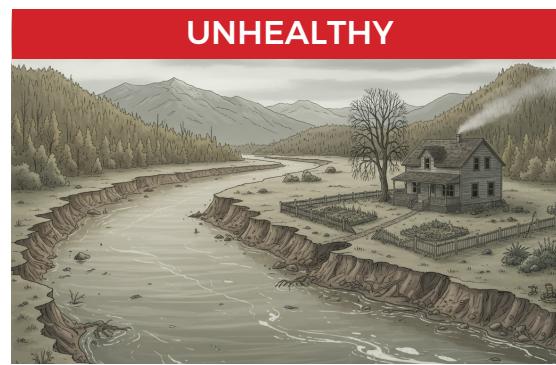
**(B)** Docks, piers, marinas, aircraft hangars, and boathouses may be located closer than 75 feet and over the water, provided they are not used for habitation and do not contain sanitary or petroleum fuel storage facilities.

**(D)** In this section, a "structure" is any dwelling or habitable building or garage.

**(E)** No part of a subsurface sewage disposal system shall be closer than 100 feet from the ordinary high water mark of any body of water. The planning commission shall require this distance be increased where necessary to protect waters within the borough.



The river and property are protected by a healthy riparian area full of native plants, and potential sources of pollution are not close to the water. The result – clean water and healthy fish, wildlife, and people!



This river does not have riparian plants along the banks, and the house, garden and path are located too close to the water. This leads to faster erosion, an increased risk to structures, and a higher chance of pollution entering the water. Poor water quality impacts fish, wildlife, and Mat-Su residents.

## BEST PRACTICES

### On Your Property:

- ▶ Maintain vegetated buffers along streams and lakes.
- ▶ Avoid mowing or clearing vegetation near water edges.
- ▶ Use native plants to stabilize soil and support habitat.
- ▶ Clean up and properly dispose of pet waste, oil, fuel, and other hazardous materials.
- ▶ Follow MSB setback codes: structures at least 75 ft (Ch. 17.55.020 A) and septic tanks at least 100 ft (Ch. 17.55.020 E) from water bodies.
- ▶ Locate livestock enclosures away from waterbodies and riparian vegetation to prevent water pollution.
- ▶ Limit use of fertilizers and pesticides, especially near water.

### In Your Community:

- ▶ Participate in clean-up events and native planting days.
- ▶ Report illegal dumping or erosion issues to local authorities.
- ▶ Attend community council presentations and workshops.
- ▶ Share educational materials with neighbors.
- ▶ Volunteer for stream monitoring or habitat restoration projects.

### Where You Recreate:

- ▶ Pack out all trash, gear, and fishing tackle
- ▶ Use non-lead fishing tackle
- ▶ Clean, drain, and dry your gear
- ▶ Dispose of human and pet waste properly
- ▶ Use designated trails, stream crossings and boat launch sites