

# Healthy Mat-Su Watershed Initiative

This community-led effort protects the rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands that make the Matanuska-Susitna Borough a great place to live and play. Healthy riparian areas help keep pollution out of the water and support fish habitat. The initiative focuses on raising awareness, encouraging stewardship, and building partnerships to keep water clean, vibrant, and thriving for everyone to enjoy.

Bradley Carper

## WHAT IS A RIPARIAN AREA?

Riparian areas are the green spaces along rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands. They help keep water clean, support healthy fish and wildlife, and protect communities from flooding.

## HOW CAN YOUR HELP PROTECT RIPARIAN AREAS?

### 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.
- Limit use of fertilizers and pesticides, especially near water.
- Locate livestock enclosures away from waterbodies and riparian vegetation to prevent water pollution.

### 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



For more information on the Mat-Su Healthy Watershed Initiative, visit our website at <https://healthywatershed.matsu.gov/>

This project has been funded by the United States EPA through the Department of Environmental Conservation's Alaska Clean Water Actions (ACWA) program, Grant #25-03. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the EPA.

### HEALTHY



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!

### UNHEALTHY



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.

