



# What do Riparian Areas Do?

## *Key Ecological Functions*



### 1. Trap & Store Sediment

- ◆ Sediment adds to and builds soil in riparian areas.
- ◆ Sediment aids in the ability of soils to hold and store moisture.
- ◆ Sediment can carry contaminants and nutrients - trapping it improves water quality.
- ◆ Excess sediment can harm aquatic animals like fish and insects.



### 2. Build & Maintain Banks & Shorelines

- ◆ Erosion is balanced with bank building - the effects of erosion are reduced by adding bank and shore elsewhere.
- ◆ Increase stability, resilience and recovery.
- ◆ Maintain or restore profile of channel - extends width of riparian area through higher water tables.



### 3. Store Water & Energy

- ◆ Watershed safety valve - storage of high water on the floodplain during floods.
- ◆ Reduce flood damage by slowing water and reducing erosion.
- ◆ Slow flood water allowing absorption and storage in underground aquifer.



### 4. Recharge Aquifers



- ◆ Store, hold and slowly release water.
- ◆ Maintain surface flows in rivers and streams and levels in lakes and wetlands through storage and slow release.
- ◆ Maintain high water table and extend width of productive riparian area.