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## 18. RIPARIAN AREAS

**Overview:** This activity will give students the opportunity to check their knowledge of important terms dealing with riparian areas.

**Objective:** Students will complete statements by inserting correct terms on a worksheet or orally.

**Time needed:** 20-30 minutes

**Group Size:** 2-4

**Age appropriateness:** 5th Grade and up

**Site:** Classroom or as a quiet activity in the Garden.

**Background:** Riparian areas are important and valuable in many ways, including as ecologies for whole communities of life. Riparian areas are the green ribbons of life found on the edges of water courses. Riparian areas provide space, shelter, and food for the plant and animal communities with which they are associated. Vegetation provides shade from the sun for aquatic plants and animals and land-dwelling creatures at the water's edge. Riparian areas are also transportation corridors or highways for animals that depend on water bodies for food and shelter. The riparian plant community, especially shrubs and trees, provides shelter and food for animals as large as deer. Trees and marshy areas provide shelter for nesting birds and the banks provide homes for burrowing animals.

**Materials:**

Provided at the Garden

Clipboards

Provided by the classroom teacher

Worksheets

**Preparation:** Run copies of worksheet.

**Pre Activity:** Instruction about riparian areas should precede this activity.

**Procedure:**

1. Divide class into groups.
2. Pass out worksheets.
3. Give adequate time for completion of worksheet.
4. Have a class discussion about the worksheet.
5. If the worksheet is done at the Garden, have students identify specific items that apply to the terms.

**Modifications:** Statements could be separated into strips. In pairs, students can match terms to blank spaces.

**Extensions:** Through research, compare and contrast different riparian areas.

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**Reference List:**

Arizona Riparian Council Fact Sheet  
Project WILD Aquatic

**Time of Year:** any

## Riparian Areas Worksheet

turbidity    habitat    aquatic    ephemeral    riparian  
groundwater    terrestrial    aquifer    intermittent    ecosystem

The list above will be used to fill in the blanks below. Terms may be used more than once.

1. The condition of being thick or opaque because of sediment is called \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The complex of living organisms and their environment functioning as a unit of nature is an \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ means lasting only a short time.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is water within the earth that supplies wells and springs.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ means growing or living in or on water.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ means coming and going at intervals, not continuously.
7. The type of site where a plant or an animal naturally lives is called \_\_\_\_\_.
8. A water-bearing layer of rock, sand or gravel that is porous enough to allow water to pass through it is called an \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Riparian areas also serve to recharge the underground water \_\_\_\_\_ by letting the water slowly percolate through the soil into the water table.
10. Riparian areas improve degraded waters and maintain high environments in \_\_\_\_\_ habitats.
11. Riparian areas reduce sediment loads and \_\_\_\_\_ of flood waters.
12. Vegetation along the rivers provide a \_\_\_\_\_ for many small animals and insects.
13. To find a \_\_\_\_\_ area, look for places where water flows or collects when it rains.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ depends on local physical conditions (water flows, soil, temperature) and on their location (elevation, valley, canyon, etc.)
15. This biomass serves as food for a multitude of animals, both aquatic and \_\_\_\_\_.

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### **Riparian Areas Worksheet (answer key)**

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|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. turbidity    | 9. aquifer      |
| 2. ecosystem    | 10. aquatic     |
| 3. Ephemeral    | 11. turbidity   |
| 4. Groundwater  | 12. habitat     |
| 5. Riparian     | 13. riparian    |
| 6. Intermittent | 14. Habitat     |
| 7. habitat      | 15. terrestrial |
| 8. aquifer      |                 |