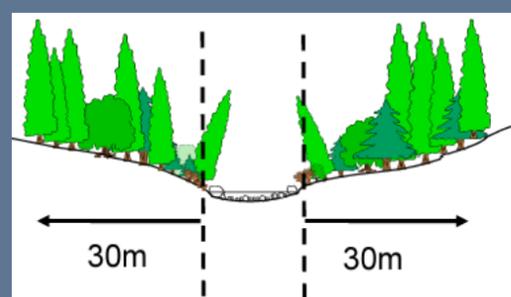


# DEVELOPMENT WITHIN RIPARIAN AREAS

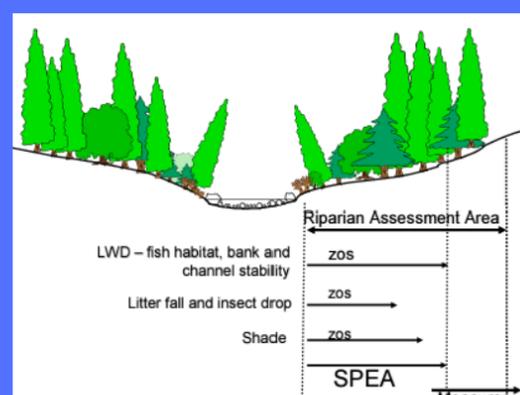
Riparian areas are the lands beside streams, lakes and wetlands that connect aquatic and terrestrial habitats.

Riparian areas are a crucial part of fish habitat as the trees within them provide shade that keeps water cool for fish, overhanging vegetation drops leaves and insects which become food for fish and provide nutrients to the stream, overhanging branches and woody debris provide refuge (hiding places) for fish. Riparian areas filter pollution and play an important role in flood protection and bank stability.

On Bowen Island, lands within 30 metres of a watercourse (i.e. a stream, wetland, lake, ravine or ditch) are protected by municipal Watershed, Aquifer, and Stream Protection Development Permit Area and the provincial Riparian Areas Protection Regulation (RAPR). "Development" (including building construction, demolition, land alteration, tree removal, or subdivision of land) within 30 metres of a watercourse may require a Riparian Areas Protection Regulation detailed assessment, environmental assessment, and Development Permit, even if the watercourse is not on your property.



Riparian Areas Protection Regulation detailed assessments are conducted by a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) and are used to request a variance to reduce the 30 metres Watershed, Aquifer, and Stream Protection area while providing adequate protection to the waterbody. The reduced setback is referred to as a Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area (SPEA), it is designated by the provincial government and based on several factors such as the width and gradient of the stream, type of overhanging vegetation, or the proximity of existing developments.



There are several exemptions that you should be aware of. For example, you can:

- maintain existing uses such as mowing your lawn or repairing your fence,
- remove hazard trees, restore native vegetation, and remove invasive species under the guidance of a QEP, or
- reconstruct an existing building or perform renovations on an existing footprint

Exemptions are nuanced, but we can help you navigate this process.

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