

## Riparian Areas

Under the ALUS pilot project, landowners can enroll their riparian areas and receive an annual payment based on its level of agricultural and environmental use.

A riparian area is an area of land adjacent to a stream, river, lake or wetland that contains natural vegetation that, due to the presence of water, is distinctly different from the vegetation of adjacent upland areas. A riparian buffer is an area of land developed or conserved to reduce erosion, intercept contaminants and provide wildlife habitat along the side of a watercourse or water body. The area is often left in undisturbed or permanent vegetation.

In this pilot project, riparian areas must be 10m (33 feet) on each side of the water body, and can extend up to 100m (330 feet). Riparian areas along wetlands that are under 10 acres in size are also eligible for the following payment rates:

**\$15.00 per acre** when the landowner signs an ALUS contract to maintain the riparian areas with no agricultural use and leave them in their natural state without burning, breaking, or clearing.

**\$7.50 per acre** when the landowner signs an ALUS contract to maintain or enhance the riparian areas, but with haying or mowing permitted.

**\$5.00 per acre** when the landowner signs an ALUS contract to maintain or enhance the riparian areas, where grazing will be permitted after July 1 if off-site watering is available.

Landowners who have any questions about their eligibility or the criteria for wetland areas should contact local ALUS representatives for more information.

### Why Riparian Areas?

Riparian areas provide an abundance of food and primary or seasonal shelter for a wide variety of species while helping to regulate water levels.

As the link between land and water, riparian zones are the most biologically productive natural ecosystem in the world.

Riparian areas also filter surface water before it reaches the waterway, help to control erosion, and minimize run-off of sediments and nutrients.