

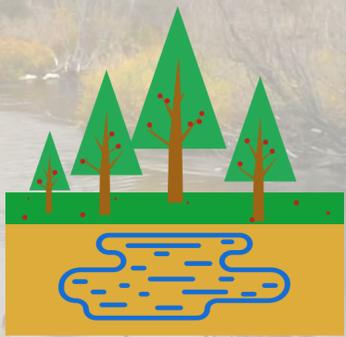
# Wild and Scenic Rivers: *Fish, Wildlife, Ecology & Botany*

## *Why healthy riparian areas?*

Wild and Scenic Rivers and their immediate environments possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, historical, cultural, or other values that are unique or truly special.

Riparian areas are lands along rivers and other water bodies. While their appearance and boundaries vary, their soil and vegetation are unlike their neighboring 'uplands' due to the dominant influence of nearby water.

## *Did you know...*



The flow of water through riparian soils regenerates ground water.



Shade provided by riparian vegetation optimizes the light and temperature for fish, aquatic plants, and resident animals.



Although riparian ecosystems occupy only 7% of the country, they are more diverse and have more plant and animal species than adjacent upland areas.



To illustrate how riparian vegetation supports water quality: One mature tree in a riparian area can filter out as much as 200 pounds of nitrate runoff per year.



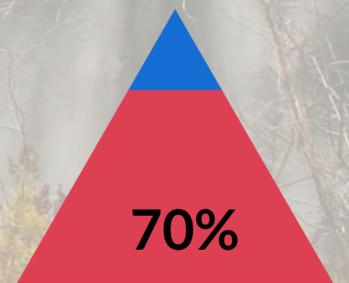
Of the more than 200 designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, 74% are protected for fish, 67% for wildlife, 22% for botany, and 17% for ecology.



80% of songbirds and 50% of threatened and endangered species depend on rivers and streams.



Freshwater animals are disappearing five times faster than land animals.



Estimates indicate that 70% of the riparian habitat in the United States has been lost or altered.



*Tell me more...*



## *Wildlife*

Wild and Scenic Rivers and their immediate environments are important for wildlife. They provide:

- habitat
- connectivity
- wildlife viewing
- wildlife interpretative and educational opportunities

### *Salmon Wild and Scenic River, Oregon*

The entire river provides optimal summer and winter habitat for big game from both sides of the Cascades, and the upper meadows supports diverse wildlife habitat. The northernmost breeding population of endangered Sandhill Cranes also lives here.

Photo: Diane McAllister



## *Fish*

Wild and Scenic Rivers may be judged by fish populations, diversity, habitat, or a combination of these river-related conditions. Some Wild and Scenic Rivers are protected for the fish that make the river their home. Protection of free-flowing water is critical to fish habitat and life for these fish. Some Wild and Scenic Rivers are integral producers of resident or migratory fish, including federally listed species.

### *Lamprey Wild and Scenic River, New Hampshire*

The Lamprey River's shoreline, natural floodplain, and wetlands support the largest quantity of freshwater fish in the Great Bay watershed and numerous freshwater mussel species.

Photo: Lelia Mellen



## *Botany*

Areas near Wild and Scenic River corridors include upland, riparian, and wetland habitats and a rich variety of plant communities. Plants in riparian areas support pollinator insects and seed dispersers.

### *Snake Wild and Scenic River, Idaho*

Hells Canyon, carved by the Snake River, is one of the deepest and most imposing river gorges in the West. Few locations equal this canyon in the concentration and number of rare or endemic plant species, such as the Snake River Goldenweed, found only in the canyon and on its adjacent slopes.

Photo: Oregon Department of Agriculture