

THE IMPORTANCE OF RIVER AND STREAM WATER HABITATS TO SOCIETY, ECOSYSTEMS, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT



SOCIETY

Rivers and streams provide clean drinking water to many communities and are a source of water for farming and livestock needs. The culturally significant Atlantic Salmon rivers in Newfoundland and Labrador also offer food security, recreation and tourism.

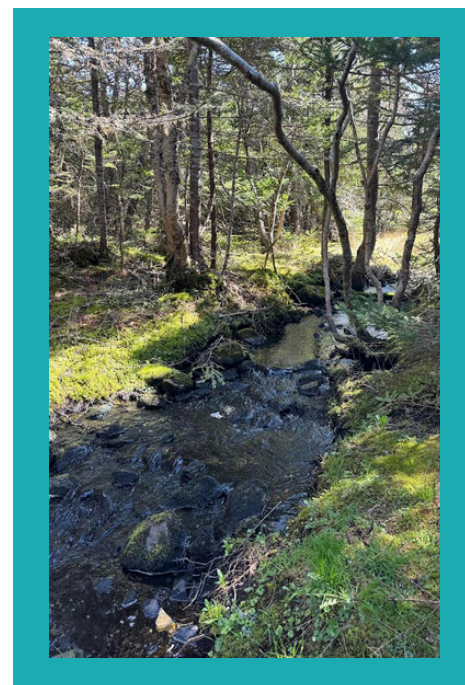


ECOSYSTEMS

A variety of waterfowl, fish, amphibians, mammals and aquatic vegetation, rely on river and stream ecosystems for food, shelter, spawning and nesting zones. These habitats also connect other water habitats by transporting water and nutrients between wetlands, lakes, ponds and oceans.

WHAT IS A RIPARIAN BUFFER?

Many communities have ecological conservation acts that conserve freshwater habitats, like rivers and streams. Such conservation areas also protect the land adjacent to these habitats, conserving from the shoreline to more upland areas, this is what's known as the riparian buffer. These habitats are critical to a diverse number of wildlife and plant species.

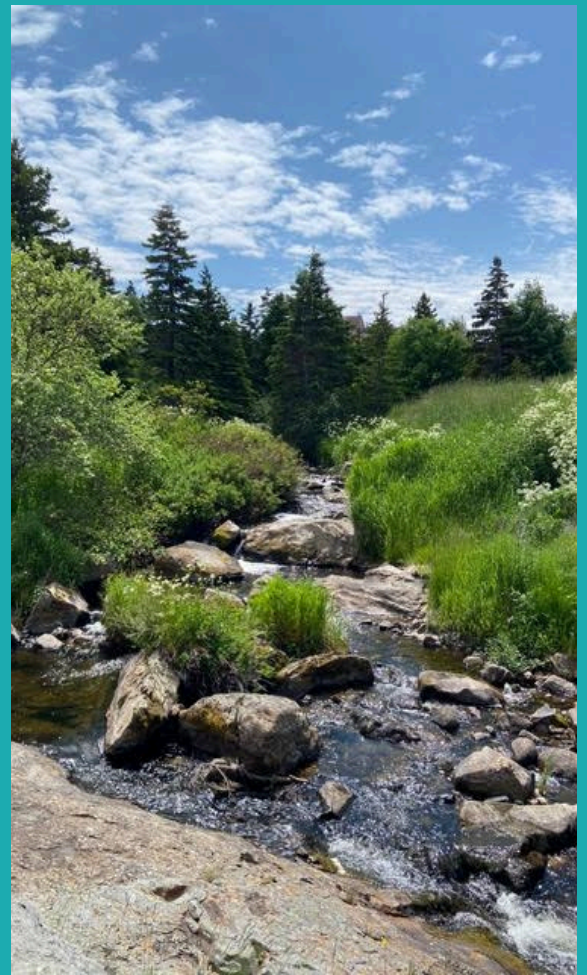


SAFETY

- Riparian buffers around river and stream channels protect communities from the risk of flooding by slowing down heavy water runoff and spring snowmelts.
- Riparian buffer vegetation also stabilizes the soil of streambanks. This greatly lowers the risk of erosion of these habitats, while supporting better air quality through natural vegetation.

ENVIRONMENT

- Rivers and streams naturally filter pollutants in the water through aquatic vegetation and surrounding soil, helping to improve water quality.
- Healthy freshwater habitats also help maintain biodiversity and make the environment more resilient to climate change by acting as natural shock absorbers during extreme weather events.



Only 3% of the entire world's water is freshwater, which is mostly in frozen glaciers or underground!

