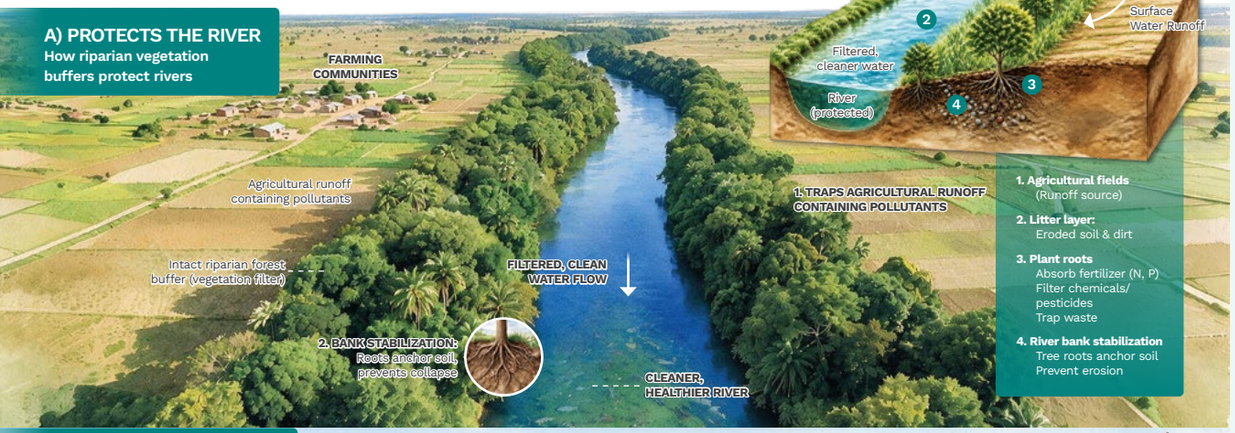
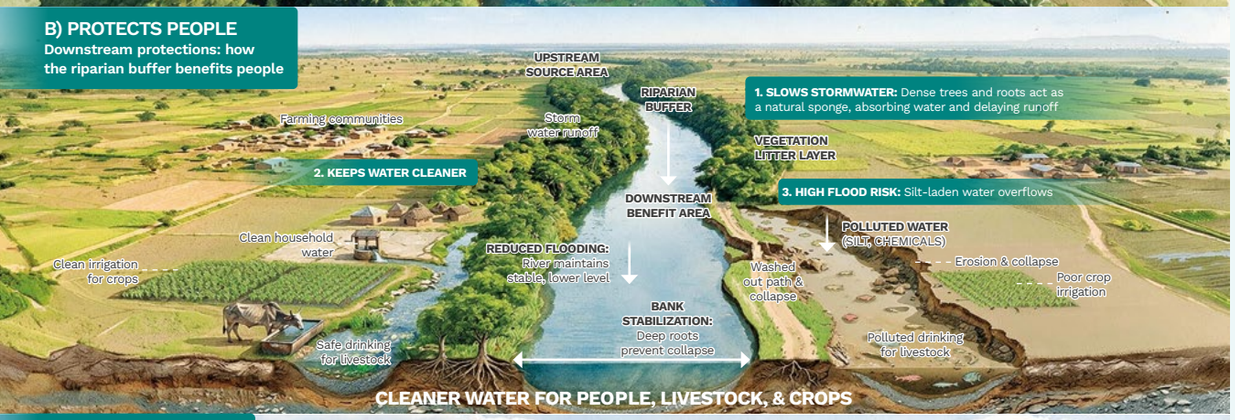
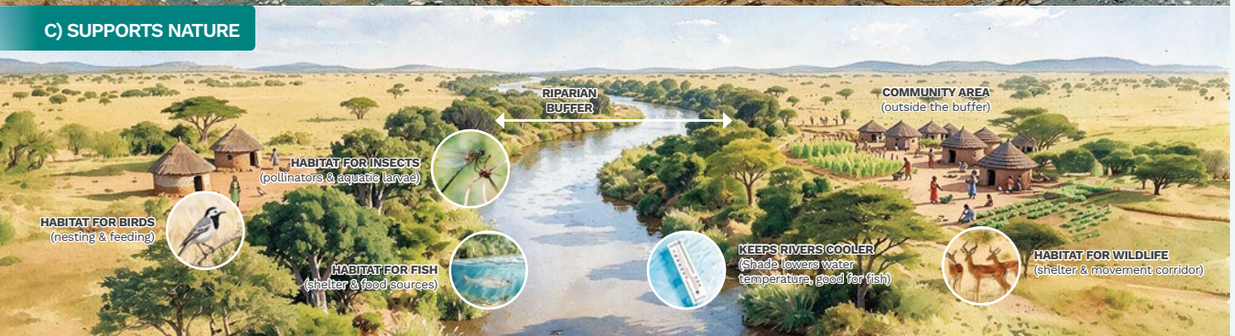
What is a Riparian Vegetation Buffer?

A riparian vegetation buffer is a strip of natural plants, such as grasses, bushes, and trees, that grow along the edges/banks of a river, stream or wetland. Think of it like a green protective barrier between the water and the land around it that acts as a **green shield** that protects both the river and the surrounding community.

Why Are Riparian Buffers Important?
(Benefits for the Community)



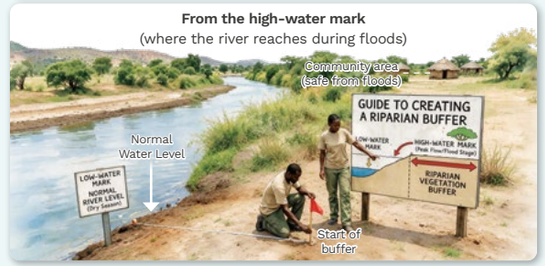




Where Should Buffers Be Created?

Riparian buffers should be placed:







Recommended Buffer Widths

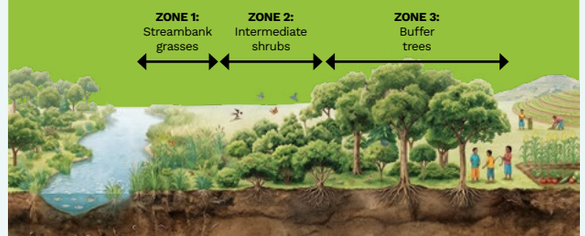
These can be adjusted depending on land availability.

Condition	Recommended Width
Small seasonal stream	10–15 meters on each side
Medium permanent stream	20–30 meters per side
Large river	30–50 meters per side
Flood prone areas	50+ meters

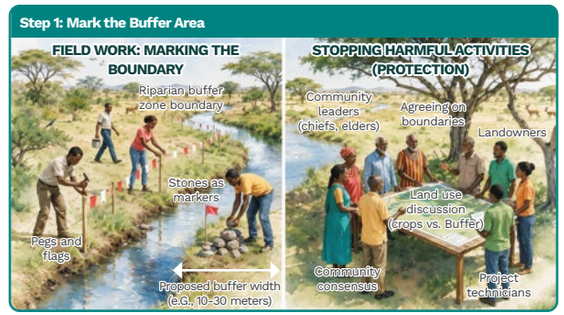
Note: Wider buffers = better protection.

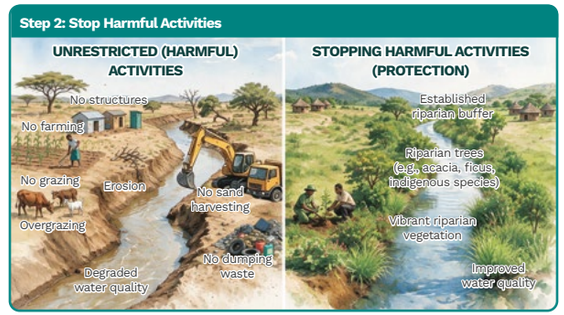
Simple layout and what Plants to Use (Easy & Local Options)

Avoid planting eucalyptus or invasive species, they dry out soil and harm ecosystems.

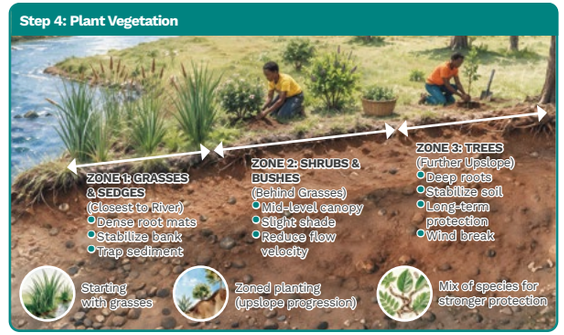


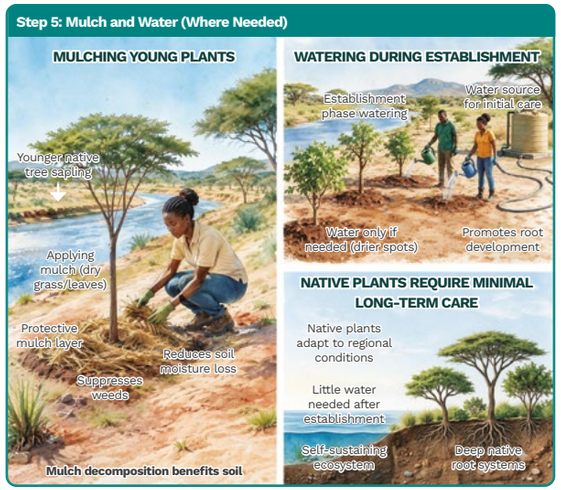
How to Establish a Riparian Vegetation Buffer











Community Roles in Buffer Management



What NOT to Do in a Riparian Buffer



- No farming (e.g., Maize, vegetables, bananas, rice)
- No buildings, toilets, or animal sheds
- No grazing or tethering animals
- No fires or charcoal burning
- No dumping of waste or chemicals
- No sand harvesting or excavation

THESE ACTIVITIES DESTROY THE BUFFER AND PUT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY AT RISK

Monitoring & Maintenance Checklist
Do this every 1–2 months:



- Remove invasive specie
- Replace dead plant
- Check for soil erosion gullies
- Clean litter
- Ensure buffer boundaries are respected
- Keep records (dates, problems, solutions)

REGULAR MAINTENANCE PROTECTS THE BUFFER, STABILIZES RIVER BANKS, AND ASSURES FUTURE RESOURCES

Community Success Indicators



Water looks clearer than before


Riverbanks stop collapsing


More birds, insects, and fish appear


Flooding becomes less destructive


Crops near the river grow better


Community conflicts over water reduce

A WORKING BUFFER ENSURES CLEAN WATER, STABLE LAND, AND A THRIVING, HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY

Quick Training Exercise for community, led by a field officer or community champion (15 Minutes)

- Take community members to the riverbank.
- Ask: “Where does the water reach during floods?” Mark this line.
- Ask: “Which activities may be harming the river?” List them.
- Identify **3 plant species** already growing naturally.
- Agree on a **buffer width** everyone accepts.
- Assign **volunteer teams** for planting and monitoring.



Handling Conflicts Fairly

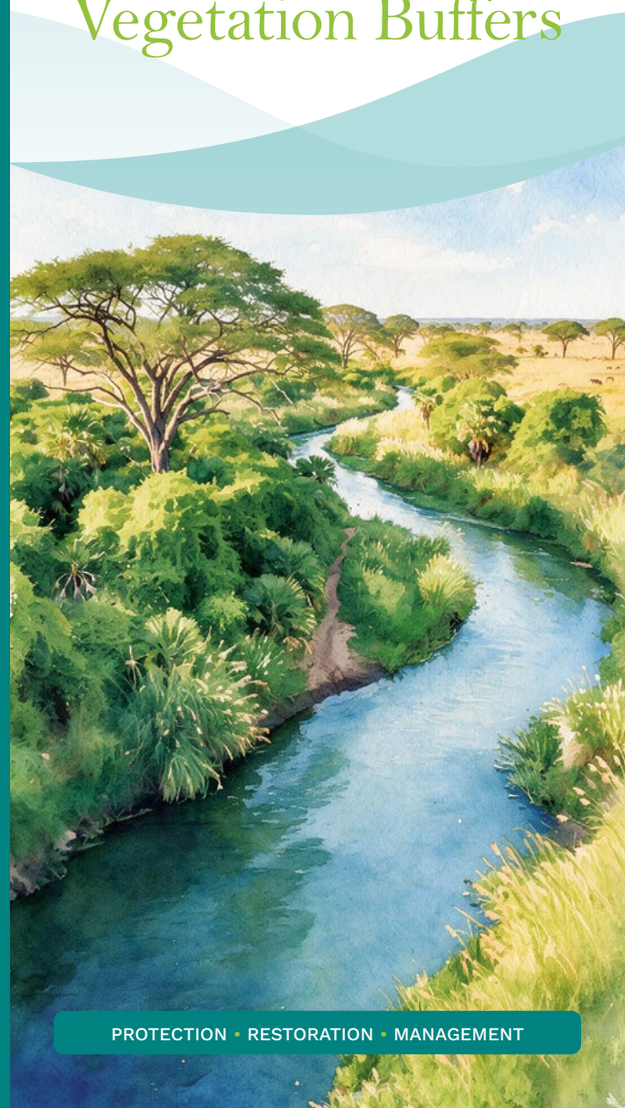
Handle riparian conflicts fairly by sharing information openly, involving women, youth, elders, and all user groups in decision-making, documenting agreements clearly, using neutral mediators when needed, and following community by-laws and agreed rules. Encourage respectful dialogue, listen to all sides, and resolve issues in ways that strengthen unity and protect the wetland for everyone.

Who to Contact for Help

- County Environment Office
- NEMA officers
- WRUA (Water Resource Users Associations)
- Local conservation NGOs (ICF, WWANC...)
- Community forest associations
- Agricultural extension officers

The Nature Conservancy

Community Practical Field Guide for Riparian Vegetation Buffers



PROTECTION • RESTORATION • MANAGEMENT