

## **Watershed, Riparian and Fish Habitat**

### ***Key Message***

Clean, clear, and productive waters are a big reason that people come to the Chippewa National Forest to fish, swim, boat, camp, and view scenery. But these waters also provide important ecological functions that contribute to biodiversity and fish and wildlife habitat. Maintaining and improving watershed health, healthy riparian areas and a productive fishery are vitally important in managing the Chippewa National Forest. The watershed and riparian emphasis of the Revised Plan contributed in large part to the Regional Forester's decision to select Modified Alternative E.

### ***The Plan:***

- ✓ goes beyond mitigation and best management practices to proactively manage watersheds and riparian areas for their inherent values
- ✓ includes objectives to protect, improve and restore watershed and riparian areas
- ✓ maintains the overall integrity of aquatic ecosystems, providing habitat for all species while supporting sustainable populations of game fish.
- ✓ recognizes the important roles, authorities and cooperative relationships that exist among the National Forests, American Indian tribes and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources regarding fish habitat management.
- ✓ favors long-lived tree species and managing for longer rotations within riparian zones
- ✓ allows vegetation management in the near bank riparian area for the primary purpose of enhancing riparian values

Riparian Emphasis Management Areas are located along major rivers and lakes and selected large areas of relatively contiguous wetlands. Management in these areas focuses on conserving or restoring special social and ecological features of the Forest.

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*FAQs*

**Q.** Are riparian areas different than Riparian Emphasis Management Areas?

**A.** Yes, riparian areas occur along all lakes, streams and open water wetlands. Riparian Emphasis Management areas are designated management areas located along major lakes and rivers.

**Q.** Are riparian areas suitable for timber management?

**A.** The inner riparian zone or the “near bank” area (usually 100’) is not suitable for timber management. Vegetation management can occur, but the primary purpose would be for enhancing or restoring riparian values, not for producing timber. The outer zone is suitable for timber management, but management would generally be for longer lived species and longer rotations.

**Q.** Did creating riparian areas and Riparian Management Areas cause you to reduce your ASQ?

**A.** No, the ASQ is a result of the conditions we are trying to achieve on the ground. Healthy watersheds, riparian areas and fisheries are the desired condition we are striving to attain.