



Living bodies of water need space. The riparian zones along our rivers, lakes and streams are covered by many uses and increasingly under pressure. To protect our bodies of water and to ensure long-term flood protection, Swiss federal law requires the cantons to determine the riparian zones along water courses, and to restrict their use through spatial planning processes.

Minimum riparian zone widths for surface waters have been defined in the Water Protection Ordinance (GSchV) since 2011. To determine how wide the extended riparian zone needs to be in individual cases, it is essential to first determine the space needed for flood protection, restoration efforts, water use as well as nature and landscape conservation. In settlement areas, it is also necessary to consider the interests of future settlement development and to balance the competing claims of conservation, protection and human use.

With our interdisciplinary team, we work on the necessary steps for the parcel-specific definition of riparian zones, in municipal or cantonal planning and procedures depending on the canton. For the development of watercourse plans, this entails:

- Collecting and analyzing the necessary geographical data
- Coordinating with higher-level planning and third-party projects
- Demarcating areas of dense development
- Balancing the competing claims of conservation, protection and human use

We also support cantons, municipalities and private individuals in this challenging task by:

- Developing process instructions and tools for the designation of watercourse corridors
- Completing the necessary steps for including riparian zones into land use and local planning
- Coordinating suitable participatory processes
- Providing support for the professional communication of the issues involved, drafting informative and compelling communication material, and managing public proceedings on behalf of stakeholders
- Providing consulting services to third parties regarding property-use limitations and drafting expert reports

Two videos created by EBP help to explain the most important facts relating to the riparian zones in the Canton of Zürich (on behalf of WWEA)