

Riparian Zones

While bodies of water need sufficient space to support life and fulfill their role in the water cycle, the riparian zones along our rivers, lakes and streams are under pressure. In order to protect our bodies of water and to ensure long-term flood protection, Swiss federal law requires the cantons to define the space, or riparian zone, which their bodies of water need to remain intact.

Minimum riparian zone widths for bodies of surface water are defined in the Swiss Water Protection Ordinance (WPO). In order 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 and 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 of experts, we are in a position to arrive at precise determinations of riparian zone widths to support planning efforts at different levels. We perform the following specific tasks when drafting plans for riparian zones and watercourse corridors:

- Gathering and analyzing the necessary geographical data
- Coordinating planning activities with parties responsible for superordinate planning and related projects
- Demarcating areas of dense development
- Balancing the competing claims of conservation, protection and human use

We also support authorities and private parties when it comes to the following tasks:

- Drafting procedural guidelines and creating planning tools for development in riparian zones and watercourse corridors
- Completing the necessary steps for including riparian zones in development plans
- 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

Riparian zones video, part 1

Riparian zones video, part 2

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)