

# Riparian Zones in Gearhart, Oregon

## What is a riparian area and where are the riparian zones in Gearhart?

A riparian area pertains to the vegetation and animal habitat on the edge of a body of water.

Riparian Zones in Gearhart include:



- 50ft on either side of Neacoxie Creek
- 50ft on either side of Mill Creek
- 25ft adjacent to unnamed lake north of Pacific Way

## Why are riparian zones so important?



- Riparian areas provide habitat for wildlife, including much needed shade from trees to keep animal life, water and surrounding air at healthy temperatures.
- The roots of trees and shrubs help avoid shorebank erosion by soaking up stormwater and filtering pollutants before reaching a watersouce.
- Plant life reduces the flow of stormwater allowing nutrients from organic materials to settle into the soil. This allows plant life to remain healthy and continue growing and helps to reduce potential flooding.
- Riparian areas are great for relaxation and recreation, observation of nature and environmental education.

## What am I allowed to do with the riparian zone on my property?

All structures/uses must be outside the riparian zone with the exception of:

- Where direct access is required for water-dependent use; or
- Access to a lot where the proposed access is the only alternative; or
- Structural shoreline stabilization; or
- Trails or other pedestrian walkway that provide access to the water.

## Why did I receive this brochure?

Recently, there has been some unauthorized tree removal on several properties bordering Neacoxie Creek. This brochure has been sent for clarification of the rules regarding riparian zones. While there may be good reason for the need of removing vegetation or trees, a written hazard statement from a certified arborist must be presented. Failure to procure permission may result in a fine. Please contact the City of Gearhart if you have any questions.



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## What am I not allowed to with the riparian zone on my property?

You may not remove vegetation or trees unless permission has been granted by the City Manager with the following exceptions:

- Removal of dead, diseased/dying trees, or if posing a safety hazard.
- Removal of vegetation necessary to provide for allowed uses.
- Vegetation removal regarding an approved in-water project.
- Removal of noxious weeds defined by the City's nuisance ordinance.
- Vegetation removal necessary to maintain proper stream drainage.

Thanks,

Chad Sweet, Gearhart City Administrator