



How to use the Riparian Health Audit (RHA)



STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION OF THE RIPARIAN ZONE

(A) To correctly undertake the RHA the user needs to identify the lateral extent of the riparian zone. This will give the user an accurate idea of the river system's health.

- The riparian area (the area alongside each side of the stream) and therefore the riparian habitat is highly influenced by the geological and hydrological of the river. This makes the vegetation on the riparian zone different from the surrounding area.
- Users of the RHA need to observe and identify where vegetation type changes.

STEP 2: IDENTIFYING IMPACTS

(B) To determine the health of the riparian zone, there are 8 negative impacts the user must identify and rate:

1. Invasive Alien Plants
2. Bank Erosion
3. Rubbish Dumping
4. Inundation
5. Flow Modification
6. Physico-chemical Modification
7. Vegetation Removal
8. Channel Modification

STEP 3: RATING IMPACTS

(C) The rating impact varies from 0-5 and is dependent on the level of intensity and extensiveness of impact. The impacts are rated as a % of change to the riparian habitat by the impacts.

(D) Use the RHA Field sheet to record the ratings of each negative impact.

STEP 4: DETERMINING OF THE ECOLOGICAL CONDITION

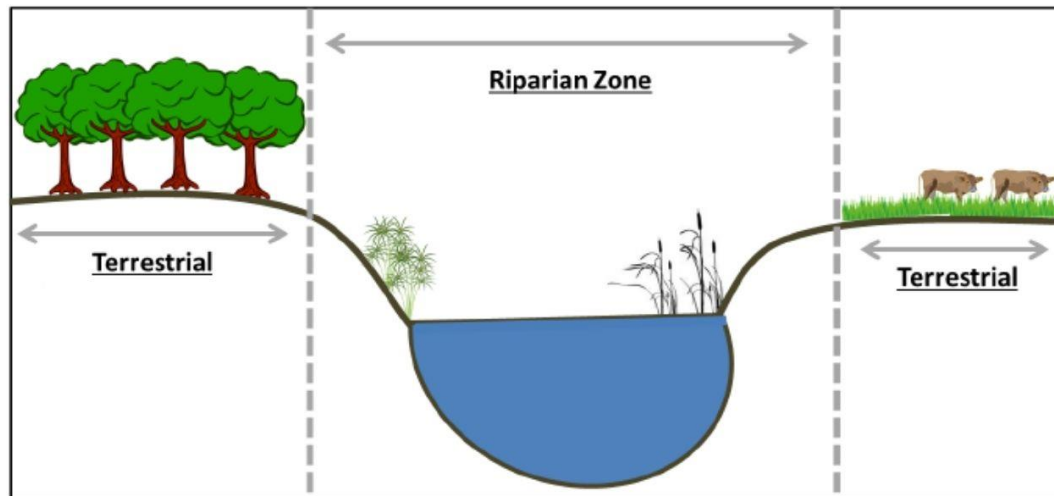
(E) The various impact ratings are summed and then converted to a percentage of the maximum total impact rating.

- The maximum total impact rating is a product of the number of impacts and the maximum rating per impact:

Number of impacts X Maximum rating = 8 X 5 = 40
An example of the step by step calculation for the the riparian EC is in the Table 2 below.

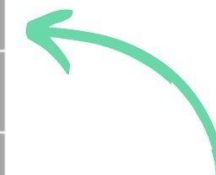


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STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION OF THE RIPARIAN ZONE

Rating	Percentage Change or Coverage	Description
0	0	No Impact
0.5	1-10	Minor Impact
1	11-20	Minor Impact
1.5	21-30	Moderate impact
2	31-40	Moderate impact
2.5	41-50	Large impact
3	51-60	Large impact
3.5	61-70	Serious impact
4	71-80	Serious impact
4.5	81-90	Critical impact
5	91-100	Critical impact



STEP 3: RATING IMPACTS (TABLE 1)



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STEP 4: DETERMINING OF THE ECOLOGICAL CONDITION (TABLE 2)

Impact	Rating
Exotic Vegetation	5
Rubbish Dumping	3
Bank Erosion	3
Inundation	0
Flow Modification	2
Evidence of decreased water quality	4,5
Vegetation Removal	3
Channel Modification	0
Score	21
Percentage Change (Score/40 X 100)	51
Ecological Condition	Poor

