



# Managing riparian zones on farmland

*Worksheet to assist ACRES advisors/farmers*

A **riparian zone** is a **transitional zone** between **land and watercourses** such as rivers, streams, ponds, drains etc.

There are many **different types of riparian zones** that can be found on farmland – woodlands, hedgerows, grasslands, wet grasslands and bogs are all types of riparian zones.

## Workshop ideas for ACRES Advisors

1. Start by watching the short video on riparian zone management developed by Farming For Nature ([link here](#))
2. Ask farmers to think about (possibly write down) the different watercourses they have on their land – ponds, drains, rivers etc.
3. Next, ask them to describe what type of transitional zone(s) currently exist between the watercourse and the adjoining land – are there trees/a hedgerow? Is there a grassy bank? Does the watercourse run directly alongside grazing/arable land with no boundary between?
4. Ask farmers to think about what values beyond the obvious ones (e.g. food production) these zones might offer (a) for nature, (b) for the farm and (c) for themselves/their family/community (*some suggestions given below*)
5. Ask the farmers to describe the current condition of these zones and how they are managed. What are the problems - for the farmer and for the riparian zone?
6. Discuss how ACRES specifications can work to improve the condition of the riparian zones - if carried out properly.
7. Discuss any additional ways in which farmers can go 'beyond compliance' to support more nature in these zones – e.g. planting native trees, fencing off wider margins, managing invasive species.
8. Ask farmers to think about (describe) one additional thing they could do to help improve the condition of their riparian zones.



## **Video Notes for ACRES Advisors: The Benefits of Riparian Zones**

### **1. For nature**

Riparian zones can:

- Provide healthy habitats for wildlife by providing food, water and shelter
- Improve water quality and habitat conditions for aquatic life
- Filter pollutants thus improving water quality
- Reduce water run-off and provide natural flooding control
- Stabilise riverbanks and prevent soil erosion
- Increase carbon capture

### **2. For the farm, the farming system & farmer's pocket**

Riparian zones can:

- Provide shade/shelter for livestock
- Improve soil stability and structure
- Reduce loss of nutrients from the farm
- Aid drought resistance and alleviate flood-risk
- Provide an additional income from agri-environmental schemes like ACRES

### **3. For the farmer, their family & wider community**

Riparian zones can:

- Provide personal joy in seeing nature and wildlife thrive
- Provide potential for farm visits, school tours, research – contributing towards the collective nature-friendly farming movement
- Minimise flood risk and improve water quality further downstream



For more information and resources on what you can do  
to enhance your farm for nature go to

[www.farmingfornature.ie](http://www.farmingfornature.ie)