

Riparian Ramble Station

This video is going to help guide you through the process of hosting the **Riparian Rx Station**.

The objectives of the Riparian Rx station are to:

- define riparian zone, and gain a basic understanding of riparian zone values and how human use may affect the stream and flood plain
- Learn about transects and ways to measure vegetation; gain experience estimating percent canopy cover and composition by vegetation type (shrub, grass, forb, or no veg.) in two kinds of plots
- Understand definitions and examples of plant adaptations and functions within the riparian zone and identify at least five species of riparian vegetation common to the area
- Understand origins and transport of sediments that create riparian features, and changes in vegetation over time

The bullet list / steps

- When the students arrive, introduce yourself and the other station members by giving your name, career, and agency
 - Ask students to define “riparian” and prompt them to answer why a riparian zone is important to the stream
 - State the goals and objectives of the Riparian Rx station
1. Divide students into 2 groups. Walk and identify riparian plants on the way to the transect station Identify plants throughout the activities, ask students to know five species.
 - a. Define “transect” and the methods used to measure vegetation – why measure? and what can you measure?
 - b. Estimate percent cover by species composition on two contrasting plots at selected intervals along a transect.
 - c. Also estimate percent cover by species composition on a 100 square foot circle plot
 2. Proceed to selected overhead canopy site and demonstrate the use of a spherical densitometer – allow everyone to try it if they want to.

a. Have students make an estimate beforehand and compare to the results of the densitometer; explain variations from different locations and how this is remedied by taking four readings averaged from the four cardinal directions.

b. What are we really measuring? Why measure overhead canopy? use examples like spotted owl, invasive species, and dry forest management).

3. Have suitable spots along trail to explore the following concepts:

a. Plant adaptation

b. Functions of riparian zone vegetation

c. Plant succession

d. Larger scale floodplain functions and values

In conclusion, summarize the lessons learned at the Riparian Station:

There are many reasons to measure vegetation and many ways to do it. The riparian zone is an interaction of three major factors; soils, water, and vegetation. Humans may have considerable influence in riparian zones. Whether we are recreating, harvesting timber, grazing, farming, or planning some development, we should decide which riparian functions and values of stream, floodplain, and watershed we may impact as we put our planning into action. Think about what are we affecting at the watershed scale?