



# The South Grand Current

www.sgrwa.org  
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## Riparian Corridors

Riparian (river) corridor is a term river biologists use to describe the area adjacent to a river that includes its banks and the floodplain. The most important

part of the riparian corridor is the area closest to the river. So, imagine a line drawn about 100 feet from both of the river's edges that runs parallel to the river. On a river the size of the South Grand River, this 100-foot corridor is important to the quality of the water

and the river's inhabitants, and should be managed with the goal of protecting the quality of water and life within the river. If we were to describe the riparian corridor along the Missouri River a much wider corridor would be needed—like one-half mile wide.

So what makes a quality riparian corridor? The first thing to look at would be the vegetation, or the lack thereof, in the corridor area. Since rivers by their nature are erosive to the soil on the river banks, a lack of vegetation leads to more erosion and lost ground. Quality riparian corridors are heavily vegetated in trees, brush, and grasses that are in thick stands. Vegetated stream banks and corridors are much more resistant to erosion than bare or lightly vegetated banks. Not only are trees resistant to erosion on the banks but when they wash into the river they provide structure for fish and other water

organisms like bugs to live in or upon. Trees also shade smaller streams which keep the water temperature down in the hot summer months and provide for more dissolved oxygen in the water for stream life.

Vegetated corridors greatly reduce the amount of sediment and pollutants that run off into the river after hard rains. Corridors slow the water run-off which causes the water to drop its sediment

load before reaching the river. Vegetated corridors also act like sponges, soaking up nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous, thereby preventing additional algae growth and helping maintain good water quality.

Now imagine a river at flood levels where the water level is over the banks and flowing over the floodplain. Then take a riparian corridor that has a healthy forest habitat and compare it to an unvegetated corridor. The unvegetated corridor at flood level would be eroding

badly as the unobstructed flood waters cut across it. Now look at the timbered corridor and see that the flood waters actually slow down due to all the obstructions caused by the plants. When water slows down it cannot hold as much silt so it then drops some of the sediment. The sediment dropped on the corridor helps fertilize that area and keeps the silt, pollutants and nutrients out of the river channel where it is not wanted. If you desire clean healthy waters, you should be a fan of healthy vegetated riparian corridors.

Unvegetated riparian corridors have higher velocities, more sediment deposited in the stream channel from erosion, less woody debris that provides habitat for many stream species,

increased amounts of pollution, and higher temperature fluctuations—all of which are bad for wild things and humans.

In conclusion, riparian corridors that are in timber or heavily vegetated are good for the life in the stream, the quality of water, provide wildlife habitat, and make the stream maintain a healthy and stable

ecosystem.

*If you would like to know more about how to create a quality riparian corridor, contact us at: [www.sgrwa.org](http://www.sgrwa.org), or your local MDC Private lands Conservationist (PLC). In Cass County you can contact PLC Andy Carmack at 816-622-0900, or Conservation Agent Phil Needham at 816-809-6259.*



*Heavily vegetated corridor along the Meramec*



*Partially vegetated corridor along Moss Creek*

# Fall Stream Cleanup Along the South Grand

The Soggy Bottom River Rats Stream Team held their annual stream cleanup along the South Grand River near Freeman Sunday afternoon, October 13. A small group of volunteers from the Soggy Bottom River Rats Stream Team 4315, South Grand River Watershed Alliance Stream Team 3757, and volunteers from the Stream Team Unit of the Missouri Department of Conservation had a very enjoyable time as they made a difference in the appearance of the river and the quality of the water by removing tires and other trash along a mile of the stream.

Opportunities to participate in stream cleanups will be offered by these Stream Teams in 2014 and will be announced on the website, [www.sgrwa.org](http://www.sgrwa.org) as well as other venues. Be sure to check for the dates and make plans to participate and help make a difference!



*Some of the cleanup crew proudly pose by some of their efforts*



*Volunteers removed these mosquito havens and unsightly tires from the river for proper disposal.*

*If you are interested in taking part in activities to protect Missouri streams, you can join an existing Stream Team or form your own. A Stream Team can be an individual, family, group, or organization with a desire to protect Missouri streams. A Stream Team can be involved in any of a number of different activities such as litter pickups, storm drain stenciling, water quality monitoring, habitat improvement, advocacy, greenways and/or educational possibilities. Training for several of these activities is provided by the Missouri Stream Team program. They also have staff available to help you begin your Stream Team activities and provide materials at no charge for these activities. To begin your own Stream Team, register at <http://mdc4.mdc.mo.gov/>*



## From the SGRWA 2013 Album...



*From left top: South Grand River at Raisbeck Park location of River Connections event; welcome booth for River Connections; learning about Stream Teams; star of the day; participants enjoying roast hog meal; family and friends planting Rick Lincoln's Memorial Rain Garden, Raymore.*

# Caring for the Stream in Your Backyard...or Acreage

If you have a stream flowing through your property, you have a wonderful opportunity to enhance its health and no doubt your own enjoyment. Whatever the size of the stream—whether a small headwater that only carries water in wet seasons or a regularly flowing stream or river—you can play a role in the quality of the water it transports. Remember, headwaters are the top of the watershed where water begins its journey to larger streams and whatever pollutants enter there through runoff are carried on to the next stream and so on.

Many residents in urban areas with a stream flowing through their property typically mow to the edge of the stream to achieve that well-kept, manicured appearance that is promoted by the trade as the way lawns should look. Unfortunately, that practice is detrimental to the health of the stream, contributes to increased erosion, and to downstream flooding. From a personal standpoint, it is also time-consuming and expensive.

Property owners, whether urban, suburban, or rural, can contribute

to healthier functioning of streams by planting a vegetated corridor (as described in featured article) to facilitate the slowing, trapping and filtering out of sediments and pollutants, and the absorption of stormwater, and to provide vital terrestrial and aquatic habitat.

Native plants are recommended for stream corridor plantings as well as other landscaping purposes. There are many native species to consider for your streamside that will not only

be beneficial to the stream, but will also surely enhance your enjoyment with more opportunities to view wildlife. Those not familiar with native landscapes often express fear that these plants will attract rats and snakes. However, the reality is that native grasses, flowers, shrubs and trees are much more likely to attract beneficial wildlife.

*There are many resources available to help you as you work to care for the stream in your backyard. In addition to resources on page 1, other resources with stream corridor information include:*

- [www.grownative.org](http://www.grownative.org)
- *City of Neosho Urban Stream Guide:* <http://www.neoshomo.org/documentcenter/view/1114>;
- *River Network Report published in October 2013; Restoring Riparian Buffers: A What Works Snapshot:* [http://www.rivernetwork.org/sites/default/files/whatworksbuffers\\_0.pdf](http://www.rivernetwork.org/sites/default/files/whatworksbuffers_0.pdf)
- [http://springriver.jaspercounty.org/guide\\_to\\_urban\\_streams.html](http://springriver.jaspercounty.org/guide_to_urban_streams.html)



*Buttonbush (Cephanthus occidentalis) butterfly and other pollinator magnet, likes moist to average conditions and is one of many beautiful and beneficial native shrubs for corridor and other plantings.*



*Service berry (Amelanchier arborea) show early spring blooming small tree that draws butterflies.*



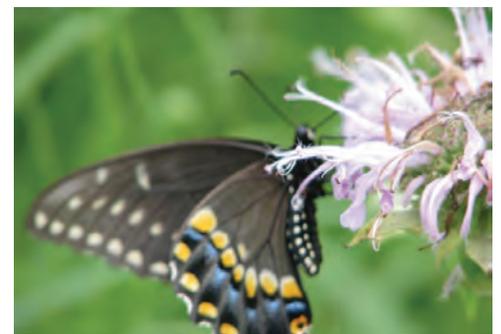
*Switch grass (Panicum virgatum) lends a touch of elegance to stream corridors.*



*River oats (Chasmanthium latifolium) an interesting grass that attracts butterflies and stabilizes soil making it ideal for corridor plantings.*



*Possum haw (Ilex decidua) will lend color and provide winter food for birds.*



*Bee balm (monarda bradburiana) will attract butterflies and hummingbirds in your stream corridor plantings*

# Recap: SGRWA 2013 Activities to Promote Water Quality and Quantity

## Community Events

- Hosted 2nd Annual Know Your Watershed Festival on the square in Harrisonville
- Cass County Fair tabling — attendees learned about stream dynamics through stream table demonstrations and were provided with pamphlets about watershed topics
- Presented hands-on activities and information at the Family Center’s Farm Days in Harrisonville
- Assisted in writing of a city MS4 plan and provided activities in Peculiar and Harrisonville to help them meet their MS4 requirements
- Sponsored river cleanup hosted by Soggy Bottoms River Rats Stream Team
- Provided watershed information at

- Cass Regional Medical Center plant sale
- Designed, facilitated and helped with construction and planting of the Rick Lincoln Memorial Rain Garden



*Family and friends at planting of the Rick Lincoln Memorial Rain Garden in Raymore.*

- Advocated for stream protection at City Council meeting

## Grant Awards

- Mid-America Regional Council awarded grant funding to the SGRWA to host a River Connections event focusing on local decision makers, information booths, stream monitoring demonstrations; and roast hog meal.

## Maintenance of Community Rain Gardens

- SGRWA volunteers did maintenance work on rain gardens installed in previous years by the SGRWA.

**Presentation  
for Your Group  
or Organization**

Need a program for your group or organization?  
The SGRWA is available to present programs on water quality related topics such as Watershed 101, Rain Gardens, Nonpoint Source Pollution, Native Plants

Contact us through our website,  
[www.sgrwa.org](http://www.sgrwa.org)

*Plans to protect air  
and water, wilderness  
and wildlife are in  
fact plans to protect  
man.*

—Stewart Udall

**SGRWA Meetings**

Regularly scheduled Board of Director meetings are usually held the first Monday of each month. Check our website for up-to-date meeting and program dates, times and places. Members and others interested in water quality are welcome.

**SGRWA Mission**

To promote the conservation, protection, and restoration of the South Grand River Watershed through education, advocacy, and demonstration activities.

**Yes, I want to join the South Grand River Watershed Alliance and help protect and restore water quality.**

Memberships/donations are fully tax deductible and run from January 1 through December 31

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership type:**

Individual (\$15);  Family (\$20);  Business/Organization (\$50)  Government (\$150);  
 Donation(\$\_\_\_\_) New Member \_\_\_Renewing Member\_\_\_

I can help with: \_\_\_Planning; \_\_\_Outreach/Education; \_\_\_Community Events; \_\_\_Distributing brochures etc.

**Make checks payable to SGRWA and mail to: SGRWA, 10807 E. 205th St., Peculiar, Mo. 64078**