

WHAT ARE RIPARIAN ZONES

Riparian zones are areas bordering bodies of surface water such as lakes, ponds, rivers or streams.

In the Azuero peninsula these zones have been deforested, but where forests exist they represent some of the last patches of tree cover



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This eco-guide is a living document. If there are any errors, comments or clarifications to this info please contact Azuero Earth Project in person, by email, or phone:

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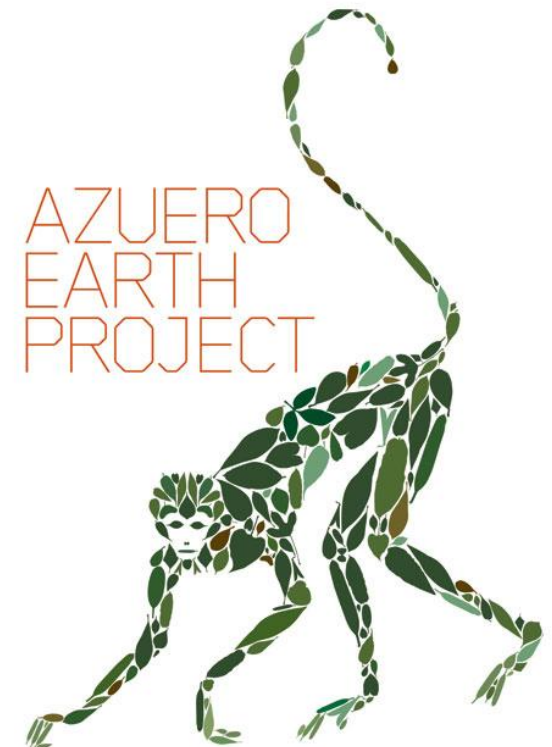
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RIPARIAN ZONE CONSERVATION

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTAND & PROTECT RIPARIAN ZONES



They provide very important services because:

1. The vegetation cover protects water and soil quality by preventing erosion and agrochemicals from entering the river
2. Trees along riparian zones harbor diversity by providing a seed bank and fruit for consumption or sale
3. Trees are important habitats for animals, including the endangered subspecies Azuero Spider Monkey
4. Riparian zones absorb water and release it slowly when compared to deforested or bare zones. They provide steady supplies of drinking water. These contributions are "achieved through minimization of soil erosion on site, reduction of sediment in water bodies, and trapping or filtering of other water pollutants in the forest litter" (FAO)

REFOREST RIPARIAN ZONES

To increase the integrity of these areas, reforest riparian zones using trees that grow well around bodies of water!

CONSERVING RIPARIAN ZONES ON CATTLE FARMS

Cattle with access to a riparian zone often negatively affect its soil, water, and vegetation. Trampling, defecating and urinating in the water limit natural regeneration of plants leaving a bare area. To protect the soil, water, and vegetation bring the water to the cattle.

Guidelines for how to protect riparian zones when cattle are present:

1. Fence both sides of a riparian zone to limit cattle from entering, especially in the early years after planting.
2. Once it has been fenced, install water troughs. Bring water by using a hose that comes from the creek or river. These troughs can be made from old tires, containers, buoys or other recycled items. Consider whether or not these containers will be permanent or mobile. If you would like them to be mobile so that the trough will follow the cattle's rotation, use light materials.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RIPARIAN ZONES

National Laws protect riparian zones due to the importance of these areas--It is illegal to deforest them. According to articles 23 and 24 from the 1st law of February 3rd, 1994 it is prohibited to destroy or log trees in the following areas:

Article 23 Protects natural vegetation that borders bodies of water:

1. **Areas that border springs originating from the forest.**
 - ▶ 200m radius of tree cover must be maintained.
 - ▶ 100m radius if the area is flat.
2. **Around rivers and streams.**
 - ▶ Both sides must be forested at a level equal or greater to the width of the river or stream with a width no less than 10m.
3. **Around natural lakes and reservoirs.**
 - ▶ 100m from the shore.
4. **Forest on the banks of aquifer areas that are for human consumption cannot be cut under any argument and are considered special forests in national protected areas.**

Article 24 protects areas of planted forest bordering bodies of water.

1. Areas that border springs originating from the forest.

- ▶ 100m radius of tree cover must be maintained.
- ▶ 50m radius if the area is flat.

2. Around rivers and streams.

- ▶ Both sides must be forested at a level equal or greater to the width of the river or stream with a width no less than 10m.

3. Around springs that are for human consumption.

- ▶ Radius of 50m.

4. Areas in natural or artificial reservoirs

- ▶ 10ft from the maximum water level.

