

What is the Riparian Zone and Why is it Important?

The word 'riparian' means of, or referring to, the bank of a river or lake.

Take a slow, observant ride around Song Lake to see a truly varied shoreline: woodlands, wetlands, lawns, retaining walls, native and non-native plantings, development and undisturbed wilderness. Song Lake has it all. Undisturbed, these riparian areas provide important environmental functions; regulating water quality, temperature, clarity, nutrients, and contaminants. They also sustain critical habitat for a variety of aquatic and terrestrial organisms, including fish, frogs, turtles, muskrats, butterflies, dragonflies, herons, and many waterfowl.

Riparian zones are the critical borders between the upland zone and the water body's littoral zone (see below). These areas experience frequent turbulence from wave action, ice and upland changes (runoff). However, this strip of land helps to retain flood waters, stabilize the shore against erosion, filter nutrients, contaminants and sediments from water flowing from upland zones, while providing critical habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals.

Riparian zones also provide beautiful focal points. The riparian area shown here reflects the native cardinal flower that was once abundant around Song Lake. This shallow lake has steep upland regions and seasonal shoreline depths. Much of the riparian area on Song Lake is underwater for several months of the year. These cardinal plants emerge as the lake level recedes.

With increased development along lakesides, human activity has often removed the native vegetation, altering slopes, or installing a variety of structures, such as lawns, roads, breakwalls, and docks. These disruptions can destabilize the upland area, shoreline or riparian zones making them susceptible to erosion. As well, changes in a critical riparian area can threaten the survival of species that rely on this habitat during different stages of life. Some species depend on these areas for breeding, spawning, nesting, feeding, growing and escaping from predators.

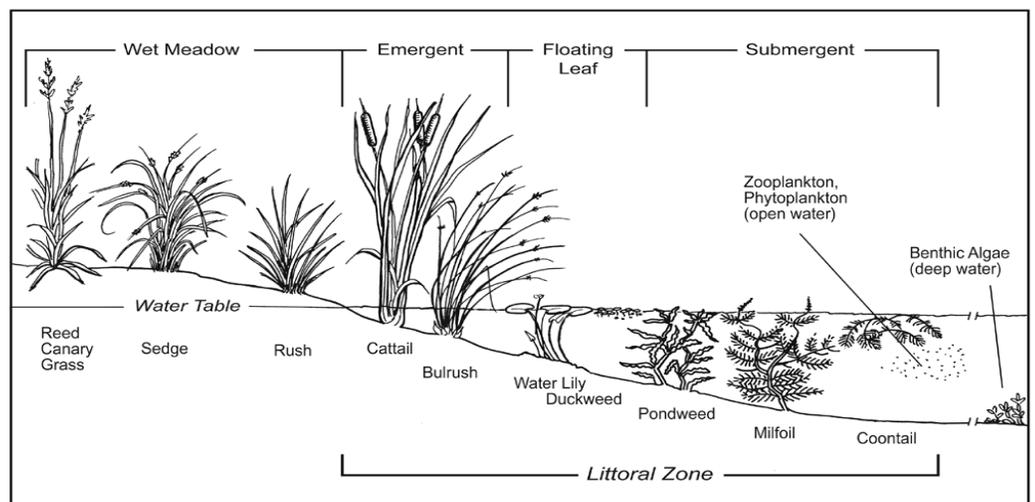
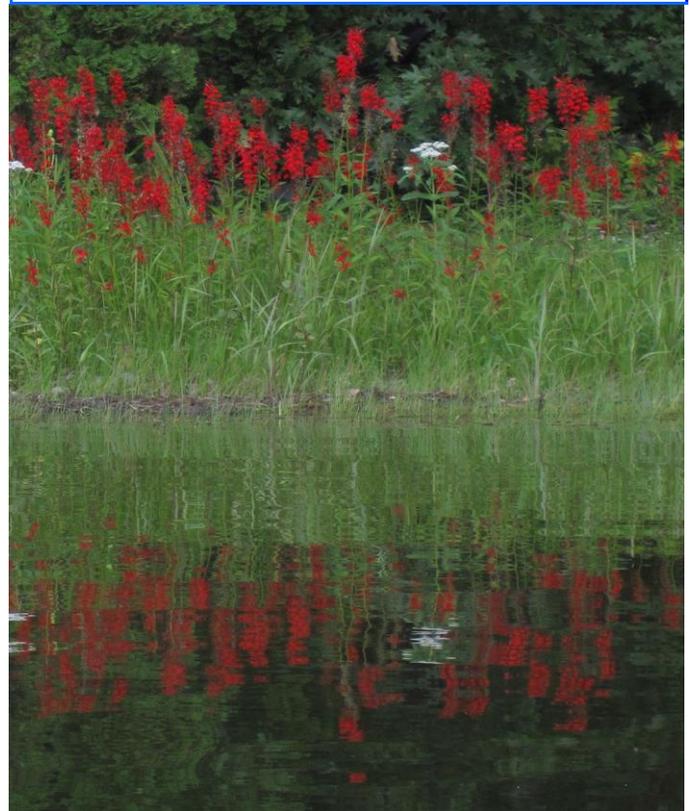
While Song Lake has some shoreline areas that are considered "over-developed," there remain large expanses of natural shoreline. For the health of the lake, it is important to preserve those riparian ecosystems.

While some disturbance of the shoreline may be unavoidable, development should always be done with an understanding of the importance of riparian zones to the health of the lake.

Our Song Lake Watershed

Volume 15

www.songlakewatershed.org



This illustration, from **Diet for a Small Lake**, shows a typical shoreline zone of a lake, pond or marsh showing the transition from upland plants to submerged macrophytes to algae. (Credit: Wendy Skinner)

Attractive Shoreline and Riparian Plants

Lovely plants that help maintain a natural, native landscape



Button Bush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) Height: 5 to 10 feet Width: 4 to 8 feet. Location: Provide sun and moist to wet soils, but they will grow on well drained sites with adequate moisture. It is often found in cattail marshes and pond shorelines. Characteristics: Button bush is a deciduous shrub, most often multi-stemmed, but it may have single trunk. May sometimes show distinctive right angle branching. Leaves are opposite, 3 to 4 inches long, rather leathery with a smooth margin. The flowers are fragrant, snowball-like spheres, about one inch in diameter.

Decorative round green seedheads on long stems turn brown when ripe. The bark is smooth on young plants, developing a flaking texture as it matures. Benefits: It is a great nectar plant for butterflies and hummingbirds and the seeds are eaten by many birds. It is a lovely, fragrant plant, and the flaking bark, unusual branching, and the round seedheads make buttonbush striking even in winter. Image from: www.fcps.edu/islandcreekes/ecology/buttonbush.htm



Cardinal Flowers (*Lobelia cardinalis*) Height: 2 to 4 foot tall. Location: Cardinal flowers are native to wet meadows, marshes and stream banks and prefer a wet soil. On Song Lake, these are a native flower and used to cover an extensive riparian area around the lake. Characteristics: Spikes of gorgeous, bright red flowers between midsummer and early autumn. Benefits: Cardinals flower are fairly easy to grow. The seed capsules can be collected in autumn, usually October. The stalks are cut below the capsules, and placed upside down in sack. Expose the capsules to the air for a few days, then scatter the seeds. These beautiful plants attract several species of butterflies as well as hummingbirds. Lobelia images from Tarki Heath

Wetland Rose (*Rosa palustris*) Height: 4 to 7 feet Width: 2 to 4 feet. Location: They prefer sunny areas with wet to well drained soils, and are often found growing with other wetland shrubs such as buttonbush. Although they will also grow well on non-wetland sites, this plant does not survive drought well. Characteristics: Fragrant pink, 5-petaled blooms occur in late spring- early summer. The flowers are followed by red hips with soft prickles. Benefits: The hips provide food for many birds. Fall color provides an array of reds, oranges and yellows. Image from: www.nativeplantwildlifegarden.com



These plants are available through the NYS DEC Spring Seedling Sale - www.dec.ny.gov and The Plantsmen Nursery in Groton, near Ithaca - www.plantsmen.com



Join Us!

Sunday, August 10th at Camp Hoover.

The membership meeting starts at 3:00 followed by a picnic dinner with Dinosaur BBQ, but please bring a dish to share.

This event is open to current SLPOA members and their families and friends. It's always a wonderful event – a relaxed and enjoyable time to share with our good neighbors. The meeting will include elections, so if you have a desire to be on the SLPOA board, please call committee chair, Paul Motolo at (315) 657-5487

SLPOA Newsletter:

If you have news for our SLPOA community newsletter, please contact Gloria Wright at: gwright4@twcnv.rr.com.

SLPOA Septic Program Incentive – It's Still a Deal! The incentive is a rebate of \$25.00 back to you for work on your septic system. If you are interested in participating in this initiative, contact Al Socha at 488-2410 or al_socha@twcnv.rr.com

CSLAP Testing Has Begun, ...

...but it's not too late to get involved. For those new to this acronym, it stands for **Citizen's Statewide Lake Assessment Program**. We are beginning a second round of five year testing. The results of this testing help us to understand the water quality and changes in our lake, over time. You may notice the CSLAP bouy just south of the island. Please do be aware of it when boating. If you want to learn more about the program, click on this link: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/81576.html>
To find out more about our Song Lake water testing. contact Tony at 315-696-8045.

Song Lake
Property Owners Assoc.

Annual Picnic & General Meeting
Sunday, August 10th
3:00 PM to 5:00 PM
At Camp Hoover

A Note about Algae and Harmful Algal Blooms, or HABs

For several years now, Song Lake has experienced periodic blooms of harmful algae. One bloom has already occurred this year, and as the lake continues to warm, the likelihood of blooms increases.

To help identify what might be harmful algae from those that are harmless, take a moment to look over these images. If you think that you have seen a HAB in any area on the lake, please call someone on the Watershed and Environment Committee. We are working directly with the NYS DEC and have a "rapid response" team that will report the bloom and if necessary, collect a sample for toxicity testing. Be sure to TAKE A PICTURE! Even if we are not able to get a sample, we can tell quite a bit from a good picture. Always take proper cautions when a bloom is seen and keep children and pets out of the water. For more information, go to (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/77118.html>)

More Likely to Be HAB's

Spilled paint appearance on surface of lake



Green streaks on the water



Pea soup appearance within lake



Green dots or clumps on the water



Less Likely to Be HAB's

Bubbling scum on surface of lake



Watermeal or Duckweed "dots"



Stringy or hairy "tumbleweed"



"Hairy" or wet fabric on rocks or plants



Yes, We Can Stop the Spread of Invasive Species!

Off With Their Heads!

Purple Loosestrife is spreading like wildfire around the lake. This pretty plant is a non-native invasive that can choke a wetland and seriously harm the native habitat. The plant spreads both by seeds and roots. If you see plants in your area, please nip them before they flower! Carefully snip the seed heads into a garbage bag and take the bag to the dump. Digging the plant can cause it to spread even more by the roots! Note: We are working with the DEC to see if our situation qualifies for biological control. For more information, go to: www.esf.edu/efb/parry/grevstad.pdf

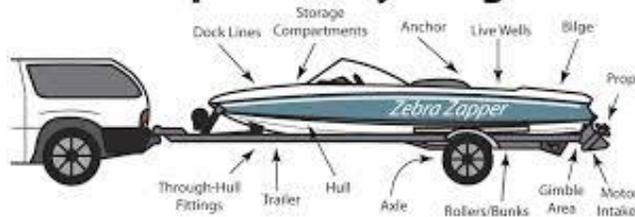


Check, Clean, Drain and Dry!

When you clean, be sure to move your boat away from the lake and avoid drainage back to the lake.



Before leaving and before launching... inspect everything!



Be Observant!

If you suspect a plant on Song Lake may be invasive, please:
 1 – Take a picture.
 2- Record the date you saw the plant.
 3- Record where you saw the plant.
 4- Collect a sample and bring it to a SLPOA Watershed Committee representative.
Try to collect the entire plant. Carefully wash muddy roots. Float the sample onto an absorbent paper. Place in plastic, and put it in the refrigerator or a cooler for transport. We will either take the samples to the NYSFOLA office or send directly to Scott Kishbaugh at the DEC for identification.



Alverna Heights Conference – “Call to Action: Community Engagement”

If you want to learn more about how other communities are working together to limit, control or eradicate invasive species in Central NY, come to the **6th Annual Invasive Species Workshop – Wednesday, October 8, 2014, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm** followed by a hands-on lesson in mapping invasive species, through *imapinvasives* (www.imapinvasives.org) This conference is sponsored by Alverna Heights Spirituality and Nature Center, Cornell Biological Field Station at Shackleton Point, Cortland – Onondaga Federation of Kettle Lakes Associations and NYS Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation. Alverna Heights is located at 7770 Green Lakes Rd., Fayetteville, NY 13066. Please call: 315-637-9334. You will need to register for the conference through S. Caryn Crook, OSF at 315-637-9334 or ccrook@sosf.org with additional registration for the *imap* workshop, to be posted soon. For more immediate information, call Tarki at 315-696-5262

Boater Safety Course-Offering



Tully Lake is sponsoring a special **Boater Safety Course on August 16th at the Tully Town Hall from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM**. The course will be taught by certified instructors: Jason Wright and Jason Bracy. The cost is \$35.00, which includes a \$10.00 deposit when signing up at www.cnynav.com. At completion of course and test a \$10.00 fee needs to be sent in to the state to get your certificate. Any person born after **May 1, 1996** must take a boater safety course to operate a motorboat.

As of January 2014, everyone who operates a personal watercraft in N.Y must take a boater safety course.

Remember, all power boat operators 18 years of age or younger are required to pass an 8 hour boater safety course. If out of compliance, first time violators face fines of \$100 to \$250. Safety on the water begins with each one of us. For more information, go to <http://nysparks.com/recreation/boating/education.aspx>.



The Cortland -Onondaga Federation of Kettle Lake Associations 7th Annual Water Festival & Picnic

Little York Lake Pavilion

Sunday, September 21st, 2014 - 1:00 to 4:00 PM

Join a celebration of our beautiful kettle lakes! This event is free and open to all our friends and neighbors, featuring: Good food and great neighbors -

Family fun! Activities / Displays and Games for all ages and live music. Please bring one dish to pass/ BYO for special drinks. For more information call: Tarki Heath: 315-696-5262, Karen Lang: 607-423-4653, or Tom Cappa: 315-696-6668.

C-OFOKLA is a coalition of the lake associations of Crooked Lake, Little York Lake, Song Lake and Tully Lake.

Your Observations Wanted: The Song Lake Watershed Committee would like your lake observations. If you see anything interesting - unusual fish, bird, plant, etc. - we ask you to take a picture and send it to us. Of course, now is the time when we are on the lookout for algae and invasive species. If you see any growth of concern, please don't wait, give one of us a call, or email here so we can get a sample as quickly as possible. This committee continues to meet monthly. Current members are Tony George, Marjie and Carl Grillo, Peter Tague, Rick Henry, Tarki Heath and Ken Brock. If you are interested in joining us, please call Tarki: 696-5262, Marjie: 696-5963, or Tony: 696-8045.



The Song Lake Watershed & Environment Committee

Please consider making a donation to the Watershed Fund. These funds provide the money needed for these newsletters, water quality testing and many other projects. We will continue to work on issues of importance to all those living on the lake and truly appreciate your support. To find out more about our work and that of the association please go to the website at, www.songlakewatershed.org. We would love to hear from you with your ideas and insights. To provide feedback about our work, give us a call, or email your comments to Songlakeassociation@gmail.com



This Publication is made possible by your donations to The Song Lake Watershed Fund
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