

## Criteria for Designating Wetlands and Riparian Areas

Although Boulder County does not have regulatory authority over wetlands and riparian areas, the county recognizes and uses the same features and characteristics used by Federal agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the (USFWS 1993) to identify and designate wetland and riparian areas.

Because certain wetlands are regulated by the federal government, federal regulatory agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) are guided by technically detailed wetland definitions for regulatory purposes. Although wording varies, regulatory definitions generally recognize three wetland elements: wetland vegetation, wetland soil, and wetland hydrology.

Lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. Wetlands must have one or more of the following attributes: (1) at least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytes (wetland plants); (2) the substrate is predominantly un-drained hydric soil; and/or (3) the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year (USFWS 1993).

### ***Wetlands Designation Criteria***

- 1) Areas with federal status, i.e., jurisdictional wetlands as defined by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).
- 2) Wetlands that are also designated as Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWHs).
- 3) Wetlands that include Significant Natural Communities (SNCs) or support critical plant associations (e.g., fens, willow carrs).
- 4) Wetlands that are within or include a Rare Plant Area (RPA).
- 5) Wetlands created by human activities, such as reservoirs, that function as natural wetland systems.
- 6) Areas with hydrological and/or ecological evidence of past wetlands.

### ***Riparian Areas Designation Criteria***

- 1) Areas directly adjacent to perennial, ephemeral, and intermittent streams.
- 2) Areas that enhance hydrologic functions of waterways (e.g. they recharge ground water through infiltration, filtrate sediments and chemicals, reduce erosion of water flow and dissipate flow energy, stabilize streambanks, and slow evaporation).
- 3) Riparian areas with known federally threatened and endangered (T&E) species, (e.g., Ute's Ladies-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) and its potential habitat).
- 4) Riparian areas adjacent to stream reaches recognized by Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) as having importance to native aquatic species conservation.
- 5) Riparian areas designated as Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWHs).
- 6) Riparian areas that include Significant Natural Communities (SNCs).
- 7) Riparian areas that include or are within a Rare Plant Area (RPA).
- 8) Man-made areas that function as natural riparian areas (e.g. ditches).
- 9) Areas along streams that show evidence of historically being riparian areas (e.g., oxbows).