DuPage County, is the vegetated area within regulatory floodplains that provides habitat for vegetation and/or wildlife dependent on the proximity to water. Riparian areas in DuPage County are often dominated by tree and shrub species, such as Alder, Willows, Dogwoods, Ash and Cottonwood.

**Why are these areas important?**
Riparian areas supply several beneficial functions to the environment. Vegetated riparian areas are important since they help to slow stream water down and allow it to infiltrate into the ground. This helps to remove sediment and pollutants that would otherwise make their way into the river system. This also offers flood control benefits by absorbing oncoming flood water into the groundwater system. Also, many native plants have deep roots that help to prevent streambank erosion by holding the soils in place. These floodplain areas also provide essential access to fresh water, food and safe travel for wildlife. These corridors are especially important in an urban environment. Forested riparian areas provide cover that helps maintain cooler water temperatures and encourages fish and aquatic species to use these areas for spawning.

**I am worried about mosquito breeding sites and West Nile virus. What can be done to prevent the spread of this disease?**
The West Nile virus is transmitted by mosquitoes and was first found in Illinois in 2001. The primary mosquito carrying the West Nile virus, Culex pipiens, prefers to breed in stagnant water, often in containers that hold rain water, such as bird baths, buckets and gutters. Since few mosquito predators reside in a backyard environment, many mosquitoes that live in these areas tend to stay. However, the mosquito most commonly found in wetlands, *Aedes vexans*, is not a primary disease carrier. Wetlands have many mosquito predators, such as frogs, dragonflies, and fish that help to keep the mosquito population in balance with other species.

To prevent mosquito breeding sites in your yard, empty or remove containers that have accumulated water after a rainfall. If you live near a wetland area, provide a habitat for wildlife, such as birds, bats, and fish, to help control the mosquito population. Always wear insect repellent when working outdoors in the early morning and evening hours and wear light colored clothing while outside.

**How can I help to maintain or improve a natural area near my home?**
Everyone can help to maintain a wetland or riparian system by using proper care. If your property has a wetland or waterway on site, make sure that you do not negatively impact the area in any way. This would include building unpermitted structures, including fences or sheds, creating brush/landscape waste or refuse piles, mowing in the natural area, or planting non-native vegetation in or around the wetland or buffer area.

For more information regarding West Nile virus, please consult the following websites:  
CDC West Nile Virus Homepage  
www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm  
Fox River Ecosystem West Nile Virus Homepage  
http://www.foxriverecosystem.org/west_nile.htm  
Illinois Department of Public Health  
www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm  

For more information, please contact:  
DuPage County  
Department of Economic Development and Planning  
Division of Environmental Concerns  
421 N. County Farm Rd.  
Wheaton, IL 60187  
Phone: 630-407-6700  
Fax: 630-407-6702  
Website: http://www.dupageco.org/edp/
A riparian environment, as regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and DuPage County Department of Economic Development and Planning, bathes riparian areas with water, soils, and vegetation that support riparian species. Riparian areas provide essential habitat and ecosystem services, including water filtration, sediment retention, and flood control. They also serve as corridors for wildlife movement and are key to maintaining biodiversity. Protecting riparian areas is crucial for maintaining healthy ecosystems and supporting wildlife. A riparian area is a strip of land adjacent to a water body, such as a river, stream, or lake, that is characterized by unique soils, vegetation, and wildlife. Riparian areas are vital for maintaining the health and function of aquatic ecosystems. By protecting riparian areas, we safeguard these critical habitats and support the many species that depend on them.