

## **USING LAND USE PLANNING TO PROTECT MONTANA'S WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN AREAS<sup>TWS</sup>**

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As more and more people choose to build homes next to Montana's streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds, and as property values increase, pressures to develop our state's wetlands and riparian areas are increasing—often to the detriment of the very qualities that attracted buyers in the first place. As explained in *A Planning Guide for Protecting Montana's Wetlands and Riparian Areas*, many of the impacts to these areas can be avoided by land use planning decisions made at the local level. An overview of the handbook will be presented, along with information on how to determine an effective buffer size, and examples of how numerous communities—from Powell County to the city of Missoula, and from Chouteau County to the city of Bozeman—have used the principals outlined in the book to protect important resources. An update will be given on protection measures adopted by local governments since the guide was published. This publication was a cooperative venture between Montana Audubon, Montana Watercourse, and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.