



# Wild Kids

## Riparian Poetry

### STUDENT GUIDE

Most people think of Arizona as just a desert. But you know that is not true.

Arizona has deserts, grasslands, mountains, forests, rivers and lakes. Habitats near water are called **riparian areas**.

Riparian areas in Arizona are found along rivers, creeks, lakes, springs, marshes, cienegas and tinajas.



A **cienega** is a marshy area of a small river or creek. Water moves through a cienega slowly. Cienegas tend to be shallow.



**Tinajas** are found at the base of waterfalls. Rock below the waterfall is slowly **eroded** (broken down and washed away) by the falling water. After some time a wide **basin** or depression is formed. This basin is called a tinaja.

The common key to riparian habitats is water. The water can be on top of the ground. The water can also be underground, but close to the surface (so plants can reach the water with their roots).

Riparian habitats provide food, water, shelter and space for many plants, animals and even humans.

Some plants and animals can only be found in or near riparian areas. Some of these plants include: cattails, willows, sycamore and cottonwood trees. Some of these animals include: gray hawks, beavers, fish and dragonflies.



Can you think of any other plants or animals that are only found in or near riparian areas?

Remember that all riparian habitats have one thing in common: WATER! When you think of water, what words come to your mind? Write down as many of these words as you can.

Now, use the words you just listed to write a poem about the importance of riparian to wildlife.

Finally, draw a picture to illustrate your poem.



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### TEACHING GUIDE

#### Overview

In this activity, students will read a short passage about riparian habitats. Then, they will brainstorm words related to water before making a poem focused on the importance of riparian areas. Finally, they will illustrate their poem.

#### Suggested Procedures

1. Print the worksheet above. If possible, print it double sided.
2. Ask students to read the short passage and answer the question at the end.
3. Discuss the student responses. If you wish, you can write their organisms on the board.
4. Guide the students through each of the tasks on the second page. First, have them brainstorm any words they can think of that relate to water. If they need additional assistance, have them identify key words from the passage and use those to get started.
5. Then, instruct the students to use as many of those words as possible to write an original poem. The poem can be in any format that you wish, or you can have them choose the style. The poem should focus on the importance of riparian areas to wildlife.
6. Once the students have finished their poem, have them make a drawing. The drawing should be an illustration that could accompany the poem.
7. Have students share their poems. As they read the poems out loud, write down common words or themes that are present. Discuss these words. What do they tell us about riparian habitats?

#### Grade

1st

#### AZ Science Standards

- 1.L2U2.7

#### Science and Engineering Practices

- Develop and use models

#### Crosscutting Concepts

- Stability and Change

This activity was adapted from "Aqua Words," an Aquatic WILD activity.