**What are my rights & responsibilities if I have land next to a watercourse?**

As a **riparian** owner you have a right to:

* ownership of the land up to the centre of the watercourse (unless it is known to be owned by someone else)
* the flow of water onto your land in its natural quantity and quality
* protect your property from flooding, and land from erosion (subject to approval by the Environment Agency)
* fish in the watercourse. This right may be sold or leased, and a fisherman must have a valid Environment Agency rod licence.
* acquire accretion
* boomage

As a **riparian** owner you have a duty to:

* pass on the flow of water without obstruction, pollution or diversion affecting the rights of others
* accept flood flows, even if they are caused by inadequate capacity downstream. There is however, no duty to improve the drainage capacity of a watercourse.
* maintain the bed and banks of the watercourse and to clear any debris, whether natural or man-made
* keep any culverts, debris screens, weirs and mill gates clear of debris
* be responsible for protection of your land from flooding
* not cause any obstructions (either temporary or permanent) that would prevent the free passage of fish