



# WILD Kids



K-3

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## Riparian Habitat

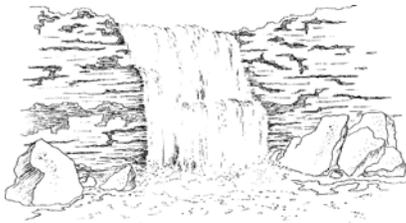
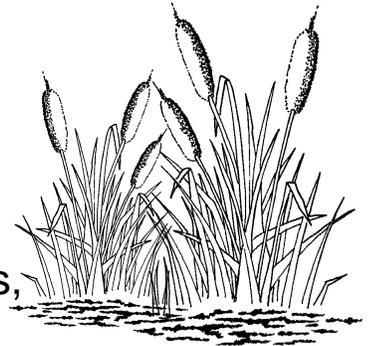
Most people think of Arizona as just a desert. But you know that it is not true.

Arizona has deserts, grasslands, mountains, forest, rivers, creeks and lakes.

Habitats near water are call **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.

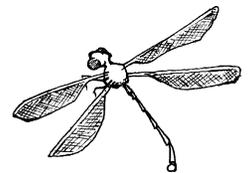


**Tinajas** are found at the base of waterfalls. Rock below the waterfall is slowly **eroded** (broken down and washed away) by the falling water. After some time a wide basin is formed. It is called a tinaja.

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

Riparian habitat provides food, water, shelter and space for many plants, animals and even humans.

Some plants and animals can only be found in or near these riparian areas. Some plants include: cattails, bulrushes, willow, sycamore, and cottonwood trees. Animals include: grey hawks, beavers, water shrews, fishes and many insects.



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

Remember that all riparian habitats have water in common. Write down as many words that you can think of that have to do with water.

Next, use as many words from your list to write a poem about water.

Finally, draw a picture that your words make you think of.