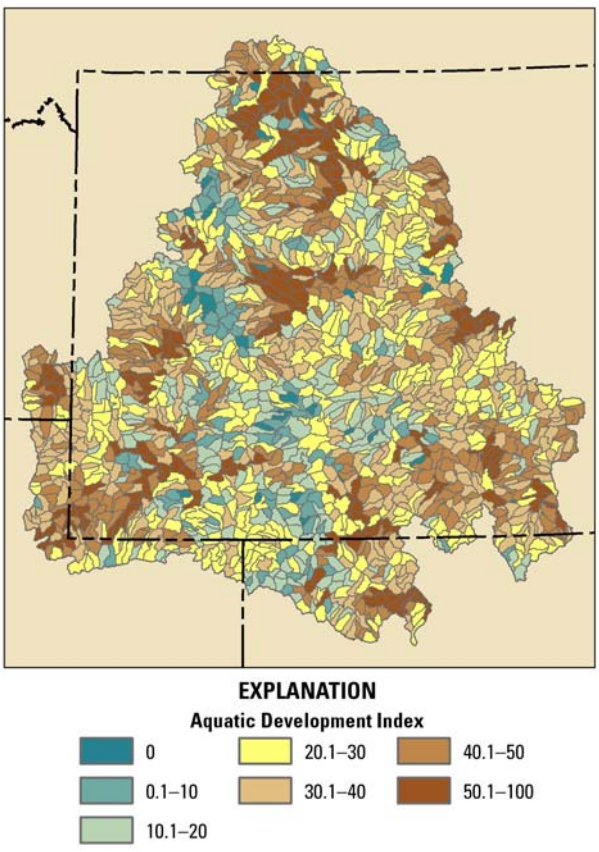
Riparian Forests and Shrublands

Management Questions

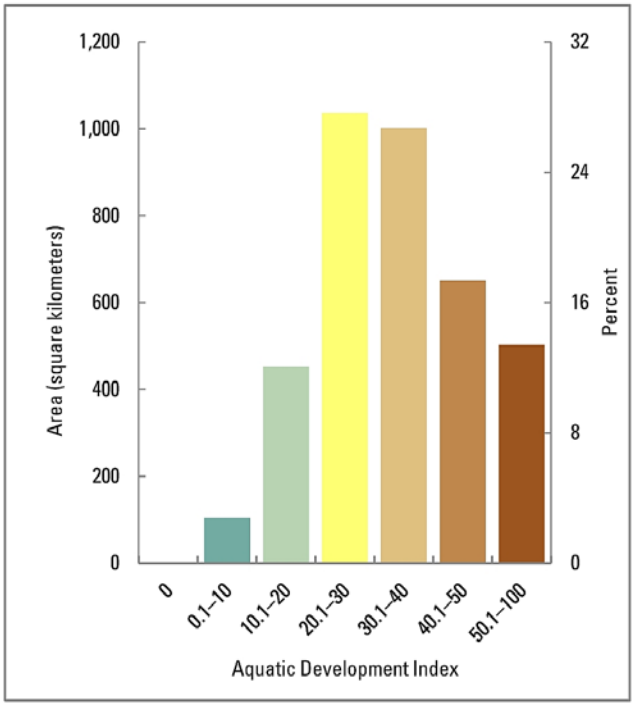
- Where are baseline riparian forests and shrublands, and what is their total area?
- Where are the largest areas of riparian vegetation in the Wyoming Basin?
- Where does development pose the greatest threat to baseline riparian forests and shrublands, and where are the large, relatively undeveloped areas? (Left map below)
- Where do dams pose an ongoing threat to downstream riparian areas?
- Where are Russian and (or) tamarisk olive present? (Top left map following page)
- Where could riparian vegetation be at risk from Russian olive and tamarisk expansion by 2030?

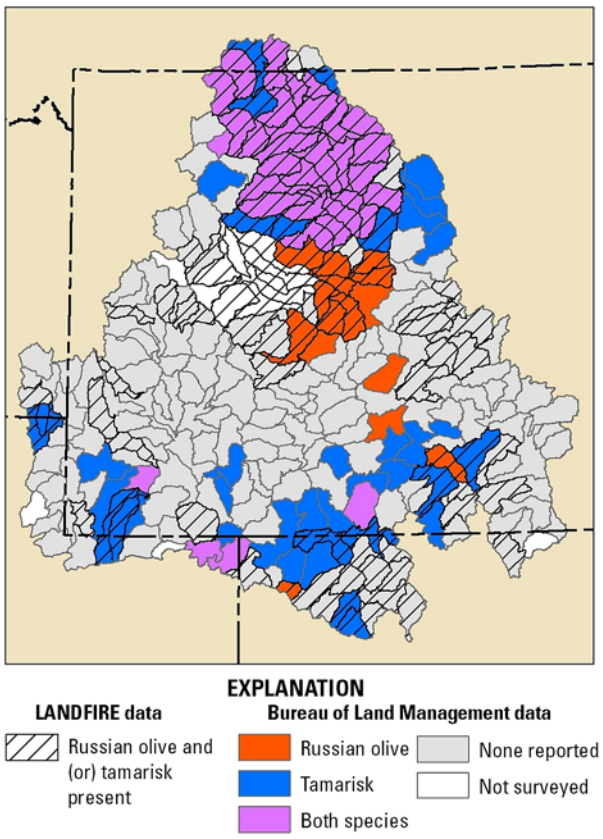
Photo credit: Bureau of Land Management.

- How does risk from development vary by land ownership or jurisdiction for riparian forests and shrublands?
- Where are the watersheds with the greatest landscape-level ecological values? (Top right map following page)
- Where are the watersheds with the greatest landscape-level risks? (Center right map following page)
- Where are the watersheds with the greatest conservation potential? (Bottom right map following page)



Aquatic Development Index scores for riparian areas, summarized by sixth-level watershed, in the Wyoming Basin Rapid Ecoregional Assessment project area.

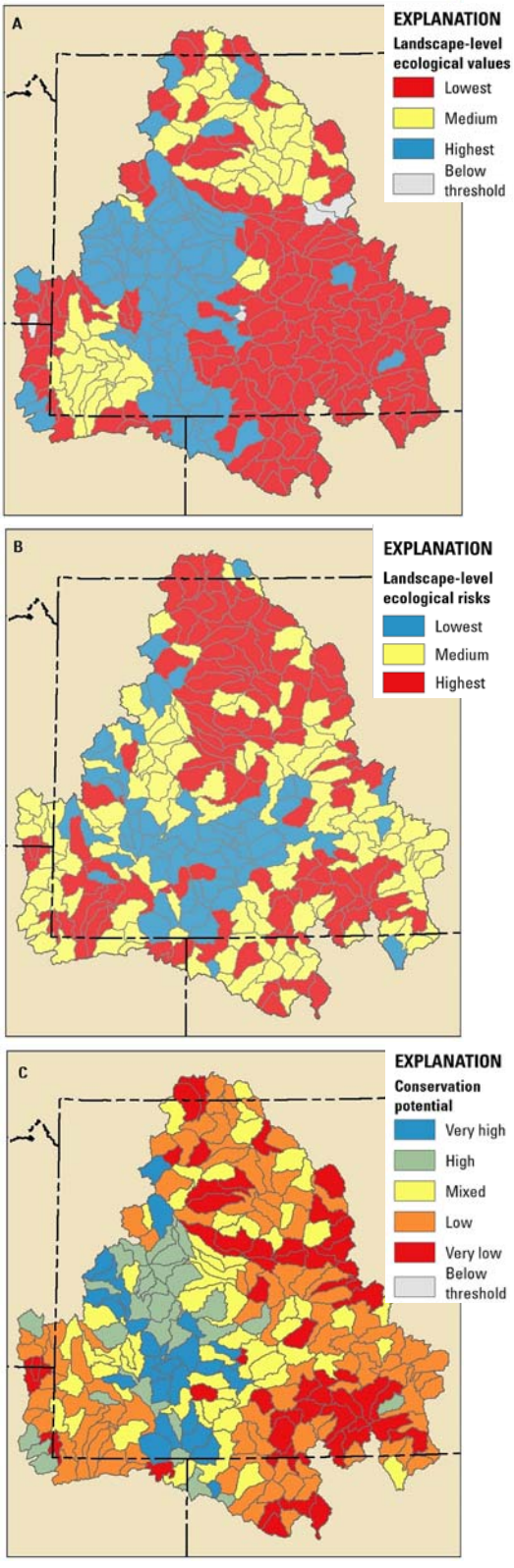




Presence of Russian olive and (or) tamarisk, based on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) field office data and LANDFIRE data for the Wyoming Basin Rapid Ecoregional Assessment project area, summarized by fifth-level watershed.

Summary

Riparian forests and shrublands are sparsely and unevenly distributed throughout the Wyoming Basin and represent only 2 percent of the total area. Except in some portions of the Great Divide Basin, most watersheds have some riparian vegetation present. Most watersheds, particularly at lower elevations, have been negatively affected by development, most commonly by agriculture, energy, and dams. Private lands account for almost half of the total riparian area, and are experiencing higher development pressure from the presence of roads, dams, industry, energy, and agriculture. Russian olive and tamarisk are present in many northern and some southern watersheds, but data on invasive species are quite limited regionwide. Invasive species surveys may be useful in watersheds where Bureau of land Management occurrence data are lacking, LANDFIRE indicates that invasives species are present, and the conditions conducive to invasive species occurrence are present. Moderately sized and connected riparian areas and large but isolated high-density riparian areas in the Wyoming Basin may provide important refugia and stopover habitat for animals dispersing or migrating across expanses of sagebrush and desert shrubland.



(*A*) Landscape-level ecological values, (*B*) ecological risks, and (*C*) conservation potential of riparian areas, summarized by fifth-level watershed.