

The scenic creeks that meander through the Santa Clara Valley can be harmed by development – unless we take precautions. If loose soil is allowed to wash into creeks, it can lead to sedimentation that harms migratory fish. Development in or near “riparian corridors” can result in excessive erosion, increased pollution, and impacts to wildlife habitat. Municipalities may require permanent stormwater treatment measures to reduce impacts. Follow these “top ten” tips to help protect local creeks for our enjoyment, native fish and wildlife, and future generations.

A “riparian corridor” is the strip of land, centered on a stream, characterized by vegetation that grows adjacent to freshwater watercourses.

In the Site Layout...

1. Maintain setbacks. Reduce impervious surfaces and keep buildings, patios, decks and other structures at least 100 feet away from the riparian corridor edge (*clustering buildings away from streams and using pervious paving reduces impact on habitat and protects property*).

Don't:



✓ Do:



2. Preserve healthy native and non-invasive trees and protect the riparian habitat through creative site plan design (*the urban forest provides shade, improved air quality, site aesthetics, and reduces noise. Visit www.canopy.org/db/ for tree selection tips in the Bay Area.*)



3. Avoid intrusive activities. Balance the need to protect riparian habitat from intrusive activities with creek-friendly recreation. (*Any human activity may generate noise and trash, but recreation opportunities help people become “stakeholders” and promotes stewardship.*)



In the Project Design...

4. Avoid night lighting, bright colors, reflective surfaces and noise near the riparian corridor (*riparian and wildlife habitat protection.*)

Don't:

✓ Do:

- 5. Control pollutant sources on the site (*cover debris and material storage, specify roofed trash enclosures, dispose of waste properly, and implement an effective trash removal program*).



In Landscaping...

- 6. Use suitable California native and drought tolerant plants, and avoid the use of invasive species. (*Visit www.cal-ipc.org for a list of invasives, www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/ipc/encycloweedia/encycloweedia_hp.htm for plants defined as noxious weeds in California, and www.cnps.org/cnps/nativeplants for information on native plants.*)



- 7. Use Integrated Pest Management techniques in design and maintenance (*learn how to promote healthy soils, conserve water, and help avoid the use of pesticides and quick-release fertilizers at www.ourwaterourworld.org and www.mywatershedwatch.org*).



- 8. Preserve, maintain, and restore the riparian setback area with native vegetation and non-invasive adapted plants to buffer the creek from development (*protects habitat and reduces erosion, sedimentation, and excessive runoff during storms*).



Throughout the Project...

- 9. Determine and address all project impacts on the creek and obtain appropriate regulatory permits (*site design, impervious surfaces, activity areas, site grading, filling in floodplain areas, pollution, landscaping, and stream crossings all affect habitat*).
- 10. Remember that every section of a stream contributes to the habitat value of the entire stream (*even channelized sections may connect better habitat areas*).

For More Information:

Contact the municipality and see the Santa Clara Valley Water District's Guidelines and Standards at www.valleywater.org/Water/Watersheds_-_streams_and_floods/Taking_care_of_streams/Creekside_property_owners.shtm#facts