

Rural Landowners

- ✓ Control pet access to creeks.
- ✓ Check septic system every other year. Keep out solvents, phosphate detergents, and hazardous materials.
- ✓ Manage livestock to reduce stream impact.
 - Use controlled or rotational grazing system to reduce nutrient loading.
 - Maintain quality pasture grasses.
 - Consider herding applications to control grazing time and creek access.
 - Provide shade structures and alternate water supplies away from streams.
 - Maintain plant cover along streambank buffer and minimize access locations.
 - Place livestock holding and loafing areas away from streams and drainages.
 - Keep animal waste away from paved surfaces. Prevent manure from washing into streams and drainages.



Keeping Your Stream Healthy

The Streambank



Photo by Tim Robinson, CCRB

- ✓ Healthy streambanks reduce flood damage, filter contaminants, reduce erosion, and shade aquatic habitats.
- ✓ Adhere to setback requirements (check your local planning division for guidelines).
- ✓ Never use tires or concrete rubble to repair erosion. They may contain toxic materials or be washed away.
- ✓ Take steps to avoid impacting streamside areas during construction
- ✓ Streambank vegetation helps control erosion
 - It may be appropriate to remove invasive plant species (Arundo, cape ivy, ice plant) and replace with native vegetation such as willow, cottonwood, and sycamore.
 - Before removing or planting vegetation, seek expert advice (*see back panel*).
 - Contact your local Department of Fish & Game (DFG) before doing any vegetation clearing or soil removal.
 - Large-scale clearing of creek vegetation may harm some streams and may be illegal.
 - Minimize activities during rainy season; take steps to reduce erosion while working.
 - Contribute your time and energy to volunteer restoration projects in your local area.

The Stream Channel

- ✓ Avoid removing natural woody debris, unless it poses a hazard.
- ✓ Avoid diverting, damming, or taking water directly from streams.
- ✓ Practice water conservation; use water wisely.
- ✓ Never dump trash, lawn clippings, gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, battery acid, detergents, or wastewater from carpet & upholstery cleaning near streams or storm drains.
- ✓ Reduce fertilizer & pesticide use
 - Follow instructions carefully; avoid use prior to rain events.
 - Consider using compost, wood chips, and mulch to reduce weeds and retain moisture.
- ✓ **Remember – storm drains empty directly into streams and the ocean!**



Urban Landowners

- ✓ Redirect sprinklers to avoid watering hard surfaces such as driveways.
- ✓ Redirect rain gutters to drain to lawns.
- ✓ Wash vehicles or equipment on lawn, or use car wash. Even biodegradable soaps are toxic to fish.
- ✓ Drain water from pools & spas into sanitary sewer systems.
- ✓ Keep trash from entering storm drains.
- ✓ If replacing driveways or patios, consider using porous materials.
- ✓ Use cat litter to absorb oil spills and dispose in trash.
- ✓ Control pet access to creeks.

Photo by Terre Dunivant, Gaia Graphics & Associates

Your Watershed and Steelhead Trout

California's central and southern coastal streams have been home to steelhead trout for millions of years, but within the past 150 years, their numbers have been dramatically reduced. As a result, in our local areas steelhead trout are currently listed as **threatened** (San Luis Obispo County) or **endangered** (Santa Barbara and Ventura counties).

During their lifecycle, steelhead trout alternate between freshwater and saltwater habitats. Healthy coastal streams are vital for spawning and rearing of steelhead young.



Photo by John Southwick

Healthy runs of steelhead trout symbolize healthy watersheds. Healthy watersheds provide economic, aesthetic, and recreational benefits to local communities.

By following a few basic tips, you can help restore the health of California's central and southern coastal streams and improve the chance of recovery for steelhead trout.

Additional Resources

Removing Hazardous Waste:

- Call 1-800-clean-up, enter ZIP Code

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Santa Barbara Project Clean Water; www.sbprojectcleanwater.org/volunteer.html

Removing or Planting Vegetation:

- CA Department of Fish & Game Permits; www.dfg.ca.gov/1600/
- Ventura County's *Guide to Native and Invasive Streamside Plants*; www.ventura.org/rma/planning/
- CA Native Plant Society; www.cnps.org
- www.Laspilitas.com
- www.calgold.com/green/

Funding/Reimbursement Opportunities for Streambank Restoration Projects:

- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Resource Conservation Districts
- CA Department of Fish & Game
- CA Watershed Funding Database; www.calwatershedfunds.org

Managing Livestock & Rangelands:

- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Resource Conservation Districts
- University of CA Extension

Some of the material included in this brochure is based on sections from:

Santa Barbara County Creek Care Guide (2003)
City of San Luis Obispo Creek Care Brochure
California Coastal Commission Fish Passage Improvement Brochure



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Healthy Creeks

Landowners are the most important managers of California's streams. All creeks are important, whether they flow all year, part of the year, or only during storms.

Through proper creek care, landowners can enhance their property values, help prevent erosion problems, reduce flood losses, preserve water quality, and contribute to fish and wildlife populations.

✓ Increase Property Values

In one California study, property values adjacent to creeks increased up to 13%* in areas with restored and healthy streams.

This increase was attributed to:

- Stabilized streambanks
- Reduced flood damage
- Visually appealing streambanks
- Opportunity for recreational trails
- Improved fish habitat

✓ Improve Wildlife Habitat

Signs of a healthy creek include:

- Stable, vegetated banks
- Healthy trees and shrubs
- Natural streamside debris
- Minimal erosion
- Cool and clear water
- Presence of pools, fast running water, and clean gravel
- Healthy wildlife populations

* Loomis, John B., C. F. Streiner (1996). *Estimating the Benefits of Urban Stream Restoration Using Hedonic Price Method*. *Rivers* 5(4): 267-278.