

Top Ten Development Tips to Protect Creeks

Developed by the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative (SCBWMI) and the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program (SCVURPPP)

Following These 10 Tips Will Help Protect Local Creeks

Our scenic creeks that meander through the Santa Clara Valley can be harmed by development unless we take precautions

Creekside Park, Saratoga Creek



This is an example of a “riparian corridor” – a strip of land centered on a stream characterized by the vegetation that grows next to it

Why Do We Need to Take These Precautions?

- Prevent excessive erosion from loose soil washing into creeks
 - If loose soil is allowed to wash into creeks, it can lead to sedimentation that harms migratory fish
- Prevent pollution from human activities from reaching creeks
 - Development near riparian corridors can result in excessive erosion, increased pollution, and impacts to wild life habitat



Follow these 10 tips to help protect local creeks for our enjoyment, native fish and wildlife, and for future generations



In the Site Layout:

#1. Maintain Setbacks

- Reduce the amount of impervious surfaces and keep buildings, decks and other structures at least 100 feet away from riparian corridor edges
- Clustering development away from streams and using pervious paving reduces impacts on habitat and protects property



#2. Preserve Healthy Native and Non-native Trees

- Protect the riparian habitat through creative site plan design
- The urban forest provides:
 - Shade
 - Improve air quality
 - Site aesthetics
 - Noise reduction
- 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
 - ┌ However, recreation opportunities help people become stakeholders and promotes stewardship



In the Project Design:

#4. Avoid Night Lighting

- To help protect wildlife and their habitat, avoid the following near creeks and rivers:
 - ┌ Night lighting
 - ┌ Bright colors
 - ┌ Reflective surfaces
 - ┌ Noise



#5. Control Pollutant Sources on the Site

- Cover debris and material storage areas
- Specify roofed trash enclosures
- Dispose of wastes properly
- Implement an effective trash removal program



In Landscaping:

#6. Use Suitable Plants

- Use California native and drought tolerant plants as they:
 - Conserve water
 - Can be very attractive and encourage beneficial insects (e.g., butterflies, bees)
 - Visit www.cnps.org/nativeplants for information on native plants
- Avoid using invasive species
 - Many, like English Ivy, can suffocate or out-compete native plants and trees
 - Invasives can provide habitat for pests such as snails and undesirable rodents
 - Visit www.cal-ipc.org for a list of invasives and www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/ipc/encycloweedia/encycloweedia_hp.htm for plants that are noxious weeds in California



#7. Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in Design and Maintenance

- Learn how using sustainable landscaping practices:
 - Promotes healthy soils
 - Conserves water usage
 - Avoids the need for quick-release fertilizers
 - Helps avoid the use of harmful pesticides
- Visit www.ourwaterourworld.org and www.mywatershedwatch.org for information on IPM practices



#8. Preserve, Maintain, and Restore the Riparian Setback Area

Using native vegetation and non-invasive adapted plants to buffer the creek from development in the riparian setback area helps to:

- ┆ Protect habitat
- ┆ Reduce erosion of soils
- ┆ Prevent sedimentation
- ┆ Reduce excessive runoff during storms



Calera Creek in 2006 after growth of willow blanket



Same location in 2003 before restoration

Throughout the Project:

#9. Determine and Address All Project Impacts on a Creek and Obtain Appropriate Regulatory Permits

All these can affect habitat:

- ▣ Site design choices
- ▣ Quantity of impervious area
- ▣ Activities in sensitive areas
- ▣ Site grading practices
- ▣ Filling in floodplain areas
- ▣ Potential pollution sources
- ▣ Landscaping choices



Site Design Measures to Promote Infiltration and Treatment of Stormwater

#10. Every Section of a Creek Contributes to the Habitat Value of the Entire Creek

- Even heavily channelized or armored sections of creek banks may connect to better habitat areas.



Corte
Madera
Creek
Lower and
Upper
Reaches

For More Information

- Contact your municipality and see the Santa Clara Valley Water District's Guidelines and Standards for Land Use Near Streams at:

[http://www.valleywater.org/Water/Watersheds - streams and floods/Taking care of streams/Creekside property owners.shtm](http://www.valleywater.org/Water/Watersheds_streams_and_floods/Taking_care_of_streams/Creekside_property_owners.shtm)