

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

WORD	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Active Channel	The channel that contains the discharge where channel maintenance is most effective, sediment are actively transported and deposited, and that are capable of containing most flows. Active channels are located within the area bounded by bankfull stages.	Leopold
Active Flood plain	Low lying areas built by watercourse sediment depositions between top of bank that are adjacent to a watercourse and that have been constructed by the present river in the present climate. These areas are susceptible to frequent inundation during moderate and higher flows when the active channel’s capacity is exceeded. Active floodplains are most prominent along low-gradient, meandering reaches and are often absent or undistinguishable along steeper sloped stream channels.	Collaborative, Leopold
Active Recreation	Includes sports fields, recreation centers, tot lots, play equipment, multi-use courts, etc. Should not be located within riparian area.	San Jose Riparian Corridor Policy

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Bankfull stage	<p>Bankfull stage is the point at which the flow just begins to enter the active floodplain. Accurate measurements have been conducted on gaged streams, however, in absence of historical hydrological records there are a number of field indicators that can be used to identify bankfull stages with a great deal of accuracy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An abrupt change in the slope of the stream channel, usually from a vertical plane to a horizontal plane on top of the floodplain. • The bankfull stage is usually marked by a change in vegetation such as the change from gravel bars to forbs, herbs, or grasses. Persistent woody vegetation is usually indicative of upland terrain, but can be misleading. • Erosion or scour features. These features indicate areas just below the bankfull stage and are recognized as significant characteristics of stream dynamics. • Flat depositional benches, lateral bars, or point bars, usually created by lateral or downward movement of streams and can create active floodplain areas. • Change in the size distribution of sediment materials at the surface from fine gravel to cobbles, from sand to gravel or even fine gravel material. It can change from fine to coarse or coarse to fine. • Stain lines can indicate frequent inundation of water on rocks. Stain lines may be marked by sediment or lichens. 	Water Resources Protection Collaborative, Leopold
Base Flood Elevation (BFE)	<p>The base flood elevation is the height of the base flood in relation to a vertical datum. The base flood is a 100-year flood event, which has a one percent or greater chance of occurrence in any given year.</p>	Collaborative

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Development	Any man-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including but not limited to buildings or other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations or storage of equipment or materials.	California Floodplain Management Ordinance
Geomorphology (Fluvial)	The study of the natural relationship between a stream and its bank and bed. Forced into an unnatural position, the streambanks and bed will erode. Shaped to match the water flow, the stream remains more stable.	
Habitat	The specific area or environment in which a particular type of plant or animal lives. To be complete, an organism's habitat must provide all of the basic requirements of life for that organism.	SCVWD
Hydrology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The branch of physical geography concerned with the behavior of water in the atmosphere, on the surface of the earth and underground. 2. The science dealing with the properties, distribution and circulation of water 	USDA NRCS Pullman Plant Materials Center, Pullman, WA and The Habitat Restoration Group of Felton, CA
Infill	The development of the last remaining lots in an existing developed area, the new development within an area already served by existing infrastructure and service, or the reuse of already developed, but vacant properties.	Land-Use Lingo: A Glossary of Land-Use Terms by T. A. Holveck, 2001.
Outside Edge of Riparian Habitat	The riparian edge is the outer boundary of the existing riparian vegetation; for trees, the dripline is the outer boundary.	

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Redevelopment	Development activity generally characterized by the clearance of existing structures and new construction. The new development may be the same type of land use, or a new type.	Fairfax County.
Restoration	The reestablishment of the structure and function of ecosystems. Ecological restoration is the process of returning an ecosystem as closely as possible to predisturbance conditions and functions. Implicit in this definition is that ecosystems are naturally dynamic. It is therefore not possible to recreate a system exactly. The restoration process reestablishes the general structure, function, and dynamic but self-sustaining behavior of the ecosystem.	SCVWD
Riparian	<p>1. On, or pertaining to, the banks of a stream. (As in riparian vegetation or riparian woodland.)</p> <p>2. Pertaining to the banks and other adjacent, terrestrial (as opposed to aquatic) environs of freshwater bodies, watercourses, and surface-emergent aquifers (e.g., springs, seeps, oases), whose imported waters provide soil moisture significantly in excess of that otherwise available through local precipitation - soil moisture to potentially support a mesic vegetation distinguishable from that of the adjacent more xeric upland.</p>	Warner and Hendrix. Riparian Resources of the Central Valley and California Desert 1985. California Department of Fish and Game.
Riparian Buffer	Land next to a stream or river that is vegetated, usually with trees and shrubs, that serves as a protective filter for streams. A buffer helps to stabilize stream banks from washing away and to reduce the impact of upland sources of pollution by trapping, filtering, and converting sediments, nutrients, and other chemicals. In addition, a buffer helps supply food, cover, and thermal protection to fish and other wildlife. Riparian buffers can be 300 feet wide or 20 feet wide; it depends on the stream and the land around the stream.	

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Riparian Vegetation	<p>1. Vegetation which occurs in and/or adjacent to a watercourse. For the purpose of administering Fish and Game Code Section 1600, et seq., this should be expanded to include vegetation adjacent to lakes as well.</p> <p>2. Vegetation growing on or near the banks of a stream or other body of water on soils that exhibit some wetness characteristics during some portion of the growing season.</p> <p>3. Vegetation which occurs along watercourses, and is structurally or floristically distinct from nearby, non-streamside vegetation.</p> <p>4. Riparian vegetation is terrestrial vegetation that grows beside rivers, streams, and other freshwater bodies and that depends on these water sources for soil moisture greater than would otherwise be available from local precipitation.</p>	<p>Warner, RE. and Hendrix, KM., eds. 1984. California Riparian Systems, Ecology, Conservation, and Productive Management. California Riparian Systems Conference, U.C. Davis. Sept 1981. University of California Press. Berkeley, CA</p>
Stream/Channel/Creek	<p>A stream is a body of water that flows at least periodically or intermittently through a bed or channel having banks. This may include watercourses having a surface or subsurface flow that supports or has supported riparian vegetation, fish and/or aquatic life. (See appendix for a more detailed description.)</p>	<p>Collaborative</p>
Stream bed	<p>The substrate plane bounded by the stream banks over which water moves. Also called stream bottom. It is the area kept mostly or completely bare of vegetation by the wash of water of the stream.</p>	<p>King County Dept of Public Works 1993</p>
Stream bank	<p>The portion of the channel cross section that restricts lateral movement of water. A distinct break in slope from the channel bottom.</p>	<p>King County Dept of Public Works</p>

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Toe of Bank	The break in slope at the foot of a streambank where the bank meets the bed. (See section 2.G on page 2.15).	Collaborative
Top of Bank	Top of bank designates a stream channel boundary where a majority of normal discharges and channel forming activities takes place. The top of bank boundary will contain the active stream channel, active floodplain, and their associated banks. Top of bank of streams with levees will be delineated on the inner edge of the levee. Where there are no distinguishable features to locate top of bank, the local permitting agency or the Santa Clara Valley Water District will make a determination and document, as appropriate. In the absence of this determination, the 100-year water surface will be used. (See section 2.G on page 2.15).	Collaborative
Watercourses within SCVWD Jurisdiction	Those watercourses whose watershed area upstream is in excess of 320 acres as shown in the SCVWD's Watershed Map. These are also mapped on SCVWD GIS map.	