

Sediment & Silt Deposits 800' from outfall



Duncan Creek Stream Bed

When soils erode, sediments are washed into waterways. Sediment in a stream is natural, but if sediment levels get too high, it can disrupt ecosystems. Excess sediments can cause damage blocking light that allows algae (an important food source) to grow, harming fish gills, filling up important habitats, and stopping fish from seeing well enough to move around or feed.

Excessive sediment deposits on the stream bed can significantly alter and degrade habitat. Salmon and trout depend upon clean, silt free gravel beds to successfully lay eggs during spawning. Silt deposits can also reduce the amount of invertebrate habitat and cover spawning grounds. Any increase in the amount of sediment deposited on the stream bed can also significantly change the flow and depth of the stream over time.

Duncan Creek Habitat 1/4 Mile up Stream



Giant Skunk Cabbage



Undisturbed Buffer

Watershed Riparian Buffers

Riparian buffers are the natural vegetation from the edge of the stream bank out through the riparian zone. The vegetative zone serves as a buffer to pollutants entering a stream from runoff, controls erosion, and provides habitat and nutrient input into the stream. A relatively undisturbed riparian zone supports a robust stream system; narrow riparian zones occur when roads, parking lots, fields, lawns, bare soil, rocks, or buildings are near the stream bank. Residential developments, urban centers, golf courses, and rangeland are the common causes of anthropogenic degradation of the riparian zone.

Riparian buffers are the most valuable protection a stream system has against outside influences. In most cases healthy riparian directly reflects upon the condition of the stream unless the source of the insult is a specific pollutant. Enhancement of the riparian buffer by re-planting native grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees is the first step in the recovery of the stream back to a more natural condition.