

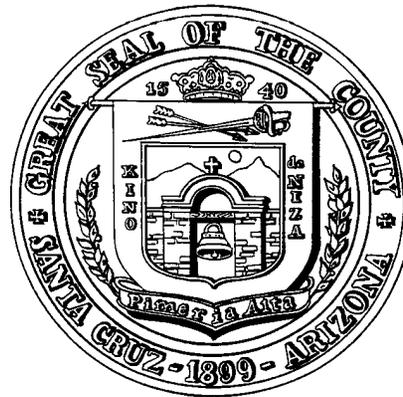
HOW CAN RIPARIAN HABITAT AND FLOODPLAIN OPEN SPACE BE PRESERVED?

- By Developers and Builders making a conscience effort to avoid Riparian Habitat, Floodplain Open Space, and floodplain areas wherever possible.
- By the dedication of open or natural areas along natural channels within new subdivisions or subdivisions being re-platted.
- By Developers and Builders who disturb these areas mitigating said disturbance by replanting the appropriate flora in an area adjacent to the remaining Riparian Habitat and/or Floodplain Open space.
- By the reversion to habitat/open space of property located within floodplain and/or erosion hazard areas that have substantially damaged structures which are deemed too hazardous to allow repair or reconstruction.
- Through restoration projects designed to restore native vegetation to areas where it had been removed in the past, such as farms, ranches, industrial, commercial, and residential areas.

For more information contact:

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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
FLOODCONTROL DISTRICT
AND
FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATION

PUBLIC INFORMATION SERIES

RIPARIAN HABITAT & FLOODPLAIN OPEN SPACE



WHAT IS THE FLOODPLAIN?

- The floodplain is any area covered by water during or after storm runoff. Santa Cruz County regulates the portion of the floodplain that would be covered by discharges of 50 cubic-feet-per-second or greater during a flood with a one (1%) percent chance of occurring every year (the 100-year flood).

WHAT IS RIPARIAN HABITAT?

- Riparian Habitat is that area containing native vegetation located within and adjacent to the channel of a river, stream, or wash. The extent of vegetation may or may not include the regulatory floodplain.

WHAT IS FLOODPLAIN OPEN SPACE?

- Floodplain open space is the area in and adjacent to the channel of a regulatory river, stream, or wash that is necessary to convey and/or store floodwaters during a flood event.

WHY SHOULD RIPARIAN HABITAT AND FLOODPLAIN OPEN SPACE BE PRESERVED?

- Over time, floodplains develop their own ways of handling flooding, erosion, and sedimentation with natural features which provide floodwater storage and conveyance, reduce the velocity of floodwaters and volume of the peak flood, and curb sedimentation.
- Riparian habitat in and along the channel, along with their natural controls on flooding and erosion, help to maintain water quality by filtering nutrients and refreshing aquifers, and by reducing the frequency and duration of low surface flows.
- Natural flood and erosion controls are less costly than construction and maintenance of manmade facilities that would provide the same benefits.
- Floodplains and their associated riparian habitat enhance biological productivity by supporting a high rate of plant growth, and by maintaining biodiversity and the integrity of ecosystems.
- Riparian Habitats provide excellent habitats for fish and wildlife by serving as breeding and feeding grounds, and as migratory routes. They also serve to create, enhance, and protect the habitats for rare and endangered species.

- Floodplains and Riparian Habitats benefit people by the recreational opportunities they afford, the scientific knowledge gained in studying them, and by the natural flood control measures they provide.
- Riparian Habitats and floodplains also provide outdoor education opportunities, as they may contain cultural resources such as historic or archaeological sites, and provide opportunities for environmental and other studies.
- Floodplains, Riparian Habitat, and Floodplain Open space provide open space areas which may be used to restore and enhance forest and/or grass land areas, or for recreational opportunities, or for the simple enjoyment of their natural beauty.
- These natural resources and functions can increase a community's overall quality of life, by transforming river, stream, and wash floodplains from problem areas into valuable community assets.
- Parks, bike paths, open spaces, wildlife conservation areas and aesthetic features are important to citizens. Assets like these make the community more appealing to potential employers, investors, residents, property owners and tourists.