

Local stream care examples: which do you think is better for fish and wildlife?



This creek was cleared of all protective vegetation. It offers little or no habitat for fish, birds or other wildlife. It is also vulnerable to soil erosion and flood damage. Note the absence of pools.



This creek (upper right, behind trees) is protected by a buffer strip of natural vegetation, and the pasture is fenced off (upper left). This creek is a haven for wildlife and cutthroat trout.



A healthy stream up close: Native plants line the stream bank, their roots holding the soil in place. A fallen tree shelters the pool below. The water is clear and the bottom is mostly gravel. Big trees grow overhead.

**Please join the effort to keep our creeks, rivers and streams healthy.
Technical help, advice, and cost assistance is available.**



For more information, please contact

Hood River Watershed Group 541-386-6063
Hood River County Planning Dept. 541-387-6840
Oregon Department of Forestry 541-296-4626
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife 541-296-4628
Oregon Water Resources Department 541-506-2650
HR. Soil & Water Conservation District 541-386-4588

*Hood River County
Landowners*

Is there a creek or stream on your property?



Tips about the quality of the stream environment on your land

*Hood River Watershed Group
Hood River County Planning
Department*

If so, you have something special in your care.

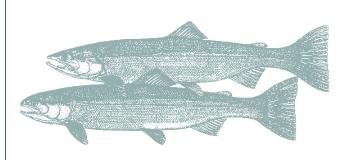
People in Hood River County are working together to improve stream habitat for fish, and to keep a high quality environment. Property owners, irrigation districts, tribes, orchardists, businesses and government agencies are cooperating on projects around the county to protect and restore our streams and water quality.

Project examples include livestock fencing, planting native trees along streams, screening & piping irrigation canals, protecting wetlands and improving pesticide spray practices. Dozens of cooperative projects have been done, and more are planned. These efforts began in the 1990s in response to the listing of Hood River steelhead and bull trout under the Endangered Species Act, and to federal and state clean water rules.

But healthy streams benefit landowners too - in terms of nature enjoyment, erosion control and enhancing long term property values.

“Riparian corridors” or streamside forest zones are so important to natural resources that farming and commercial logging along streams are subject to legal guidelines. Statewide land use planning Goal 5 requires counties and cities to develop programs that conserve and protect significant riparian corridors.

Many activities conducted in or near streams are regulated by state or federal laws. Be sure to contact Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (541-296-4628) before starting any work in or around a stream.



You can help improve local streams. Here's how:

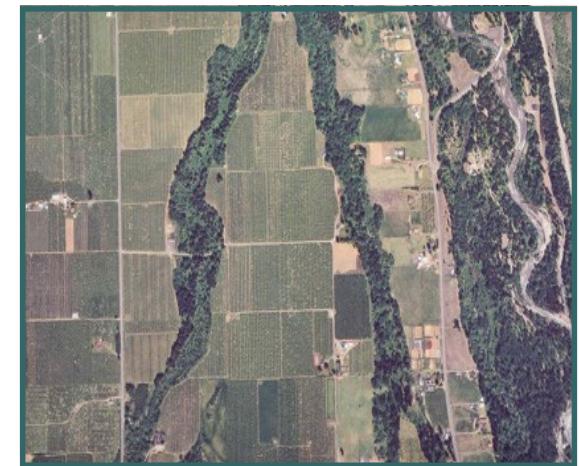
1. **Keep new buildings as far away from creeks as possible.** To find the minimum building setback for your stream, call county planning (387-6840). To prevent erosion, avoid clearing or conducting earthwork near streams.
2. **Keep a strip of native trees and brush along the creek.** Avoid clearing vegetation from the bank. If land is used for agriculture (including pasture) this is required by state law. Streamside plants absorb contaminants, provide shade, keep water cold, prevent erosion and offer fish and wildlife habitat. Call the watershed group at 386-6063 if you need assistance.
3. **Preserve the natural features of the creek.** Fallen logs provide important structure for maintaining pools and hiding places for fish. Resist the urge to “clean out,” straighten, rock or ditch the creek. Fish and wildlife prefer complex habitat with nooks and crannies... not smooth, straight and featureless streambeds.
4. **Keep pasture and animal pens away from streams.** Fence livestock out of waterways. Livestock break down the stream banks, causing erosion and stream widening. Pollution of any waterway by manure or other “waste” is illegal. Financial assistance for fence and alternative animal watering systems is available.
5. **Do not divert a spring or creek to build an artificial pond, or for irrigation, without a permit.** Ponds can raise water temperatures, promote algal growth, and breed mosquitoes. If you still desire a pond, or plan to divert water for any reason, consult with the Oregon Water Resources Dept (541-506-2650).
6. **Avoid filling ravines or slopes above creeks with dirt, grass clippings, or other debris.** Storms can carry debris down slopes into waterways.

But I have a ditch on my property, not a stream ...

Is it a ditch? A creek? Or a stream?

A “creek” is just a small stream. Many local creeks, springs, and wetlands were converted years ago to drainage ditches. Those that flow year-round often have fish and other aquatic life in them. Stream care guidelines also apply to flowing ditches, unless the entire ditch is part of an irrigation district system. Remember that even fishless ditches and seasonal creeks flow into fish-bearing streams. Seek advice on best strategies to improve these habitats.

Leave a generous buffer strip along the creek. It’s a smart thing to do for your own enjoyment, and for the long term value of your land. Please be aware that how you treat your stream affects water quality on your neighbors’ property downstream!



This aerial photo shows the forested buffer strips along Evans Creek, Griswell Creek, and the East Fork Hood River (left to right) near Parkdale. Continuous streamside buffers help protect trout and salmon, while providing important migratory and other habitat for wildlife.