

Streaminders



BIG CHICO CREEK WATERSHED ALLIANCE

Dear Resident or Property Owner:

Streaminders and the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance have been working to improve the watershed's ecosystem since 1992. To that end, many workshops have addressed the riparian habitat and its preservation in the Chico urban area. Streaminders and the Alliance have spent countless hours working with residents and landowners to prevent degradation of the stream banks and their associated habitats.

Dumping of yard waste on the banks of creeks covers the native vegetation and prevents the roots from holding the creek bank in place. The creek banks can then erode and uproot large trees which can then fall over and undermine the road. Dumping of yard waste or any other type of waste is also prohibited in Butte County.

Reasons not to dump

Well-established vegetation is one of the best long-term protections against bank erosion and channel migration. One study showed that bare banks are **10,000** times more susceptible to erosion than vegetated banks. A recent study found that over 60% of the Bidwell Ave. creek banks are rated as unstable.

Erosion Control

Vegetation has been used for erosion control for centuries. Along streams, it acts as a buffer between the water and the stream bank. If you have ever stood on a stream bank during a high flow, you may have noticed that the water along the edge was moving very slowly if there was brushy vegetation on the bank. It acts as a buffer between the water and the stream bank. When water is moving slowly, it is less likely to erode the bank. Compare this to a bare stream bank or an area of riprap. Water moves very fast and there is often turbulence near the bank. Since the water is moving rapidly, it is more likely to erode the bank, or in some instances, undermine the riprap, or the magnificent oak trees along Bidwell Ave. These trees can then topple into the creek potentially blocking flood flows, or fall on the road. So we all lose the shade and wildlife value and beauty. No one wants to see these magnificent trees die. Also, with a thick blanket of landscape debris, new trees cannot grow to replace those trees getting old. The neighborhood can wind up with a treeless street that will be much hotter in the summer.

Sediment Deposition

When water is slowed down at a stream bank because of vegetation, sediment is deposited in this area. Most of the large sediment that is moved (gravel and cobble) is transported in the central part of the stream, not along the stream banks. Riparian vegetation also acts as a natural filter for the stream. As stream flows increase the riparian vegetation slows the water down and sediment is deposited on the bank. Typically, coarser material such as gravel and sand are found near the stream while finer material such as silts and clays are found farther away from the stream.

In a healthy system, riparian vegetation alongside the stream slows water and traps sediment. In the active stream channel, where velocities are high and vegetation has a difficult time getting established, more sediment tends to be transported downstream. So your bank is building up instead of washing away.

Suffocates fish

Landscape debris especially lawn clippings end up in the creek water polluting it and eliminating the oxygen dissolved in the water. This can kill fish and the salmon eggs that will soon be in the creek. Thus dumping can kill endangered species!

Illegal

The dumping of yard waste, tree limbs, leaves, fireplace ashes, kitchen waste, etc. is not appropriate or legal (State of California Penal Code Section 369a-402C and Fish and Game Code Section 5650-5656). It can earn you a ticket.

An easy alternative

Local waste disposal companies will provide green-waste containers:

- Norcal Waste Systems - 96-gallon container - \$3.89 per month - 342-4444
- Waste Management - 96 gallon container - \$3.89 to \$5.68 per month depending on lot size - 893-4777

Please talk to your neighbors and let them know that dumping in the creek or on the creek bank is NOT OK. You can call the Butte County Sheriff at 538-7321 to report dumping.

Thank you for protecting Big Chico Creek.

Sincerely Yours,

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