

MARIN COUNTYWIDE PLAN

Definitions Pertaining to Stream Protection from the Countywide Plan Glossary

CWP Glossary

Bankfull. Indicates the height (or stage) of a stream that just fills the stream channel.

Buffer. A land area that is designed to block or absorb unwanted impacts to the area beyond the buffer. Buffers generally allow for some flexibility of use within the designated area, with restrictions increasing closer to the protected resource.

Critical Habitat. An area designated for the survival and recovery of federally listed threatened or endangered species.

Development. Any activities occurring on land and in or under water including placement or construction of any solid material or structure; construction of roadways and other infrastructure; discharge or disposal of dredged material or any other waste materials; grading, dredging, or mining; subdivision or change in the density or intensity of use of land; change in the intensity of use or water; construction, reconstruction, demolition, or alteration to the size of any structure, public or private; and the removal or harvesting of vegetation for other than agricultural purposes but excluding routine repair and maintenance activities.

Riparian. Associated with or dependent upon a river, stream, or other water body.

Riparian Habitats. Areas of riparian vegetation that are characterized by plant species that occur along and adjacent to fresh water courses, including perennial and intermittent streams, lakes, springs, and other bodies of fresh water. Riparian habitats include transitional zones between land and water and are distinguished by characteristic woody trees and shrubs, a variety of important ecological functions, and generally high wildlife habitat values.

Riparian Lands. The vegetative and wildlife areas adjacent to perennial and intermittent streams that are delineated by the existence of plant species normally found near fresh water.

Riparian Vegetation. Vegetation associated with a watercourse and relying on the higher level of water provided by the watercourse. Riparian vegetation can include trees, shrubs, and/or herbaceous plants. *Woody riparian vegetation* includes plants that have tough, fibrous stems and branches covered with bark and composed largely of cellulose and lignin. *Herbaceous riparian vegetation* includes grasses, sedges, rushes and forbs — broad-leaved plants that lack a woody skeleton.

Setback. The distance by which a structure must be separated from a lot line. Setbacks from private streets and driveways are measured from the edge of the easement.

Site Assessment. An analysis of the environmental setting of developed or undeveloped land, including but not limited to sensitive wildlife habitats and sensitive resources, such as baylands, wetlands, stream and riparian systems, and special-status species and species of concern. A site assessment may also

include findings regarding potential environmental effects resulting from a development application, and recommendations for measures that may avoid or minimize such effects.

Stream. A natural or once natural flowing open drainage channel with an established bed and bank. These consist of perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams, including open waterways that have been restored, modified, or channelized, but do not include ditches, culverts, or other above- or below-ground conduits constructed specifically for storm drainage function. Perennial and intermittent streams, shown as solid or dashed blue lines (or purple lines) on the most recent appropriate USGS quadrangle sheets, and ephemeral streams as defined below, are subject to Stream Conservation Area protection policies. *See "Stream Conservation Area (SCA)."*

Stream Conservation Area (SCA). A setback from the bank of a natural watercourse, which is intended to protect the active channel, water quality, and flood control functions and associated fish and wildlife habitat values along streams.

Stream, Ephemeral. A watercourse that carries only surface runoff and flows during and immediately after periods of precipitation.

Stream, Intermittent. A watercourse that is temporally intermittent or seasonal and that flows during the wet season, continues to flow after the period of precipitation, and ceases surface flow during at least part of the dry season. Intermittent streams are typically shown as a dashed blue line on USGS quadrangle maps.

Stream, Perennial. A watercourse that flows throughout the year (except for infrequent or extended periods of drought), although surface water flow may be temporarily discontinuous in some reaches of the channel, such as between pools, typically shown as a solid blue line on USGS quadrangle maps. (Perennial streams can be spatially intermittent but flow all year.)

Top of Bank. The elevation at which flow spills out of a stream channel and onto the floodplain.

Watercourse. Natural or once-natural flowing (perennially or intermittently) water, including rivers, streams, and creeks. Includes natural waterways that have been channelized but does not include ditches, culverts, or other above- or below-ground conduits constructed for storm drainage function and sewage systems.

Watershed. The total area above a given point on a watercourse that contributes water to the flow of the watercourse; the entire region drained by a watercourse.

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