

Before you begin planning any project within or near a waterway, such as for streambank restoration or erosion control, it is advised that you contact:

**City of Salem
Community Development**

(503) 588-6173
www.cityofsalem.net

Oregon Department of State Lands

(503) 378-3805
www.oregon.gov/DSL

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

(503) 808-4373
www.hq.usace.army.mil

CITY OF *Salem*
AT YOUR SERVICE
Public Works Department
Stormwater Services
1410 20th Street SE, Bldg. 2
Salem, OR 97302-1200

Information in this brochure has been prepared by:

CITY OF *Salem*
AT YOUR SERVICE
Stormwater Services
www.cityofsalem.net
(503) 588-6333

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Streambank Erosion

Useful information for
streamside property owners



Eroded Streambank at Pringle Creek

What causes accelerated streambank erosion?

Streambank erosion is a process where soil, gravel, and rock within the bank of a waterway become mobilized by the flow of water. Streambank erosion is a natural process that supplies the materials necessary to create features such as gravel bars and floodplains. However, activities that alter the surrounding environment can greatly increase the rate of erosion, threatening property and adversely impacting water quality.

One of the primary causes of accelerated streambank erosion is a reduction in the amount of vegetation within a waterway's riparian zone. The riparian zone is the area of trees, shrubs, and groundcover adjacent to surface water (streams and lakes). A well-developed and diverse riparian zone binds the soil together with roots and greatly reduces the rate of streambank erosion. Some ornamental plants and low growing grasses or lawn typically do not bind soil as well as trees and shrubs with deep, extensive root systems.

There are nearly 70 miles of waterways within Salem's city limits. Many of these waterways are small creeks, but all of them flow to larger streams and ultimately the Willamette River. These waterways provide recreation, as well as habitat for fish and wildlife. Ultimately, accelerated streambank erosion and degraded water quality effects all of us.



What can I do to control erosion on my property?

Streambank erosion is a natural process and cannot be prevented entirely. However, property owners have options available that can help control the rate of erosion.

One of the best methods for controlling streambank erosion is to preserve existing riparian vegetation. Another option is to plant suitable native vegetation in the riparian zone. Erosion control blankets can be incorporated with planting to further stabilize the soil. Both of these options will control erosion, while also providing habitat for fish and wildlife.

In some circumstances, stabilization measures such as the placement of riprap or concrete walls may be necessary. These measures frequently require permits, can be expensive, and often reduce the quality of habitat for fish and wildlife.

Where can I get help with controlling erosion?

Resources that can provide guidance and technical information on controlling erosion include:

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Marion County: (503) 391-9927

Polk County: (503) 623-9680

OSU Extension Service

Marion County: (503) 588-5301

Polk County: (503) 623-8395

Resource for general assistance and vegetation for planting in the riparian zone through the Free Tree Program:

City of Salem Stormwater Services

(503) 588-6333

www.cityofsalem.net

BE CAUTIOUS!
Never work alone when near a waterway. Deep water, slippery footing, and rapid flows can create hazardous conditions.