

Stream Corridor Protection Ordinance Update

Draft Terms and Definitions

“Stream” means any number of natural watercourses flowing from the hill areas to San Francisco Bay in which water flows at least periodically or intermittently through a bed or channel having banks; usually characterized by a distinct channel and a band of dense vegetation along the banks. This may include watercourses having a surface or subsurface flow that supports or has supported riparian vegetation, fish and/or aquatic life.

“Channelized Stream” means A stream that has been straightened and/or enlarged for the purposes of storm runoff control or ease of navigation; may include lining of streambanks with a retaining material such as concrete.

“Culverted Stream” means a stream or portion of a stream located underground in a fully enclosed engineered structure such as a pipe or concrete box.

“Natural Stream” means a stream that remains in a natural or mostly undisturbed state.

“Urban Stream” means a stream segment that runs through a developed area and has typically lost some or all natural features, and may be partially or fully channelized.

“Riparian Buffer” means land next to a stream or river within which development shall be controlled. It is often vegetated, usually with trees and shrubs, that serves as habitat and a protective filter for streams. This typically begins at top of bank and extends the radius specified in this chapter to form a continuous buffer of uniform width.

“Bank” means any embankment, dike, levee, wall or similar feature of natural or man-made origin which adjoins or parallels any watercourse and which has as a function the confinement of the water of said watercourse.

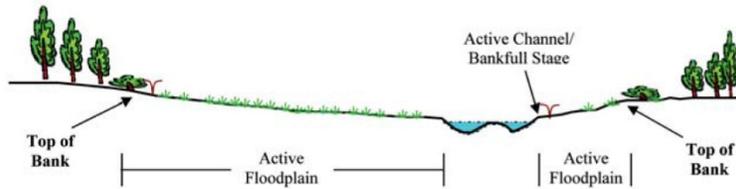
“Toe of Bank” means the point in a channel where the slope of the bank meets the streambed.

“Top of Bank” means a stream channel boundary where a majority of normal discharges and channel forming activities takes place. The top of bank boundary will contain the active stream channel, active floodplain, and their associated banks.

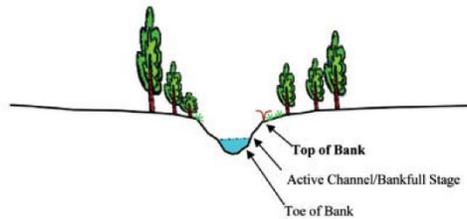
Figure 1 below illustrates various examples of stream conditions.

FIGURE 1: EXAMPLES ILLUSTRATING TOP OF BANK

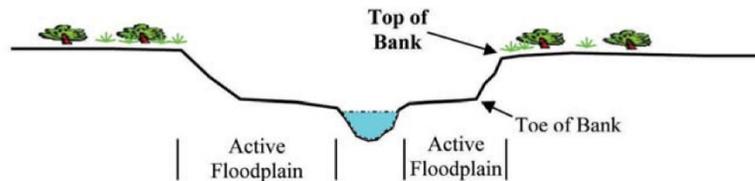
1. Wide meandering stream with a discernable active floodplain



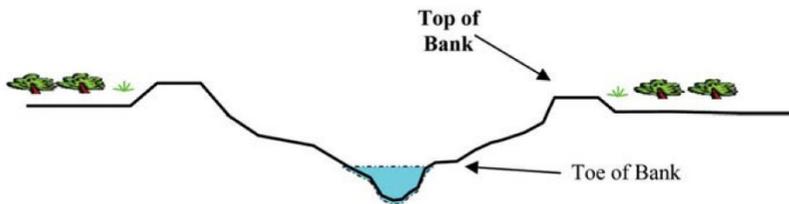
2. Stream in steep sloped area and/or area with little potential for lateral movement, but distinguishable bankfull stage



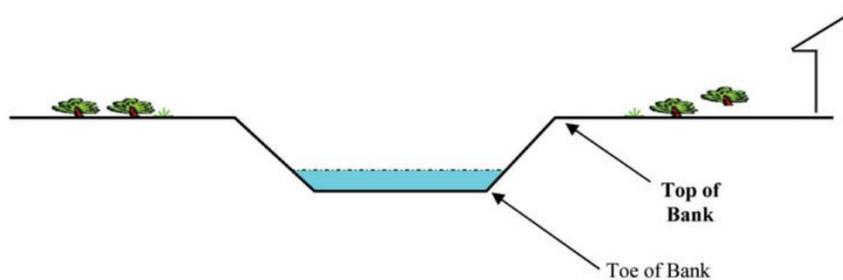
3. Meandering stream with active floodplain



4. A stream with levees



5. A concrete lined or other bank protected stream



Source: Santa Clara Valley Water Resources Protection Collaborative User Manual *Guidelines and Standards for Land Uses Near Streams*