



Wetlands and Riparian Corridors: Benefit Human and Wildlife Communities

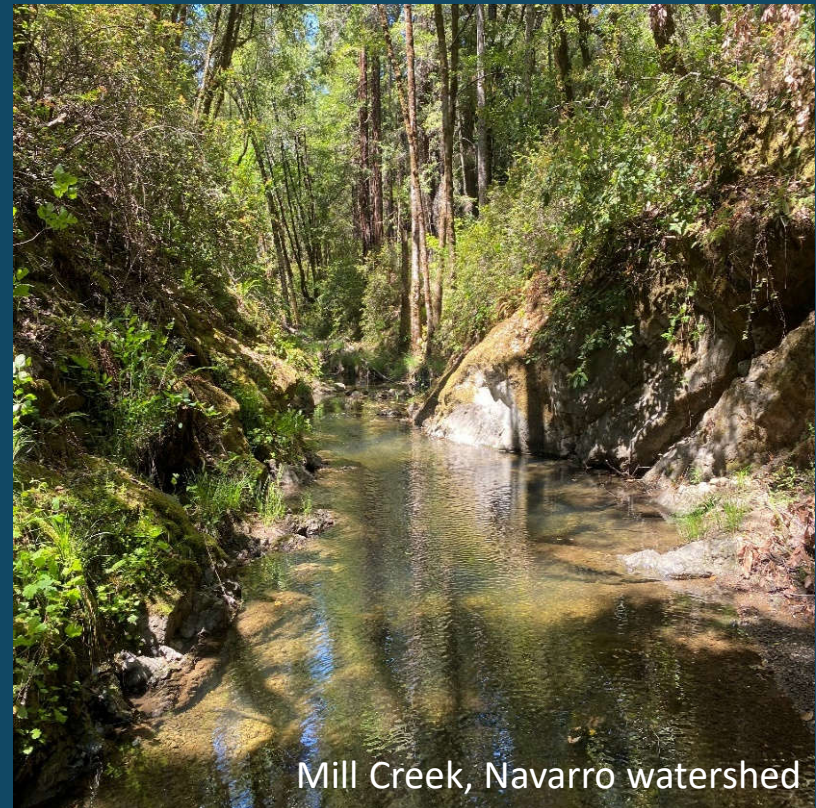
Mendocino County
Board of Supervisors
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Source: Mendocino County Resource
Conservation District

Wetlands and Riparian – What Are They?

- Wetlands are transitional areas between upland and streams, creeks, and rivers.
- Water table is usually at or near the surface, or surface of the land is covered by shallow water.
- Riparian areas are the greenbelt of vegetation along creeks and rivers.
- California has lost 91 percent of its wetlands and 75 percent of CDFW Northern Region's riparian habitat has been converted to other land uses.



Benefits of Wetlands and Riparian Corridors

1. Store floodwaters, help minimize erosion, protect against storm surges, and loss of property.
2. Recharge groundwater, trap sediment, and filter pollution.
3. Vital habitat for majority of wildlife species:
 - Seasonal or year-around water, cooler microclimate, and food.
 - Breeding and rearing habitat for aquatic and bird species.
 - Wildlife movement corridors.

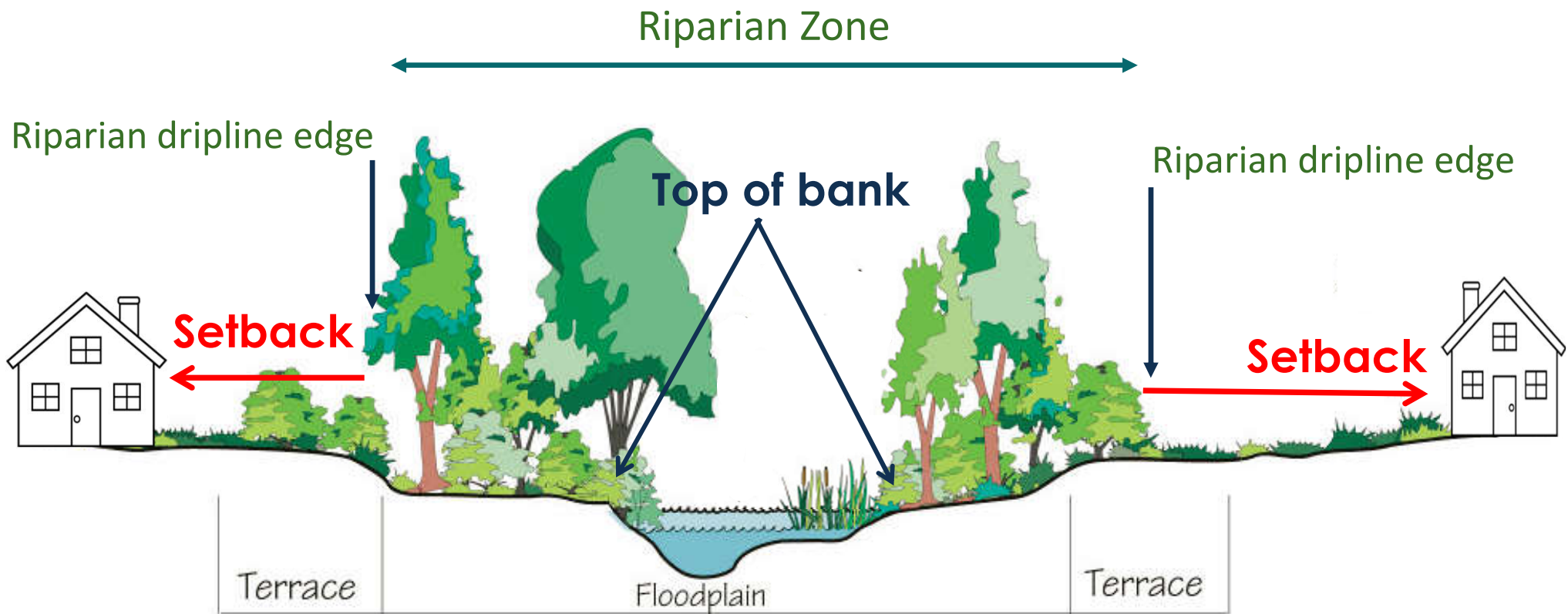


Ten Mile Creek, Laytonville area



Wet meadow, Little Lake Valley

CDFW Region 1 Recommendation: Stream setback begins at “top of bank or edge of riparian, whichever is greater.”



Land use, specifically development within and adjacent to wetland and riparian areas, is a principal cause of habitat loss and degradation.



Parking lot located at the top of a stream bank with a drain inlet depositing storm runoff (likely with pollutants), directly into the stream, which reduces water quality. Asphalt shows signs of slumping and repeat repairs to maintain the parking lot is likely.



Structure built into stream bed; invasive species present on banks, and bed and bank show signs of scouring.



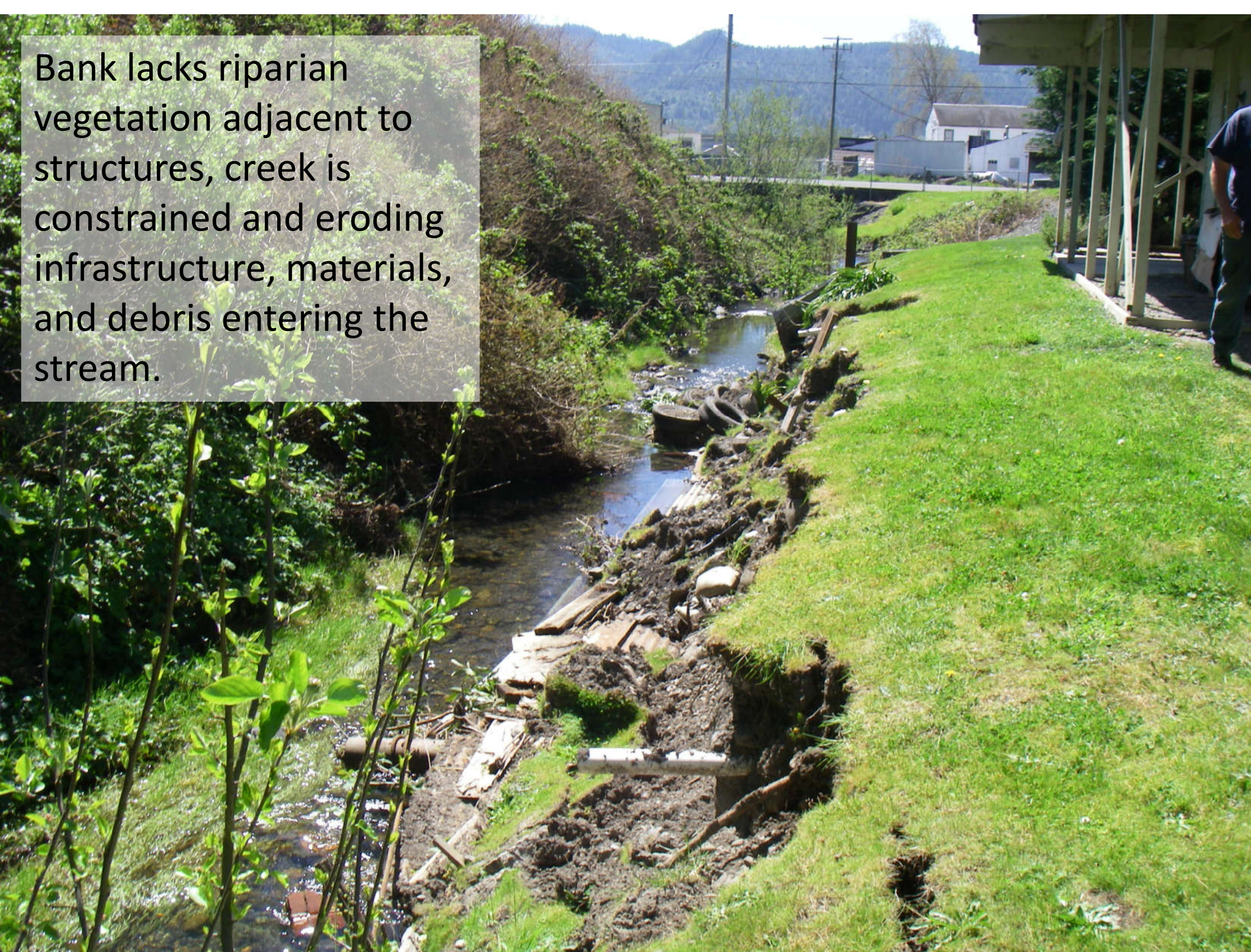
The bank is slumping

Invasive species (blackberries) removed but not replaced with native riparian vegetation.

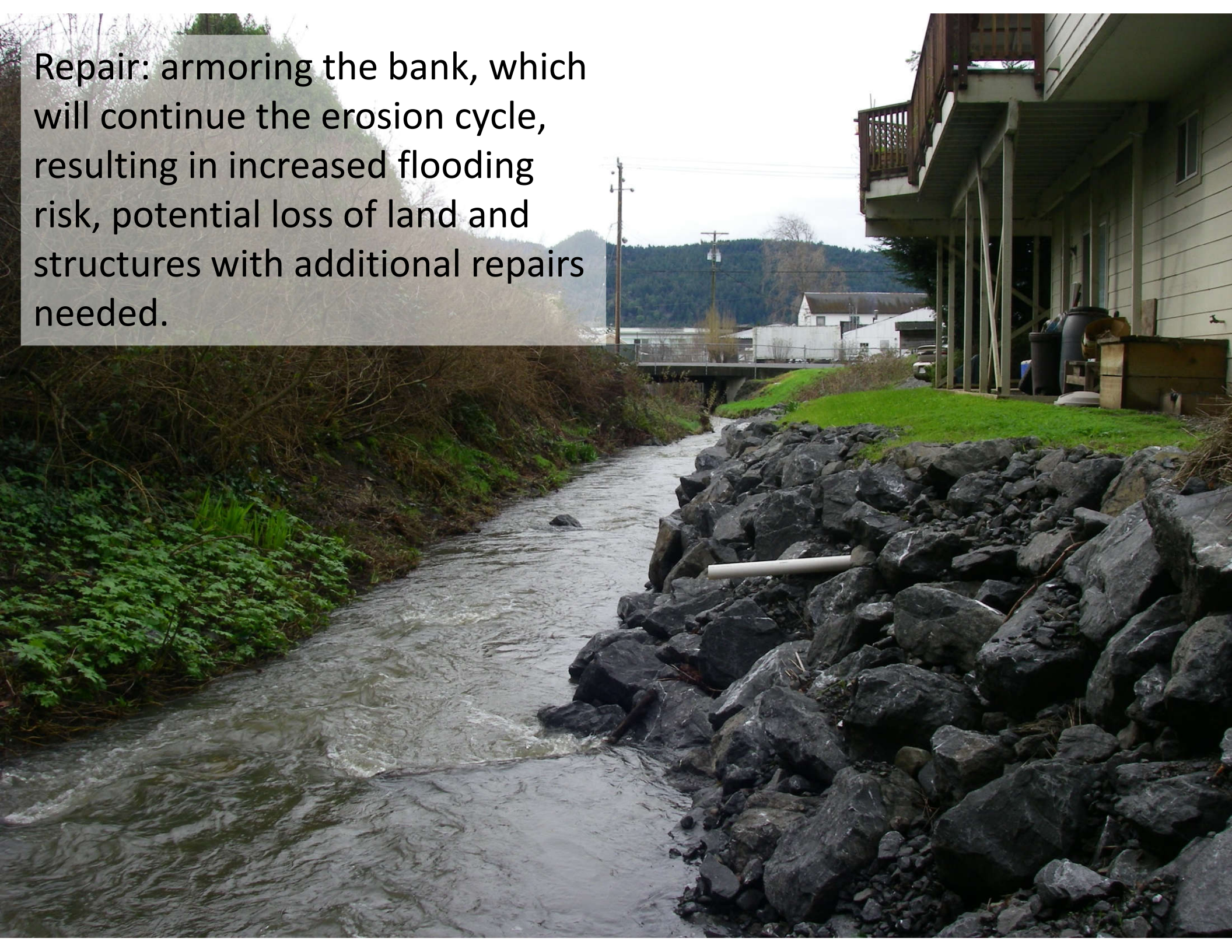
Previous rock armoring is visible after the vegetation removal

Likely future: additional bank erosion with increased sediment deposited into the stream, increased flooding risk and loss of land with need of additional and repeat repairs.

Bank lacks riparian vegetation adjacent to structures, creek is constrained and eroding infrastructure, materials, and debris entering the stream.

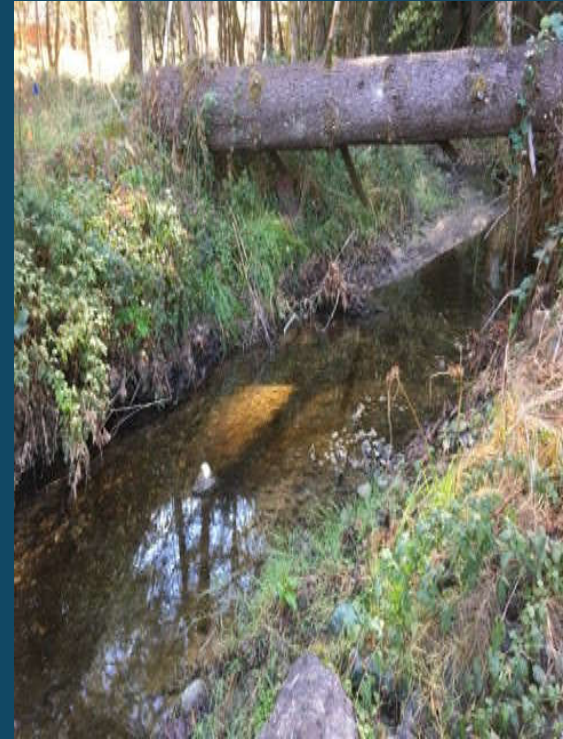


Repair: armoring the bank, which will continue the erosion cycle, resulting in increased flooding risk, potential loss of land and structures with additional repairs needed.



CDFW Supports Setbacks as They Provide Multiple Benefits

1. Discourages new development in floodplains and reduces flood potential and loss of property.
2. Minimizes development's impacts on habitats and the species who use them.
3. Riparian and wetland vegetation improves water quality:
 - Stabilizes banks and reduces erosion.
 - Reduces sediment and pollutants.
 - Lowers water temperatures.
4. Reduces light and noise pollution and invasive species introductions in riparian habitats.





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