

# Riparian Management Guidelines

## PURPOSE

This document is designed to inform property owners and managers about the role and regulatory protections of riparian vegetation (streamside) in the approximately 255 square mile Carmel River watershed. It is also designed to guide the property owner through initial steps when considering altering riparian vegetation.

## The Value of Riparian Vegetation

Riparian vegetation is dependent on high water tables and is found along the Carmel River and its floodplains. Typical riparian trees include black cottonwoods, willows, sycamores, and white alders. The riparian corridor provides structure for a stream bank by using its roots and trees to minimize erosion. Riparian vegetation also provides habitat, shade, and migration corridors for wildlife. It is for these reasons that significant alterations of the riparian corridor require permits from various resource agencies. A riparian zone fire fuel management guide is planned to be released in 2023. Upland habitats also support riparian-associated wildlife. In the future there will be an upland habitat vegetation guide as well, which will be linked here.

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

### INCLUDES:

- Land clearing
- Tree or brush trimming or removal
- Any other action to change or manage the landscape in the watershed for any purpose including fire protection, viewshed, development and agriculture

Depending on the scale of vegetation management, permit(s) may be required before work is undertaken. Regulatory agencies may require mitigation for vegetation management, depending on the type and scale of work.

Local, regional, and statewide stakeholders are improving wildfire management and ecosystem protection efforts by providing vegetation management guidelines for landowners and managers to follow, while acknowledging the role of regulatory agencies. The goal of these actions is to strike a balance between protecting houses and other infrastructure along with preserving habitat and natural functions of native vegetation. CRWC understands the importance of safety to both our communities and our native wildland areas, and this guide is developed to help landowners and property managers strike the balance between the built and wild ecosystems.

## REGULATING AGENCIES

A number of local, state and national agencies are mandated to protect the valuable resources of the Carmel River watershed. Regulations and permitting requirements can make approval of vegetation management a challenge. Depending on the location and scale of the work, several agencies may be involved. Contacts for questions on the rules and regulations of the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (streamside) and Monterey County (streamside and upland) are listed below.

When considering vegetation management, the landowner or manager should be aware of the potential impacts of action and the regulatory setting of their project, and attempt to scale the work to both minimize permit requirements and negative impacts to the ecosystem.

**If you have a vegetation management project, contact these two agencies first:**

Monterey County Housing and Community Development Department

**HCDPermits@co.monterey.ca.us or 831-755-5025**

Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (only if next to the Carmel River)

**Thomas@mpwmd.net or 831-238-2547**

## LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[SLC Fuel Management Guide](#)

[CRWC Stewardship Manual](#)

[CAL FIRE Defensible Spaces](#)

[County of Monterey Guidelines](#)

[Role of Riparian Vegetation](#)