



How do the measurements link to health?

Riparian health reflects the ability of the site to perform eight basic ecological functions. The characteristics we measure help us understand the potential of the site to perform these functions and the degree to which the functions may be impaired.

In more detailed health evaluation, beyond the checklists, each characteristic measured has a range of values that translate into the site's potential to perform several functions. The breaks between the values indicate significant differences, or changes in potential. These were arrived at with expert review and opinion; the breaks represent inflections or thresholds significant enough to indicate change. The characteristics are weighted differently; this indicates that all of the characteristics do not contribute equally to ecological function. This weighting system reflects the relative importance of the characteristic, the influence or relationship to other characteristics and the significance of a characteristic to an ecological function or functions. Some characteristics, like the ability of a stream to access it's floodplain, are the foundation. Without them, most, or all other functions could not occur.



This riparian area is "healthy, with problems". Can you identify the missing pieces?

Measurement

	<i>Function</i>							
	Trap Sediment	Bind Banks	Store Water	Recharge Aquifer	Filter/Buffer	Dissipate Energy	Biodiversity	Primary Productivity
Vegetation cover	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Weeds	✗	✗	-	-	-	✗	✗	✗
Disturbance Species	-	✗	-	-	-	✗	✗	✗
Woody regeneration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wood utilization	-	✗	-	-	✗	✗	✗	✗
Dead wood	-	✗	-	-	-	✗	✗	✗
Deep roots	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-
Bare ground	✗	✗	-	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Compaction	-	✗	-	✗	-	-	-	✗
Site alteration	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Floodplain accessible	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Water manipulation	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

- ✓ major role in performing this function
- ✗ major impact on, or impairment of this function
- minor effect or impact