

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ALONG WATERWAYS South Boise Water Co.

Running Water is a major benefit for residents of Southeast Boise. It serves as a source of beauty, wildlife habitat, and irrigation water. Wise care can enhance all of these uses. Exploitation can destroy them. Specifically to protect Loggers Creek Boise City has established a setback of 25 feet from the water's edge. This means that no structures should be built within this area and the natural vegetation should be left to grow there. Many of the properties along Loggers Creek were developed prior to the ordinance that established the setback, so they are legally exempt. Unfortunately, the forces of nature do not distinguish between legal and illegal activities. Those who are not legally required to maintain streamside vegetation, and choose not to, still contribute to the degradation of the creek, even though they legally can do as they wish.

Following a few simple guidelines for all waterways to help keep the water clearer, help wildlife thrive, and prevent erosion.

1. Allow natural vegetation to grow along the creek bank. This will cut off part of your view from the house. However, the roots prevent erosion. The shade helps keep the water cool which decreases growth of water plants and supports trout. The vegetation provides cover for wildlife and insects for birds and fish to eat. You will see more wildlife if you provide it a place to live comfortably than if you clear everything so it has no place to hide.
2. Do not apply fertilizer or insecticides near the water. Fifteen feet from the water's edge is a good distance to keep chemically free. Fertilizers leach into the water and cause the water plants to grow faster. Insecticides upset the natural balance between predators and prey, so the predators decrease and then the insects come back in greater numbers than ever. The insecticides in dead insects pass on to birds and fish.
3. Do not dispose of trash in the water. Obviously, it is unsightly. As animal waste degrades, it encourages water plant growth. Yard waste plugs up the system and overloads the natural system for removing decaying matter, creating masses of black ooze.
4. If the bank is bare, plant trees adapted to the habitat, such as willows, alders and poplars. Willow roots tend to grow out into the water, so willows are good along waterways that are much too wide, but will choke smaller waterways. You may need to protect the trees from beavers. Three-foot high 2"X4" welded wire fencing is reasonably easy to work with and usually works well for this purpose. Popular bushes include syringa (State flower), red osier dogwood, red twin berry and black twinberry. Syringa likes sun, the twinberries like some shade. Vines that do well locally include trumpet vine, honeysuckle and Virginia creeper.