

## Stream Restoration Design & Implementation

Greg Jennings, PhD, PE  
jenningsenv@gmail.com

1. Channel morphology
2. Floodplain structure
3. Hydrologic & hydraulic analysis
4. In-stream structures
5. Habitats & vegetation
6. Site & watershed conditions
7. Monitoring, maintenance, education



## Basic Science: Fluvial Geomorphology:

*study of landforms and the fluvial processes that shape them*



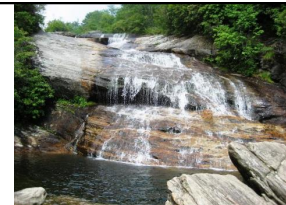
## Fluvial Processes:

*associated with flowing water, including sediment erosion, transport, and deposition*



## Fluvial Forms

- Bar
- Channel
- Confluence
- Cutoff channel
- Delta
- Floodplain
- Gorge
- Gully
- Meander
- Oxbow lake
- Pool
- Riffle
- Stream
- Valley
- Waterfall
- Watershed



## What is a Stream?

... a body of water with a current, confined within a bed and streambanks

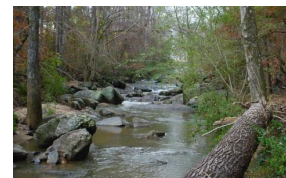
*Synonyms:* bayou, beck, branch, brook, burn, creek, crick, kill, lick, rill, river, rivulet, run, slough, syke

Streams are conduits in the water cycle and also important habitats



## Stream: A system of fluvial forms & habitats

- Channel (bed & banks)
- Floodplain
- Water
- Sediment
- Plants & animals



## Stream Connections

- Mostly downstream fluxes of energy and matter
- Lateral and vertical connections to the riparian and hyporheic zones



Courtesy of Francois Birgard, NCSU

## Stream (Ecosystem) Restoration

“activities that initiate or accelerate the recovery of ecosystem health, integrity, and sustainability” (SER, 2004)



Jasper Town Creek



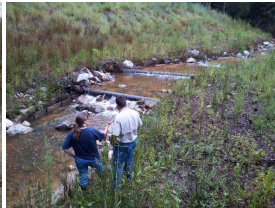
Auburn UT Town Creek

## Stream Restoration is a Systematic Process

1. Planning & Assessment
2. Engineering
3. Construction & Planting
4. Monitoring, Maintenance, Adjustments



Samford Univ Shades Creek



Daphne UT D'Olive Creek

## Goals of Stream Restoration Projects

- Improve habitats & water quality
- Improve recreation & aesthetics
- Protect infrastructure & land value
- Educate citizens & decision-makers



Daphne UT D'Olive Creek



Samford Univ Shades Creek

## Stream Restoration as a BMP

- Sediment control
- Nutrient cycling (instream & floodplain)
- Peak discharge attenuation
- Habitats (aquatic & terrestrial)
- Infrastructure protection



## Standards for ecologically successful river restoration

Palmer et al., *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 2005, 42, 208–217

1. design of an ecological river restoration project should be based on a specified guiding image of a more dynamic, healthy river
2. river's ecological condition must be measurably improved
3. river system must be more self-sustaining and resilient to external perturbations so that only minimal follow-up maintenance is needed
4. during the construction phase, no lasting harm should be inflicted on the ecosystem
5. pre- and post-assessment must be completed and data made publicly available

## Restoration Planning & Design

1. Objectives?
2. Constraints?
3. Design Approach?
4. Permitting?
5. Construction?
6. Monitoring & Maintenance?
7. Funding?



## Stream Design Approaches

1. Threshold Channel
2. Alluvial Channel
  - a. Regime Equations
  - b. Analogy (Reference Reach)
  - c. Hydraulic Geometry
  - d. Analytical Models
3. Combination of Methods



## Threshold Channels

*Rigid Boundary*

## Threshold Channels

1. Rigid boundary systems
2. *Simple design approach*: select channel configuration where the stress applied during design conditions is below the allowable stress for the channel boundary

Table 8-1 General guidance for selecting the most appropriate channel design technique

Technique	Significant sediment load and movable channel boundaries	Boundary material smaller than sand size	Boundary material larger than sand size	Boundary material does not act as discrete particles	No baseflow in channel. Climate can support permanent vegetation
Allowable velocity		X			
Allowable shear stress			X		
Tractive power				X	
Grass lined/tractive stress					X
Alluvial channel design techniques	X				

8-2

(210-VI-NEH, August 2007)

## Alluvial Channels

1. Movable boundary systems ("natural" streams)
2. *Complex design approach*: assess sediment continuity and channel performance for a range of flows
3. *Dependent variables*: Width, Depth, Slope, Planform
4. *Independent variables*: Sediment inflow, Water inflow, Bank composition
5. Empirical & Analytical approaches should be used concurrently



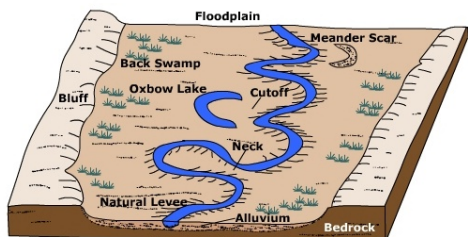
## Assumption: Stream Behavior Is Predictable

- Streams evolve to a state of dynamic equilibrium
- Equilibrium is a function of flow and sediment
- Equilibrium is naturally associated with a main channel and a flood-prone area
- Channel is formed by the effective ("bankfull") discharge
- Alluvial stream meandering is predictable



## Alluvial River Processes

Rivers that have reached base level develop broad valleys by erosion caused by meandering channels. The stream channel cuts through and redistributes its sediment or **alluvium** that lines the area bordering the stream.



[http://www.uwsp.edu/geofaculty/ritter/geog101/textbook/fluvial\\_systems/geologic\\_work\\_of\\_streams.html](http://www.uwsp.edu/geofaculty/ritter/geog101/textbook/fluvial_systems/geologic_work_of_streams.html)

## Sediment Transport in Alluvial Streams

**Stream Load** includes:  
dissolved + suspended + bed load

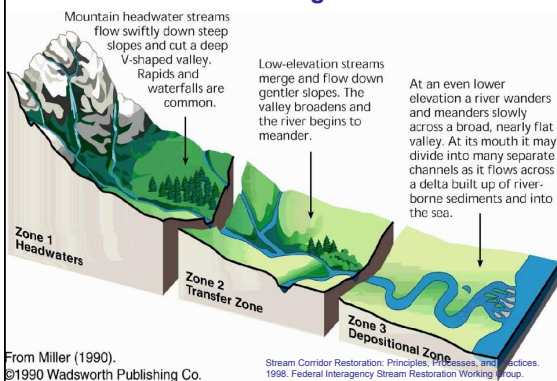
**Capacity:** maximum load that can be transported for a given discharge (increases with velocity and turbulence)

**Competence:** largest size material that can be transported for a given discharge



[http://www.uwsp.edu/geofaculty/ritter/geog101/textbook/fluvial\\_systems/geologic\\_work\\_of\\_streams.html](http://www.uwsp.edu/geofaculty/ritter/geog101/textbook/fluvial_systems/geologic_work_of_streams.html)

## Stream Corridor Longitudinal Profile

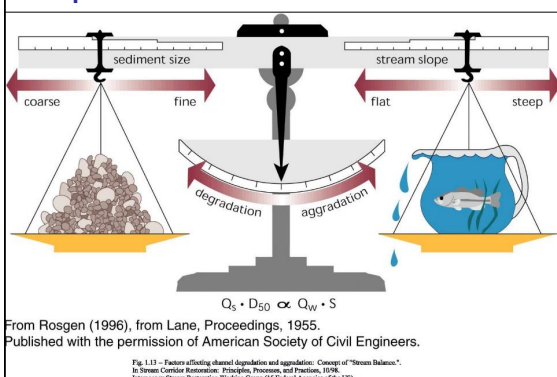


## Natural Stream Channel Equilibrium (from Leopold)

- River has a stable *dimension, pattern and profile*
- Maintains channel features (riffles, pools, steps)
- Does not aggrade (fills) or degrade (erodes)



## Equilibrium Factors for Alluvial Streams



## Equilibrium Controlling Variables

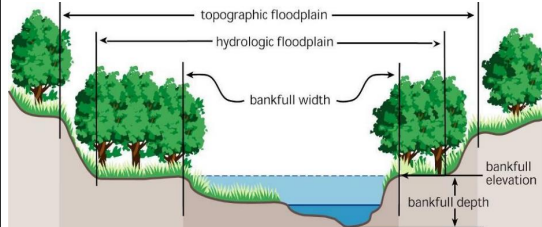
- Width
- Depth
- Slope
- Velocity
- Discharge
- Flow resistance
- Sediment size
- Sediment load

Leopold et al (1964)



### Bankfull Stage

“corresponds to the discharge at which channel maintenance is the most effective, that is, the discharge at which moving sediment, forming or removing bars, forming or changing bends and meanders, and generally doing work results in the average morphologic characteristics” (Dunne and Leopold, 1978)



Stream Corridor Restoration: Principles, Processes, and Practices. 1998. Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group.

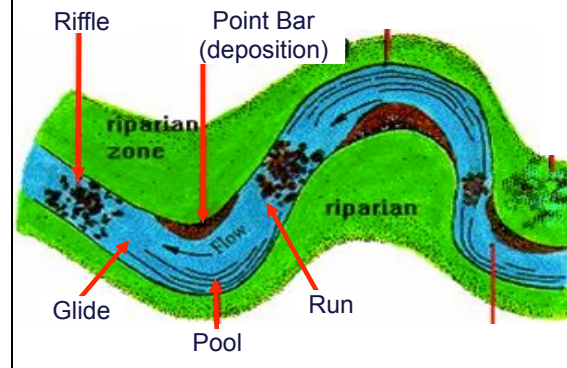


### Bankfull Indicators:

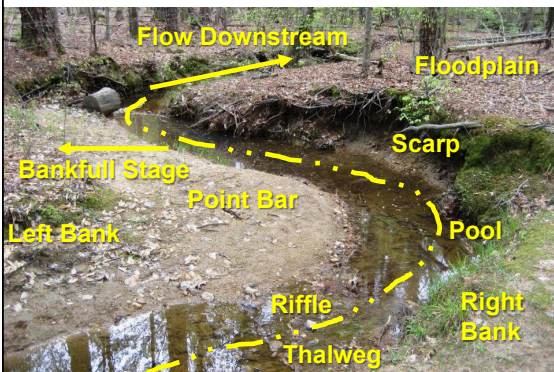
Point Bars and Lateral Benches 1.2 to 1.5 ft above WS



### Meandering Stream: Alluvial Forms



### Meandering Stream: Alluvial Forms



### Natural Channel Design: Alluvial Channels

1. Existing Conditions – valley, watershed, constraints
2. Design Parameters (Channel & Floodplain)
  - a. Reference Reaches (Analogy)
  - b. Completed Restoration Projects (Analogy)
  - c. Hydraulic Geometry Regional Curves (Empirical)
  - d. Regime Equations (Empirical)
3. Analytical Models to Test Range of Discharges




**Reference Reaches:**

Morphology design parameters serve as a “starting point”

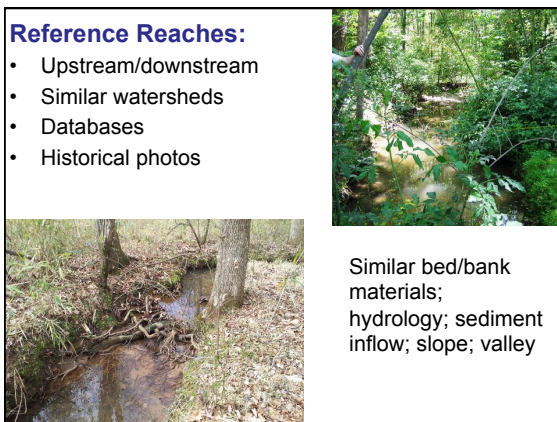
**Reference Reaches:**

- Channels well-connected to alluvial floodplains with little evidence of incision (bank height ratios less than 1.2)
- Freely-formed meanders with alternating riffles and pools
- Streambanks and floodplains well-vegetated with no erosion
- Upstream watersheds mostly forest and agriculture
- Stable and unconfined for a length 20 times bankfull width



**Reference Reaches:**

- Upstream/downstream
- Similar watersheds
- Databases
- Historical photos



Similar bed/bank materials; hydrology; sediment inflow; slope; valley

**Completed Projects:**

- Upstream/downstream
- Similar watersheds
- Successes & Failures




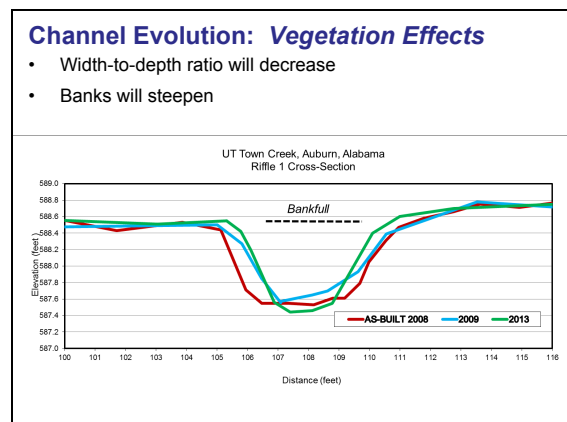
**Auburn Town Creek Park (5 years later)**

**Channel Evolution: Vegetation Effects**

- Width-to-depth ratio will decrease
- Banks will steepen

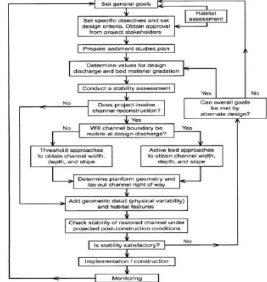
**As-built:**  
 $A_{bkf} = 4.5 \text{ sq ft}$   
 $W_{bkf} / d_{bkf} = 7.6 / 0.6 = 13$   
 Bank Angles: 3:1

**5 Years Later:**  
 $A_{bkf} = 3.8 \text{ sq ft}$   
 $W_{bkf} / d_{bkf} = 5.4 / 0.7 = 8$   
 Bank Angles: Near Vertical

## Analytical Methods to Check Design

1. Choose appropriate model
2. Assess a range of solutions
3. Use as a check



Analytical Design Approach, Shields, 2006

## Restoration Components

1. Channel morphology
2. Floodplain structure
3. Hydrologic & hydraulic analysis
4. In-stream structures
5. Habitats & vegetation
6. Site & watershed conditions
7. Monitoring, maintenance, education



## 1. Channel Morphology

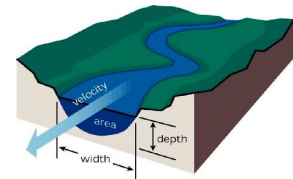
- Dimension (baseflow, bankfull, flood flows)
- Pattern (meandering, straight, braided)
- Profile (bedform – riffle, run, pool, glide, step)

Vestavia Hills: Little Shades Creek, 2011

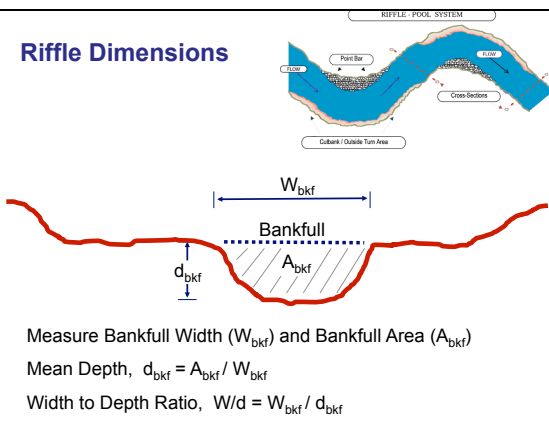


## Dimension (cross-section)

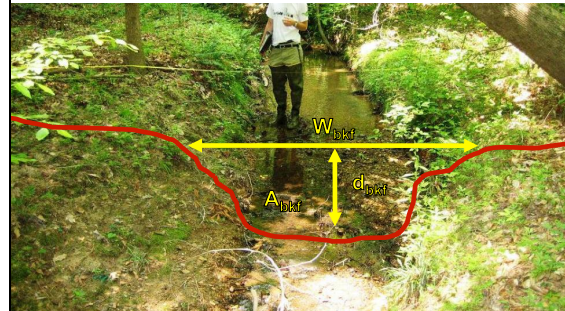
- Area
- Width
- Depth
- Width/Depth Ratio
- Entrenchment Ratio
- Bank Height Ratio

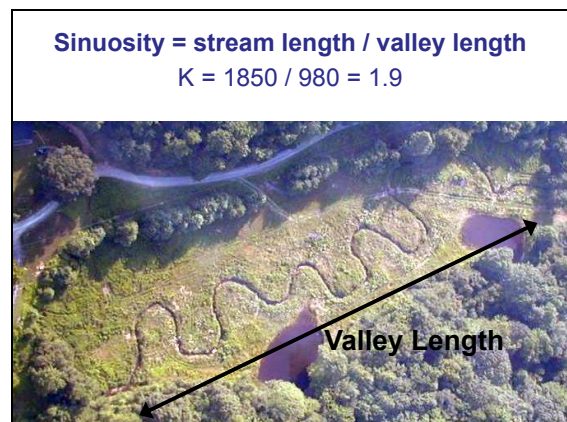
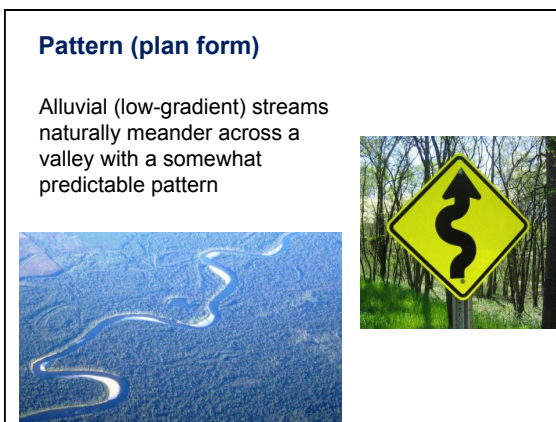
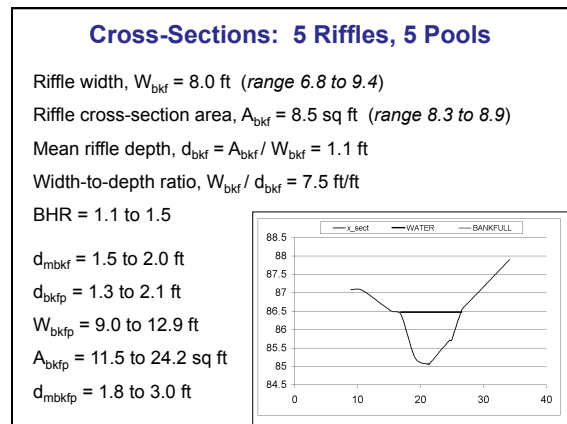
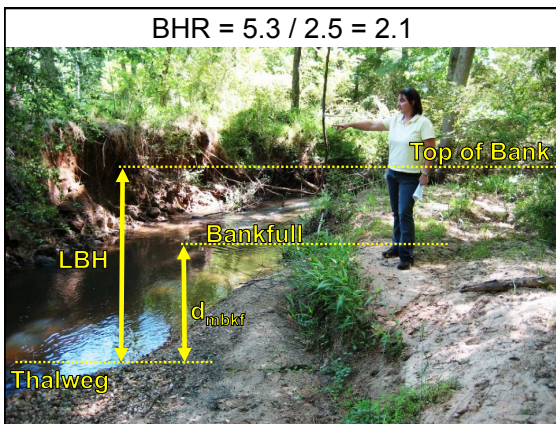
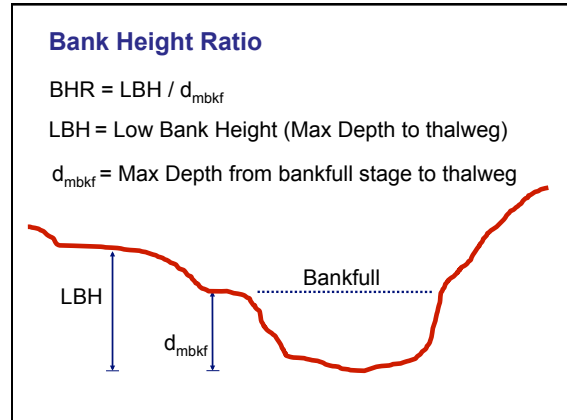
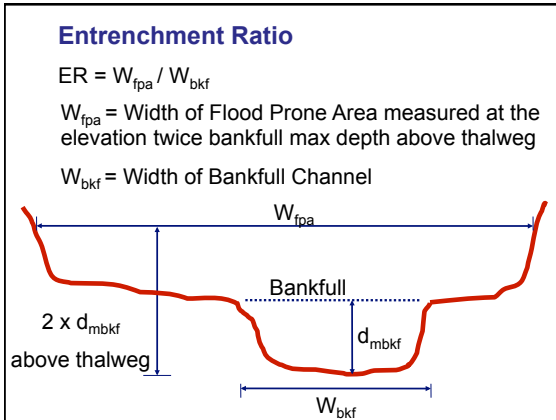


## Riffle Dimensions

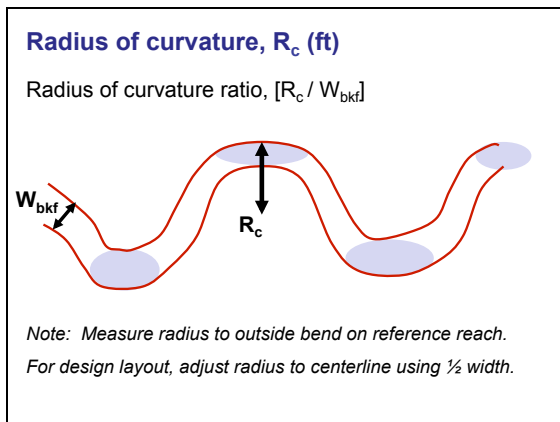
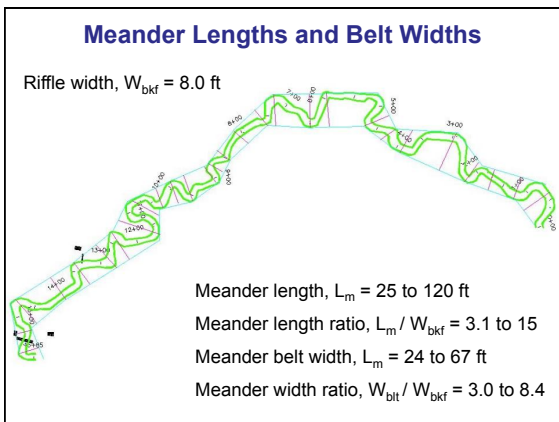
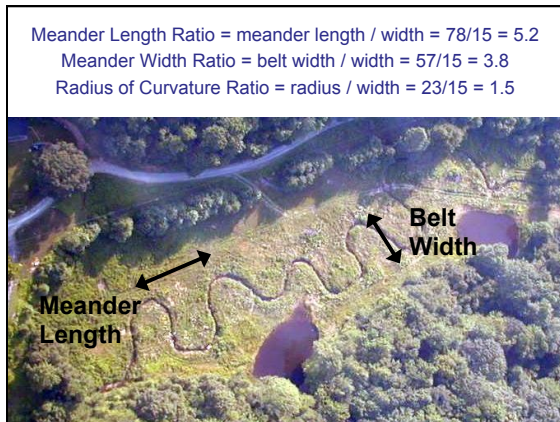
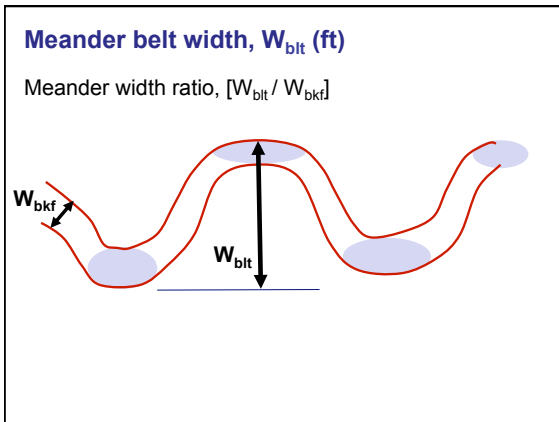
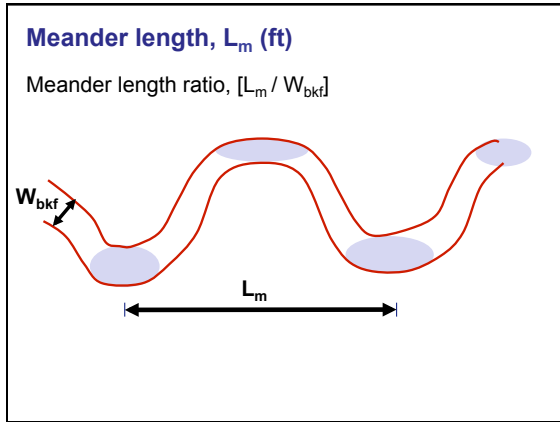
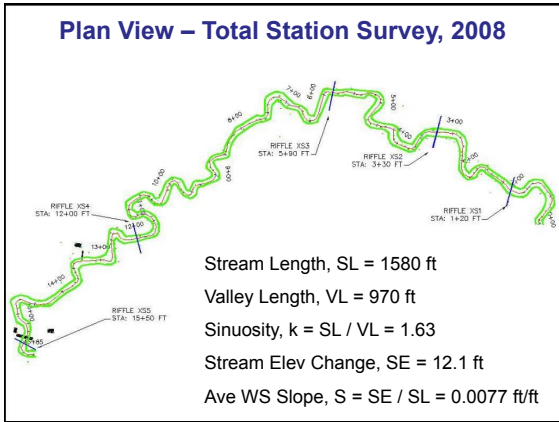


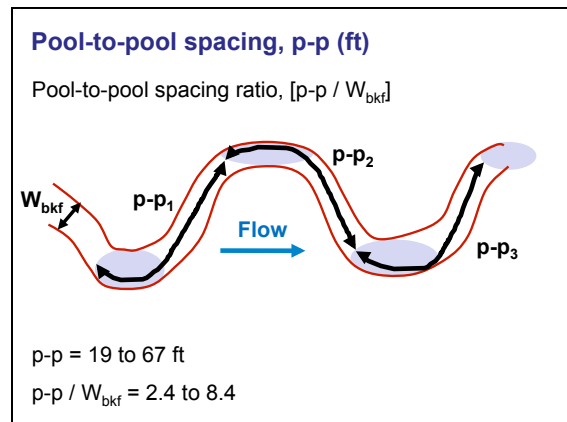
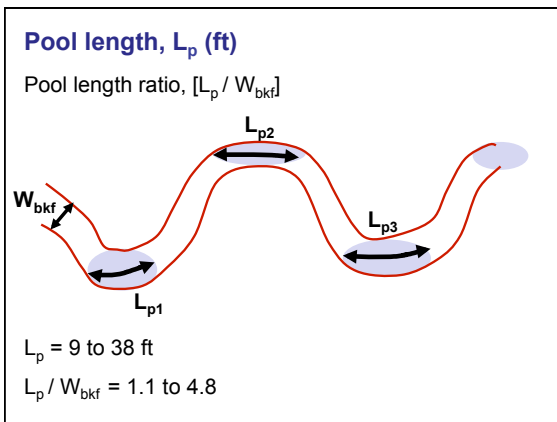
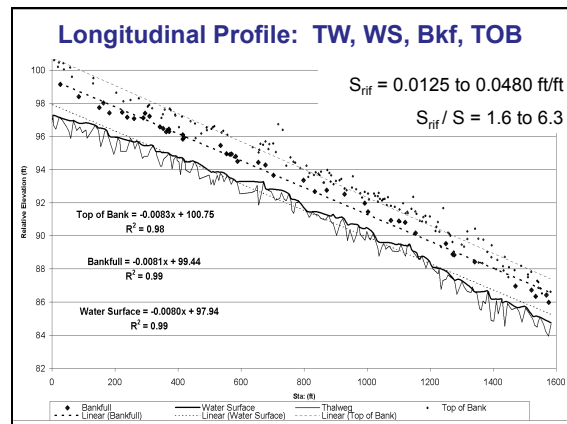
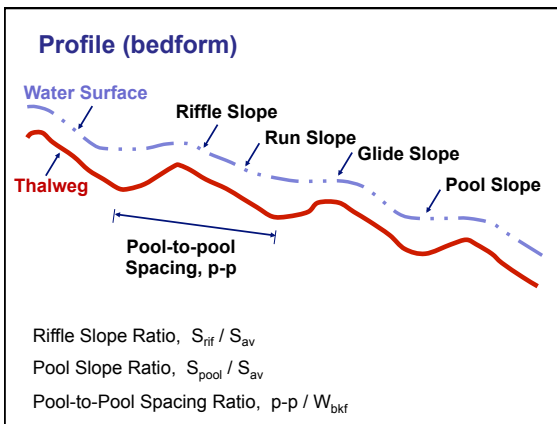
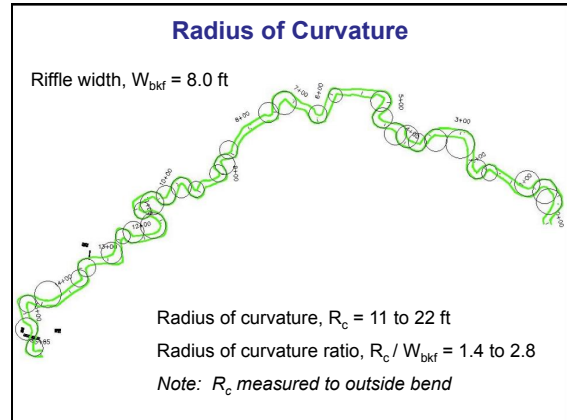
Bankfull Width,  $W_{bkt} = 9.3$  ft; Bankfull Area,  $A_{bkt} = 13.9$  ft<sup>2</sup>  
 Mean Depth,  $d_{bkt} = A_{bkt} / W_{bkt} = 13.9 / 9.3 = 1.5$  ft  
 Width to Depth Ratio,  $W/d = W_{bkt} / d_{bkt} = 9.3 / 1.5 = 6.2$

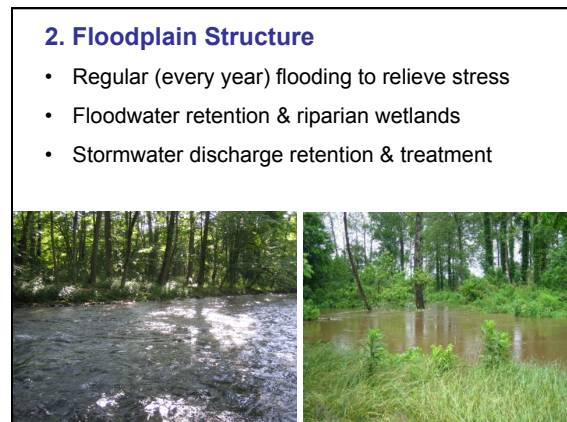
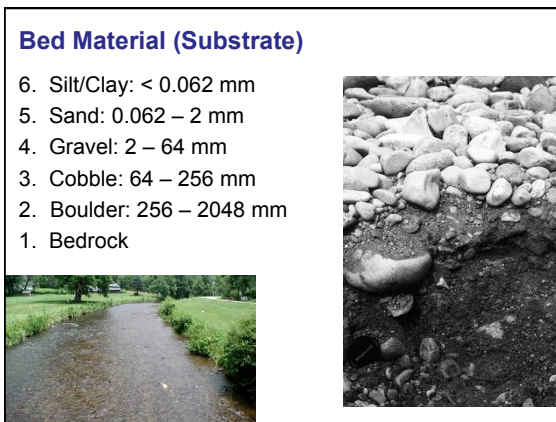
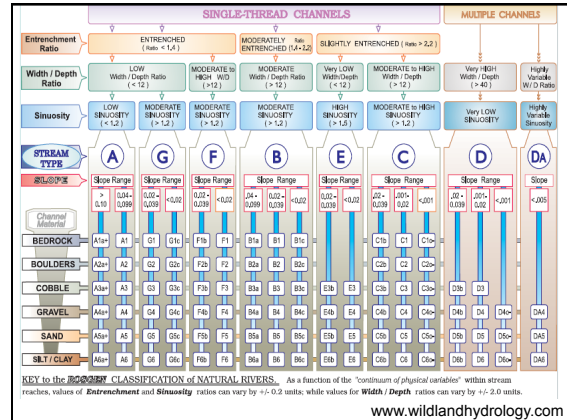
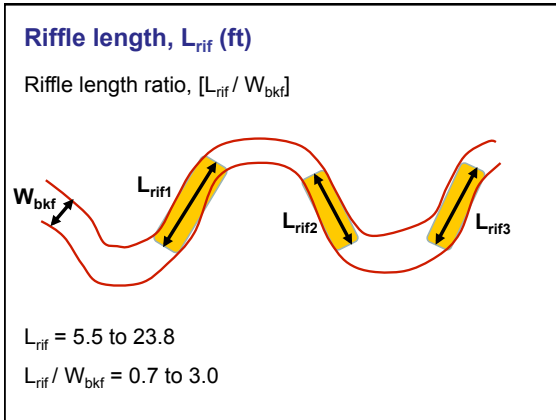












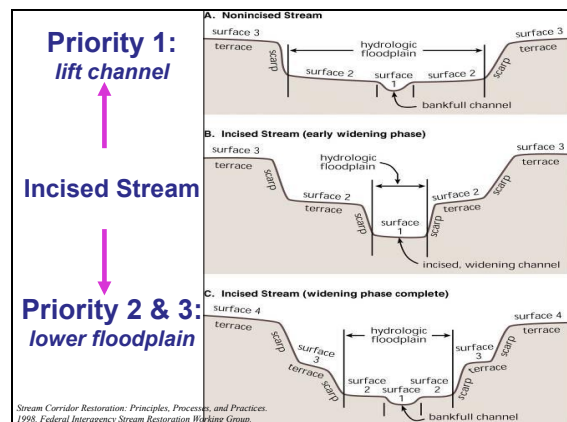
### 2. Floodplain Structure

**ER =  $W_{bkf} / W_{fpa}$** : Entrenchment ratio provides wide floodplain for flood energy dissipation, sediment retention & riparian habitats

**BHR =  $LBH / d_{mbkf}$** : Bank height ratio provides floodplain access at bankfull stage consistently down valley on both banks

Floodplain orientation minimizes flood flow stresses (straight down valley & consistent width)

Surface topography supports floodwater retention, flow diversity & riparian habitats



**Priority 1: Reconnect Floodplain**

Replace incised channel with shallow channel raised to existing floodplain elevation



ER = 18    W/d = 12  
K = 1.4    S = 0.008

2006

Town Creek Tributary

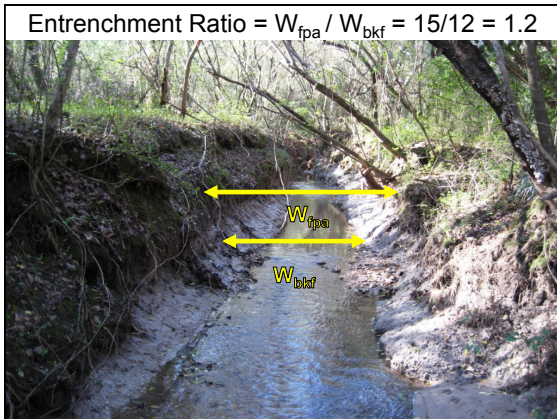
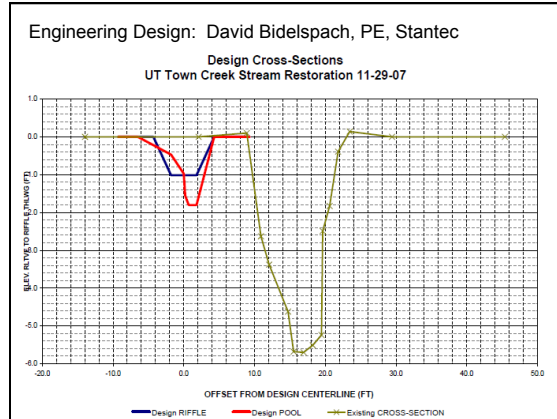
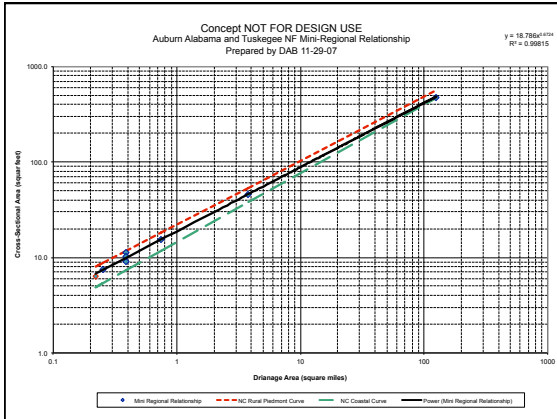
2007

Engineering Design:

Morphological Table

David Bidelspach, PE,  
Stantec

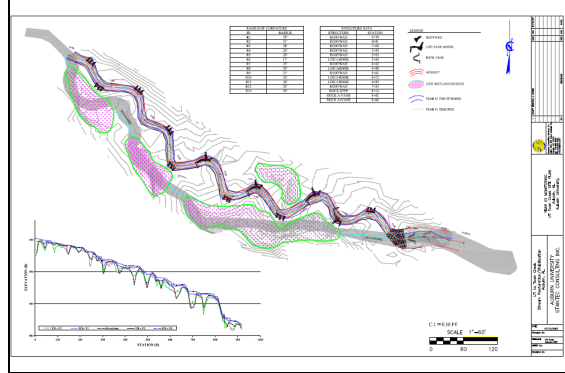
Station	Channel		Bank		Floodplain		Elevation	
	Top	Bottom	Top	Bottom	Top	Bottom	Top	Bottom
0+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
1+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
2+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
3+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
4+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
5+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
6+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
7+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
8+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
9+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
10+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
11+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
12+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
13+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
14+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
15+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
16+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
17+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
18+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
19+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
20+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
21+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
22+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
23+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
24+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
25+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
26+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
27+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
28+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
29+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
30+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
31+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
32+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
33+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
34+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
35+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
36+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
37+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
38+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
39+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
40+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
41+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
42+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
43+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
44+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
45+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
46+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
47+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
48+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
49+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00
50+00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	8.00



Entrenchment Ratio =  $W_{fpa} / W_{bkf} = 180/10 = 18$



As-Built Survey



5 years after construction



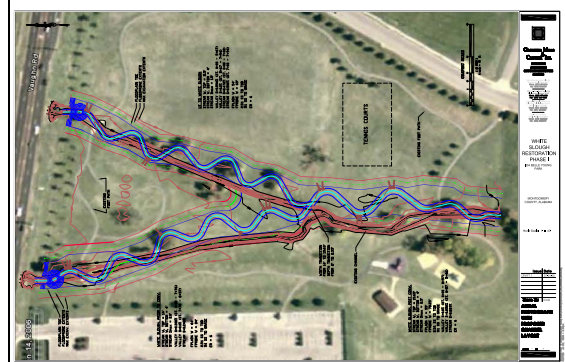
5 years after construction

Montgomery White Slough (2009)



- Project Mgmt: Auburn Univ
- Funding: ADEM, EPA 319
- Design: GMC, Jennings
- Construction: GMC
- Vegetation: GMC, Auburn Univ

Engineering Design: William McLemore, PE, GMC



**Priority 2: Reconnect Floodplain**  
Excavate wide floodplain and meander channel at a lower elevation

ER = 6  
W/d = 11  
K = 1.4  
S = 0.003

2008                      White Slough                      2010

Entrenchment Ratio =  $W_{fpa} / W_{bkf} = 84/14 = 6$



**Vestavia Hills Little Shades Creek (2010)**

**Project Mgmt:** CAWACO RC&D  
**Funding:** ADEM, EPA 319  
**Design:** GMC, Jennings  
**Construction:** North State Environmental  
**Vegetation:** Auburn Univ, NSE

2009                      2011

**North State ENVIRONMENTAL**

**Project Specs**

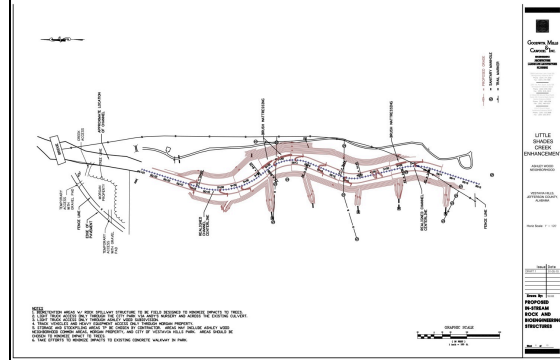
- 1,900 feet stream length
- 30-60 feet riparian buffer
- 0.5 acre stormwater wetland
- 10 stormwater outfall channels
- Sewer crossing
- Greenway trail on East bank
- Gravel/cobble – high bedload

## Project Components

1. Channel morphology
2. Floodplain structure
3. Hydrologic & hydraulic analysis
4. In-stream structures
5. Habitats & vegetation
6. Site & watershed conditions
7. Monitoring, maintenance, education



## Engineering Design: William McLemore, PE



**Priority 3:** Excavate narrow floodplain benches in confined corridor



$$ER = 1.6$$

$$W/d = 19$$

$$K = 1.2$$

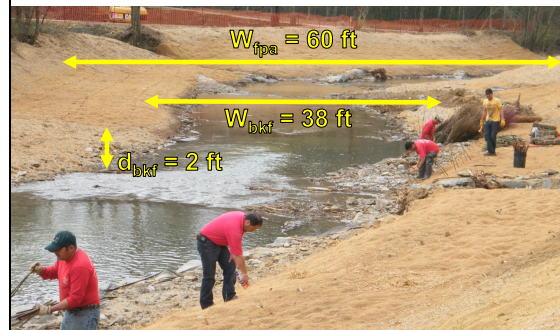
$$R_c/W = 2-3$$

Construction:  
Jan-Mar, 2010



$$\text{Entrenchment Ratio} = W_{fpa} / W_{bkf} = 60/38 = 1.6$$

$$\text{Width to depth Ratio} = W_{bkf} / d_{bkf} = 38/2 = 19$$



$$\text{Entrenchment Ratio} = W_{fpa} / W_{bkf} = 60/38 = 1.6$$



## In-Stream Structures (11): Boulder & Log

- Grade Control
- Bank Protection
- Sediment Transport
- Habitat Enhancement



### Stormwater Outfall Channels (10)

- Vegetated bio-swales (low slope)
- Rock step-pools (high slope)



### Construction Practices

- Track equipment
- Spill management plan
- Staged construction phases to limit exposure



### Temporary Erosion Control

- Soil prep, seed, straw
- Biodegradable matting (coir, 700g)
- Wood stakes



### Natural Succession



### High-stress bank after repair with coir logs



### Samford University Shades Creek (2011)





**Priority 3:** Excavate narrow floodplain benches in confined corridor



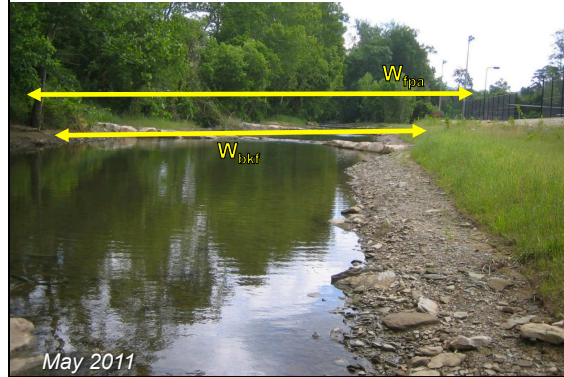
ER = 1.4  
W/d = 15  
K = 1.02  
S = 0.005

Construction:  
Jan, 2011

North State  
ENVIRONMENTAL



Entrenchment Ratio =  $W_{fpa} / W_{bkf} = 55/40 = 1.4$



May 2011

**Erosion Control:** Seed, Straw, Matting, Wood Stakes



**In-Stream Structures (10): Boulder & Log**

- Grade Control
- Bank Protection
- Sediment Transport
- Habitat



**Log Vane (Grade Control J-Hook)**

- 70-ft long log; 30-inch diameter; root wad attached
- 3 % arm slope; 20 degree angle
- Sealed with woven geotextile & backer log
- Back filled with river cobble, gravel, sand



**Log Vane (Grade Control J-Hook)**



Oct 2012

### Boulder Cross-Vanes

- 1 to 2 ton boulders; 3 % arm slope; 20 degree angle
- Throat extends through center half of channel
- Boulder footers; Sealed with non-woven geotextile
- Back filled with river cobble, gravel, sand



### Boulder Cross-Vanes

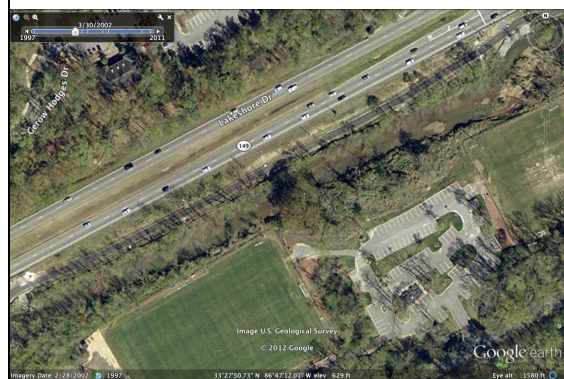


Shades Creek Flood, March 2011

March 2011

September 2011

### Samford University, Shades Creek, Feb 2002



### Samford University, Shades Creek, Aug 2011



### Floodplain Orientation:

- Straight down valley
- Consistent width to avoid contraction
- Setback from outside meander bends



### 3. Hydrologic & Hydraulic Analysis

$Q_{bkt}$ : Bankfull discharge (cfs) appropriate for watershed size, sediment transport & valley conditions

$V_{av} = Q_{bkt} / A_{bkt}$ : Bankfull average velocity (ft/s) appropriate for valley, soils, bed material

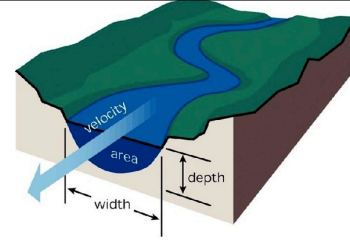
$\tau_{av}$ : Bankfull average applied shear stress (lb/ft<sup>2</sup>) & local max stresses appropriate for sediment transport conditions & bed/bank resistance

$\omega_{av}$ : Bankfull average stream power (lb/ft/s) appropriate for sediment transport conditions

Riffle substrate size distribution appropriate for hydraulic conditions & habitats

Streambank protection to resist erosion (short-term & long-term)

### Velocity & Discharge



$$Q = V A = \text{Discharge (cfs)}$$

$$V = \text{Average Velocity (ft/s)}$$

$$A = \text{Cross-Section Area (ft}^2\text{)}$$

V related to slope, channel shape, and channel roughness

Stream Corridor Restoration: Principles, Processes, and Practices. 1998. Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group.

### Manning Equation for Average Velocity

$$V = \frac{k}{n} R_h^{2/3} \cdot S^{1/2}$$

where:

$V$  is the cross-sectional average velocity (ft/s, m/s)

$k$  is a conversion constant equal to 1.486 for U.S. customary units or 1.0 for SI units

$n$  is the Gauckler-Manning coefficient (independent of units)

$R_h$  is the hydraulic radius (ft, m)

$S$  is the slope of the water surface or the linear hydraulic head loss (ft/ft, m/m) ( $S = \Delta h / L$ )

$$R_h = \frac{A}{P}$$

where:

$R_h$  is the hydraulic radius (m)

$A$  is the cross sectional area of flow (m<sup>2</sup>)

$P$  is wetted perimeter (m)



### Manning's n for Channels (Chow, 1959).

Type of Channel and Description	Minimum	Normal	Maximum
Natural streams - minor streams (top width at floodstage < 100 ft)			
<b>1. Main Channels</b>			
a. clean, straight, full stage, no rifts or deep pools	0.025	0.030	0.033
b. same as above, but more stones and weeds	0.030	0.035	0.040
c. clean, winding, some pools and shoals	0.033	0.040	0.045
d. same as above, but some weeds and stones	0.035	0.045	0.050
e. same as above, lower stages, more ineffective slopes and sections	0.040	0.048	0.055
f. same as "d" with more stones	0.045	0.050	0.060
g. sluggish reaches, weedy, deep pools	0.050	0.070	0.080
h. very weedy reaches, deep pools, or floodways with heavy stand of timber and underbrush	0.075	0.100	0.150
<b>2. Mountain streams, no vegetation in channel, banks usually steep, trees and brush along banks submerged at high stages</b>			
a. bottom: gravels, cobbles, and few boulders	0.030	0.040	0.050
b. bottom: cobbles with large boulders	0.040	0.050	0.070



"Open-Channel Hydraulics, originally published in 1959, has been described as one of the best textbooks ever written. It's clear descriptions of timeless fundamental principles make Chow a classic. Anyone wanting to learn, to teach, and to work with water and fluids must own a copy."

**Shear Stress:** fluid force per unit area acting on the channel bed

$$\tau_{av} = \gamma R S = \text{Average Shear Stress (lb/ft}^2\text{)}$$

$$\gamma = \text{Unit Weight of Water} = 62.4 \text{ lb/ft}^3$$

$$R = \text{Hydraulic Radius (ft)} = A_{bkt} / P$$

$$S = \text{Average Water Surface Slope (ft/ft)}$$

$$A_{bkt} = \text{Riffle Cross-Section Area (ft}^2\text{)}$$

$$P = \text{Wetted Perimeter (ft)} = W_{bkt} + 2 \cdot d_{bkt} \text{ (approx)}$$

**Unit Stream Power:** rate of energy loss to the channel bed per unit area

$$\omega_{av} = V \tau_{av} = \text{Average Unit Stream Power (lb/ft/s)}$$

$$V = \text{Average Velocity (ft/s)}$$

### Bankfull Conditions: Clinton Creek

$$A = 15 \text{ ft}^2$$

$$R = 1.1 \text{ ft}$$

$$S = 0.0117 \text{ ft/ft}$$

$$n = 0.040$$

$$V = 4.2 \text{ ft/s}$$

$$Q = 63 \text{ cfs}$$

$$\tau = 0.77 \text{ lb/ft}^2$$

$$\omega = 3.2 \text{ lb/ft/s}$$

$$\text{Competence} = 60\text{-}200 \text{ mm}$$



