

Restored Urban Streams: Case Studies in Science and Practice (The Science and Practice of Ecological Restoration Series)

By Ann L. Riley

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Thirty years ago, the best thinking on urban stream management prescribed cement as the solution to flooding and other problems of people and flowing water forced into close proximity. Urban streams were perceived as little more than flood control devices designed to hurry water through cities and neighborhoods with scant thought for aesthetics or ecological considerations. Stream restoration pioneers like hydrologist Ann Riley thought differently. She and other like-minded field scientists imagined that by restoring ecological function and with careful management, streams and rivers could be a net benefit to cities instead of a net liability. In the intervening decades, she has spearheaded numerous urban stream restoration projects and put to rest the long-held misconception that degraded urban streams are beyond help.

What has been missing, however, has been detailed guidance for restoration practitioners wanting to undertake similar urban stream restoration projects that worked with, rather than against, nature. This book presents the author's thirty years of practical experience managing long-term stream and river restoration projects in heavily degraded urban environments. Riley provides a level of detail only a hands-on design practitioner would know, including insights on project design, institutional and social context of successful projects, and how to avoid costly and time-consuming mistakes. Early chapters clarify terminology and review strategies and techniques from historical schools of restoration thinking. But the heart of the book is the chapters containing nine case studies of long-term stream restoration projects in northern California. Although the stories are local, the principles, methods, and tools are universal, and can be applied in almost any city in the world.

Restoration practitioners, consultants, agency personnel, and students in applied restoration courses can learn from Riley's succinct tour of restoration basics and powerful case studies, and apply them successfully in their own towns and cities.

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- Sales Rank: #5604941 in Books
- Published on: 2015-12-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .0" h x .0" w x .0" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 240 pages

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Ann L. Riley is the Watershed and Stream Protection/Restoration Advisor for the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board. Previously, she was Executive Director of the Waterways Restoration Institute, where she worked on the design and installation of stream restoration projects. She has also been involved in the evaluation of national water policy for the National Research Council, the Institute for Water Resources, and federal task forces.

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