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The Spokane River Forum is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that creates materials, events and activities that promote sustaining a healthy river system while meeting the needs of a growing population.

## Hangman Creek project shows the way for water quality and streambank restoration best practices



As we stand by Hangman Creek in the still summer air, the heat is high and the water barely moving. The stream's vertical banks offer an innocuous natural charm, adding texture to the landscape and a postcard feel to the farm that has welcomed us.

Why, then, has the Spokane Conservation District (SCD) chosen this location to remove over 12,000 yards of native soils, reshaped vertical walls into gentle slopes, and installed erosion fabric, woody debris and coarse rock materials along 3,000 feet of streambank? "It's about reducing erosion and sediment loading into the creek," said Walt Edelen, SCD's Water Resources Program Manager.

**This one-minute video** with drone footage shows the dramatic changes taking place with this stewardship project.

Come back in the spring, says Edelen, and the water will be ripping through anywhere between 6,000 and 20,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). Currently it's at about 20 cfs. The twists and turns of the creek offer ample opportunities for the confined water to beat against the banks, causing erosion and turning the creek into a chocolate milkshake that brings thousands of tons of sediment downstream each year. The sediment loading and reduced oxygen place the survival of fish, including native Redband Trout, at risk and contribute to poor water quality that

effect habitat as far downstream as Lake Spokane.

Called the "River Mile 17 Project," SCD's Senior Project Leader Dan Ross explains the bio-engineering approach used for stream re-construction. "We're slowing the water down and reducing erosion by changing the bank slope, replanting the area with native species, and using the flood plain area to naturally receive excess water rushing downstream from the spring freshet." [Read More](#)



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