Riverwalk Data Sheet

Name:_____

Completing a riverwalk assessment is one way scientists can determine the health of a river corridor. This activity focuses on assessing whether there is an appropriate habitat for trout in your local community or park.

For this activity you will need a pencil, this printed riverwalk data sheet, and a clipboard or something to write on (optional).

You will need to find a local water source, such as somewhere along the Truckee River, to complete your assessment. Once you've found an assessment spot, make a mental note of the borders of the area you will be assessing- you don't need to assess the entire river just one chunk! After you've completed your assessment, determine whether or not you think the area you assessed would be a good and/or bad habitat for rainbow trout. Why or why not?

Location:	**Date:**
Weather (*affects the flow and water clarity of the habitat*): ▢ Clear ▢ Overcast ▢ Rain ▢ Showers ▢ Storm	
River Depth (estimated):	feet
River Width (estimated):	feet
Water Clarity Description (**trout prefer cool, clear water**):	
Water Flow (check all that apply): ▢ Pools* (slow, deep water) ▢ Riffles** (shallow, fast water) ▢ Runs (deep, fast water)	
River Bottom (check the most common): *See descriptions of soil types below* ▢ Clay/Mud ▢ Cobbles (2-10 inches) ▢ Sand ▢ Boulders (over 10 inches) ▢ Gravel ▢ Bedrock (solid)	
Width of Natural Riverside Corridor[#] (estimated): Left looking downstream: _____ meters Right looking downstream: _____ meters	

Riverside Vegetation[^]:

	None/Sparse	Occasional	Common
Conifers (e.g. pine trees)	▢	▢	▢
Deciduous (e.g. elm trees)	▢	▢	▢
Small Trees and Shrubs	▢	▢	▢
Grasses	▢	▢	▢

Extent of Overhead Canopy[@]: ▢ 0-25% ▢ 26-50% ▢ 51-75% ▢ 76-100%
Presence of Logs or Large Woody Debris[%]: ▢ None ▢ Occasional ▢ Common
Presence of Organic Debris[!]: ▢ None ▢ Occasional ▢ Common
Any fish present?

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▢ No ▢ Yes
Is there any pollution present? ▢ No ▢ Yes
Adjacent Land Uses (e.g. housing, agriculture, bridges, roads, construction):
Other Comments or Observations:

*****Pools provide feeding, resting, and spawning areas for fish.
******Riffles are prefered by female rainbow trout for making their redd (gravel nest).

Silt/clay/mud: This substrate has a sticky, cohesive feeling. The particles are fine. The spaces between the particles hold a lot of water, making the sediments behave like ooze.
Sand (up to 0.1 inch): Sand is made up of tiny particles of rock. It feels soft underfoot.
Gravel (0.1–2 inches): A gravel stream bottom is made up of stones ranging from tiny quarter inch pebbles to rocks of about 2 inches. **TROUT PREFER GRAVEL**
Cobbles (2–10 inches): The majority of rocks on this type of stream bottom are between 2 and 10 inches. The average size is about that of a grapefruit.
Boulders (greater than 10 inches): Most of the rocks on the bottom will be large, greater than 10 inches.
Bedrock: This kind of stream bottom is solid rock.

#Riverside corridor, riparian area and zone of influence are terms that describe the natural vegetated area on either side of the stream. Along with the stream, that area forms the habitat of the river. It includes vegetation that shades the water, holds the soil in place, adds nutrients to the stream in the form of leaves and during flooding, and provides living quarters for streamside wildlife.

^Vegetation acts as a filter for sediment and pollution coming in from the land nearby. It provides habitat for the many creatures that are dependent on and influence the stream. Branches, logs, and leaves enter the stream from this region. Vegetation also provides shade, which keeps the water cool.

@Overhead Canopy/River Cover is the amount of vegetation that overhangs the stream. It offers protection and refuge for fish and other organisms, shades the stream and keeps the water cool, and provides ”launching” areas for insects that might fall into the river. Estimate, as best you can, about how much of the river is overhung by vegetation and whether the vegetation is grasses, shrubs, or trees.

%Logs and woody debris (not twigs and leaves) can slow or divert water to provide important fish habitat such as pools and hiding places.
!The presence of organic matter in the stream can be both good and bad. Dumped grass clippings are not good for stream health. On the other hand, naturally falling leaves and twigs can be beneficial.