

HABITAT ASSESSMENT FOR LOW GRADIENT STREAMS

	Condition Category																				
	Optimal					Suboptimal					Marginal					Poor					
1. Epifaunal Substrate /Available Cover	Greater than 50% of substrate favorable for epifaunal colonization and fish cover; mix of snags, submerged logs, undercut banks, cobble or other stable habitat and at stage to allow full colonization potential (i.e., logs/snags that are <u>not</u> new fall and <u>not</u> transient)					30-50% mix of stable habitat; well-suited for full colonization potential; adequate habitat for maintenance of populations; presence of additional substrate in the form of newfall, but not yet prepared for colonization (may rate at high end of scale).					. 10-30% mix of stable habitat; habitat availability less than desirable; substrate frequently disturbed or removed.					Less than 10% stable habitat; lack of habitat is obvious; substrate unstable or lacking.					
SCORE	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Pool Substrate Characterization	Mixture of substrate materials, with gravel and firm sand prevalent; root mats and submerged vegetation common.					Mixture of soft sand, mud, or clay; mud may be dominant; some root mats and submerged vegetation present.					All mud or clay or sand bottom; little or no root mat; no submerged vegetation.					Hard-pan clay or bedrock; no root mat or vegetation.					
SCORE	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Pool Variability	Even mix of large-shallow, large-deep, small-shallow, small-deep pools present.					Majority of pools large-deep; very few shallow.					Shallow pools much more prevalent than deep pools.					Majority of pools small-shallow or pools absent.					
SCORE:	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Sediment Deposition	Little or no enlargement of islands or point bars and less than 5% (<20% for low-gradient streams) of the bottom affected by sediment deposition.					Some new increase in bar formation, mostly from gravel, sand or fine sediment; 5-30% (20-50% for low-gradient) of the bottom affected; slight deposition in pools.					Moderate deposition of new gravel, sand or fine sediment on old and new bars; 30-50% (50-80% for low-gradient) of the bottom affected; sediment deposits at obstructions, constrictions, and bends; moderate deposition of pools prevalent.					Heavy deposits of fine material, increased bar development; more than 50% (80% for low-gradient) of the bottom changing frequently; pools almost absent due to substantial sediment deposition.					
SCORE	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Channel Flow Status	Water reaches base of both lower banks, and minimal amount of channel substrate is exposed.					Water fills >75% of the available channel; or <25% of channel substrate is exposed.					Water fills 25-75% of the available channel, and/or riffle substrates are mostly exposed.					Very little water in channel and mostly present as standing pools.					
SCORE	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Channel Alteration	Channelization or dredging absent or minimal; stream with normal pattern.					Some channelization present, usually in areas of bridge abutments; evidence of past channelization, i.e., dredging, (greater than past 20 yr) may be present, but recent channelization is not present.					Channelization may be extensive; embankments or shoring structures present on both banks; and 40 to 80% of stream reach channelized and disrupted.					Banks shored with gabion or cement; over 80% of the stream reach channelized and disrupted. In stream habitat greatly altered or removed entirely.					
SCORE	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Channel Sinuosity	The bends in the stream increase the stream length 3 to 4 times longer than if it was in a straight line. (Note - channel braiding is considered normal in coastal plains and other low-lying areas. This parameter is not easily rated in these areas.					The bends in the stream increase the stream length 2 to 3 times longer than if it was in a straight line.					The bends in the stream increase the stream length 2 to 1 times longer than if it was in a straight line.					Channel straight; waterway has been channelized for a long distance.					
SCORE	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Bank Stability (score each bank) Note: determine left or right side by facing downstream.	Banks stable; evidence of erosion or bank failure absent or minimal; little potential for future problems. <5% of bank affected.					Moderately stable; infrequent, small areas of erosion mostly healed over. 5-30% of bank in reach has areas of erosion.					Moderately unstable; 30-60% of bank in reach has areas of erosion; high erosion potential during floods.					Unstable; many eroded areas; "raw" areas frequent along straight sections and bends; obvious bank sloughing; 60-100% of bank has erosional scars.					
SCORE (LB)	Left	10	9			8	7	6			5	4	3			2	1	0			
SCORE (RB)	Right	10	9			8	7	6			5	4	3			2	1	0			
9. Bank Vegetative Protection (score each bank)	More than 90% of the streambank surfaces and immediate riparian zone covered by native vegetation, including trees, under story shrubs, or nonwoody macrophytes; vegetative disruption through grazing or mowing minimal or not evident; almost all plants allowed to grow naturally.					70-90% of the streambank surfaces covered by native vegetation, but one class of plants is not well-represented; disruption evident but not affecting full plant growth potential to any great extent; more than one-half of the potential plant stubble height remaining.					50-70% of the streambank surfaces covered by vegetation; disruption obvious; patches of bare soil or closely cropped vegetation common; less than one-half of the potential plant stubble height remaining.					Less than 50% of the streambank surfaces covered by vegetation; disruption of streambank vegetation is very high; vegetation has been removed to 5 centimeters or less in average stubble height.					
SCORE (LB)	Left	10	9			8	7	6			5	4	3			2	1	0			
SCORE (RB)	Right	10	9			8	7	6			5	4	3			2	1	0			
10. Riparian Vegetative Zone Width (score each bank riparian zone)	Width of riparian zone >18 meters; human activities (i.e., parking lots, roadbeds, clear-cuts, lawns, or crops) have not impacted zone.					Width of riparian zone 12-18 meters; human activities have impacted zone only minimally.					Width of riparian zone 6-12 meters; human activities have impacted zone a great deal.					Width of riparian zone <6 meters; little or no riparian vegetation due to human activities.					
SCORE (LB)	Left	10	9			8	7	6			5	4	3			2	1	0			
SCORE (RB)	Right	10	9			8	7	6			5	4	3			2	1	0			

HABITAT SCORE

HABITAT SCORES	VALUE
OPTIMAL	160 – 200
SUB-OPTIMAL	110 – 159
MARGINAL	60 – 109
POOR	< 60