

The River Ecosystem

The San Lorenzo River runs through City of Santa Cruz between two levees. Levees are large walls constructed to prevent the river from flooding when it rains. Within this human-made channel is a thriving river ecosystem. Plants provide food and shelter to birds, fish, bugs and other wildlife. Learn about some of the plants that you can find by the San Lorenzo River:

Gumweed



In the sunflower family, gumweed's yellow flowers attract butterflies and pollinators. Gumweed is a natural remedy to treat poison oak burn.

Willows



Willows are tall shrubs that grow along the river. Their branches grow over the water, providing shade to keep the water cool and a buffet of falling insects for fish to eat.

Tule

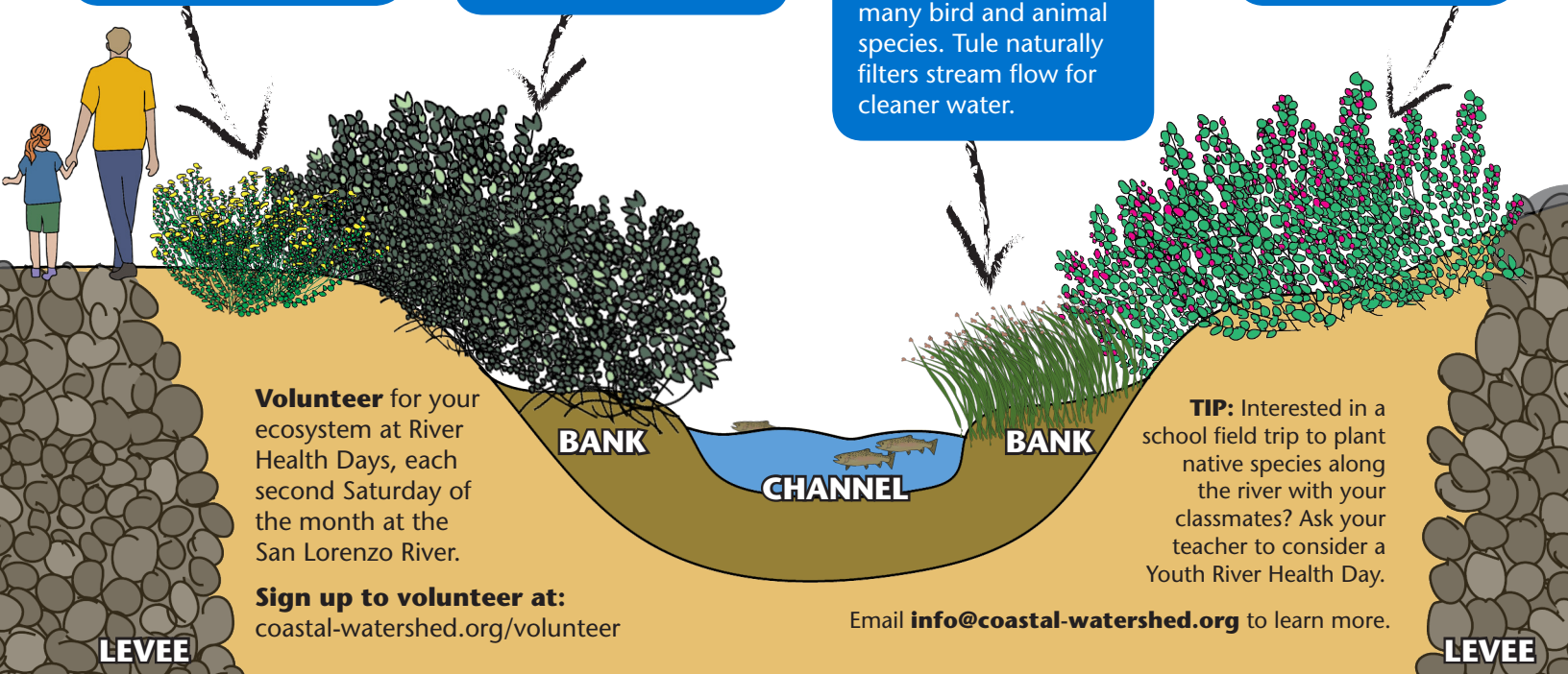


Tule grows as tall bunches of stems along the river. They are an essential habitat for many bird and animal species. Tule naturally filters stream flow for cleaner water.

Wild Rose



This wild rose is a favorite food of butterflies, bees and birds.



How do plants help the river ecosystem?

Name the plant(s) that provides each ecosystem benefit:

1. Shade to keep the water cool: _____
2. Food for pollinators: _____
3. Helps keep water clean: _____