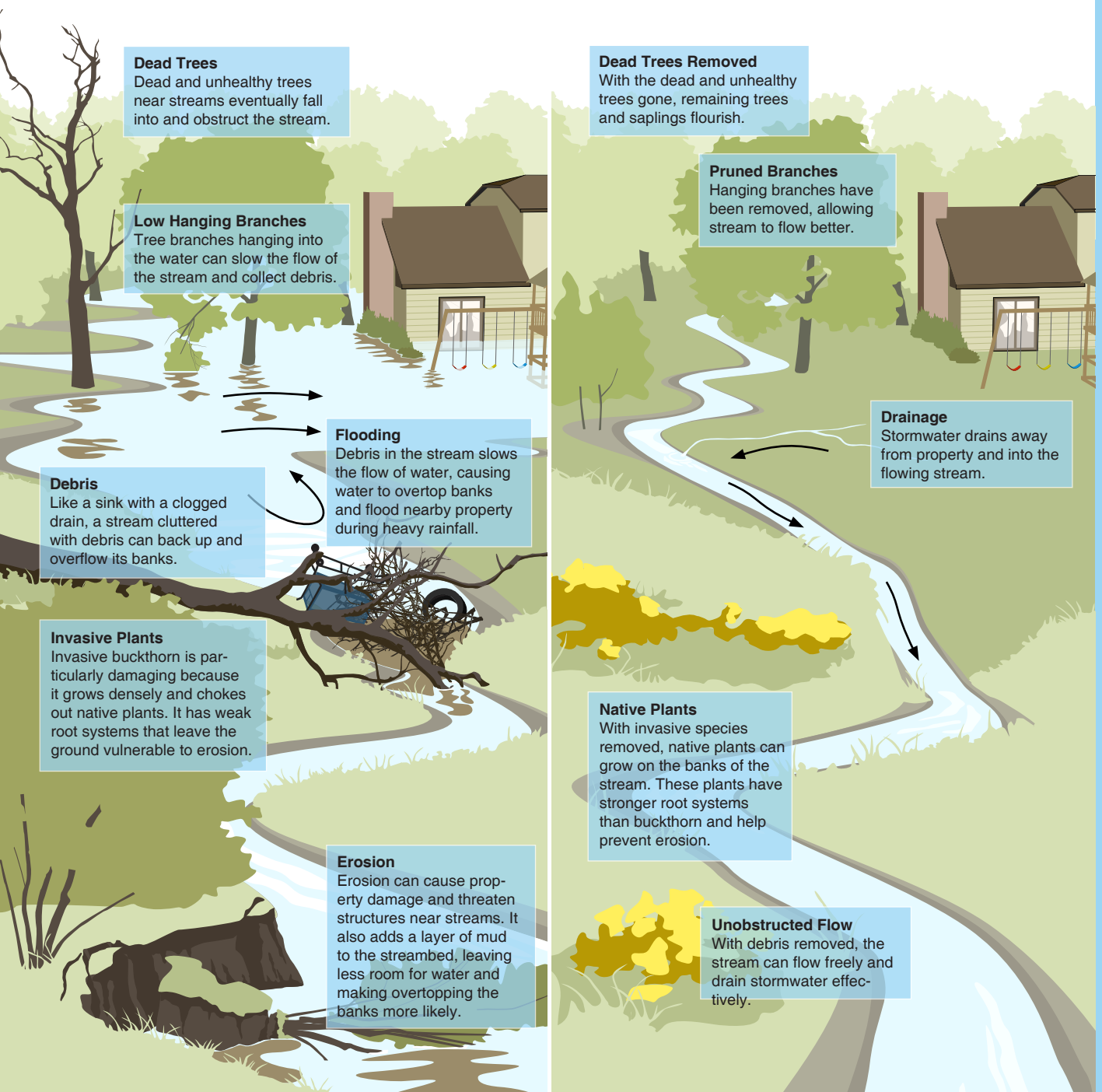
# Before

# After




# Stream Maintenance Prevents Flooding

The stream that flows through your neighborhood is more than just a scenic part of the landscape or a habitat for wildlife. It serves the vital function of draining stormwater and preventing flooding. In order to function effectively, the stream must be maintained.

The Chicago region is so flat that our streams tend to move slowly and are naturally prone to flooding. Many areas that are now developed were originally uninhabited muddy marshes with meandering streams that often overtopped their banks. As the region was built up, our creeks and streams were deepened and enlarged to drain water and to prevent flooding.

The MWRD's SSMP works to keep our streams functioning by removing debris that can restrict their flow.

Minor blockages can build up quickly in heavy rains, as floating debris piles up and creates a dam. In our flat landscape, obstructions in one spot can contribute to flooding far upstream.

## Thinking Ahead

Besides removing existing blockages, our crews and engineers also work to identify and fix potential problems before they can cause flooding. Dead and dying trees, which can eventually fall into streams and cause blockages, are removed from the banks. Harmful invasive plant species are also removed. Buckthorn is particularly harmful and thrives in our climate. It chokes out native plants and has weak root systems, leaving the ground vulnerable to erosion.