Messy Rivers are Healthy Rivers: The Implications of Physical Complexity in Mountainous Headwater Streams

I examine factors that create physical complexity, and the implications of complexity for habitat abundance and diversity, sensitivity and resilience to disturbances, retention of water, sediment and nutrients, and connectivity within the riverine system and landscape. Effective river restoration involves characterizing natural complexity, understanding its effects on ecosystem function, and assessing the degree to which it can be restored.

Ellen Wohl received BS (Arizona State University) and PhD (University of Arizona) degrees in geology before joining the faculty at Colorado State University, where she is now a professor. She is a fellow of the American Geophysical Union and the Geological Society of America, and has published more than 160 articles and several books on her work. She has conducted field work on every continent except Antarctica.