

CREEK & WATERSHED MAP of South San Jose

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This map shows the current waterways of the South San Jose area, including the creek and storm drain network and present-day watershed boundaries. Also shown are the historical creeks, freshwater marshes, and lagoons. Many of these historical water features no longer exist. Development resulted in the construction of underground culverts and engineered channels, the draining of marshes, and construction of reservoirs.

Canals, built in the mid 1900's to transport water long distances from reservoirs to groundwater recharge ponds and irrigation ditches, have largely been abandoned; their remnants now catch and divert local runoff.

Notes: The map shows creeks and engineered channels having a minimum of 0.2 square kilometers of watershed, and storm drains 24 inches or greater in diameter. Smaller features are not shown. Engineered channels include both natural creeks significantly reinforced by concrete or rocks and artificial channels not coincident with a natural or historical creek.

Accuracy: Every effort was made to produce an accurate map. However, no map is completely accurate and all lines should be considered approximate. There is error in the historical maps, in the transfer of historical information to modern maps, and in the modern maps themselves. In addition, natural shifting of creeks and fluctuations in the extent of marshes and lagoons can be expected both before and after the historical maps or photos were made. Marsh and lagoon boundaries are considered accurate to within 1000 feet on either side of the line shown. Former creek locations are accurate to within 200 feet. Present-day creek and storm drain locations are considered accurate to within 100 feet on either side of the line shown.

How this map was made: Storm drains, engineered channels, flood-control channels, and present-day creeks were compiled from city and county data, 2001 aerial photography, and field inspection. The historical locations of creeks were interpreted from 1939 aerial photography, and historical maps. Complete documentation can be obtained from Janet Sowers at William Lettis & Associates, Inc. in Walnut Creek, or www.museumca.org/creeks. The base map (showing present geographic features) was prepared by the U. S. Geological Survey. We added major new roads and highways.

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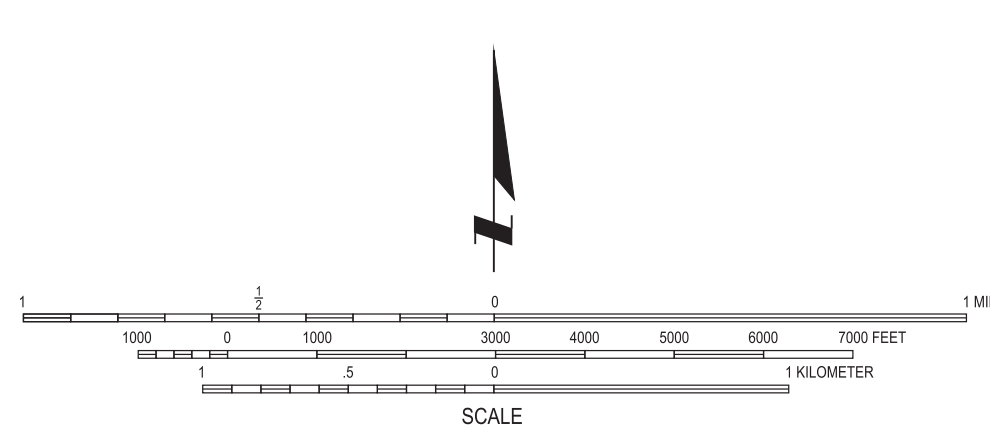
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EXPLANATION

Creeks	Water spreads over the ground
Former creeks, buried or drained where approximately located	Fresh water marsh, circa 1850
Underground culverts & storm drains	Freshwater marsh, modern
Engineered channels	Lake, circa 1850
	Artificial bodies of water
	Present watersheds



POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1. Blossom Hill Park.** Ross Creek flows through this popular city park, but you will have to make a special effort to see it. The main branch of the creek is buried in a culvert beneath the park. East Ross Creek, however, is open and fairly natural as it crosses beneath the bridge under Shannon Road. Walk to the northeast corner of the park and peer through the fence to see where East Ross Creek joins the main fork then flows north in a concrete channel.
- 2. Belgaotes Park.** Lone Hill Creek begins here on the flank of Blossom Hill above the Los Gatos city park. An oak-shaded trail follows the west branch of the creek, then makes a series of switchbacks up the canyon through an open-space preserve to the top of the ridge. Notice how the appearance of the creek changes as you ascend. Can you find the beginning of the creek? (Hint: look between the end of the mapped blue line and the ridge.)
- 3. Guadalupe Creek Restoration Project.** This reach of creek along Coleman Avenue is the subject of a comprehensive stream restoration effort by the Santa Clara Valley Water District. The project is designed to create habitat for steelhead and prevent bank erosion using natural stabilization techniques. Look for timber walls, large rocks, and new plantings of shade trees. Many large sycamores, recognized by their whitish bark, still grace the banks of the creek.
- 4. McAbee Creek.** Hike the trail along McAbee Creek toward the Senador Mine, an abandoned mercury mine in Almaden Quicksilver County Park. Interpretive signs just past the bridge tell the story of the mine. At the bridge, look beneath for signs of winter flows, such as piles of debris caught on the fence. If you visit in the summer, the creek will probably be dry.
- 5. Alamos Groundwater Recharge Ponds.** Next door to the Santa Clara Valley Water District headquarters, water in these ponds slowly percolates down to fill groundwater aquifers. From the District parking lot, walk north between ponds along a paved trail, where information benches tell the story of the ponds. Stop at the overlook to see the dam that backs up the water in the former Guadalupe Creek channel. The concrete structure on the opposite bank is a fish ladder accommodating the migration of steelhead. To

- 6. Almaden Lake Park.** This city park surrounds a large lake that was once a gravel quarry. Filled by Alamos Creek, Almaden Lake offers picnicking, swimming, bird watching, and boating. Follow the Los Alamos / Calero Trail under the bridge to the confluence of Alamos Creek and Guadalupe Creek. Because Alamos Creek drains the New Almaden mining district, the sediments filling the lake are rich in mercury and fish caught there are not safe to eat.
- 7. Guadalupe Creek.** Take a hike high in the headwaters of the Guadalupe River. This trail leads you along the creek following the bottom of a steep-sided canyon. Typical of headwater streams, the creek bed is cut into bedrock. The water flows gaily over cataraacts and small waterfalls.
- 8. Canoas Creek.** Through this neighborhood, Canoas Creek is an engineered channel built to carry urban runoff. Historically, the creek originated at the marsh shown in green at the north edge of the map and then flowed north to join the Guadalupe River in downtown San Jose. Canoas Creek was first extended southward as a ditch to drain the marsh for agriculture, and then, as urbanization brought the need for more drainage, the channel was enlarged and extended.
- 9. Coyote-Alamos Canal Park.** The Coyote-Alamos Canal, built in 1953 to carry water from Coyote Canal Extension to percolation ponds on Alamos Creek, runs through this undeveloped city park. Now abandoned for that purpose, the old canal intercepts some runoff from the hillside above it. Most hillside creeks cross the canal in pipes. However, if a creek floods, water overflows the catch basin for the pipe and spills into the canal. Between creeks, the canal intercepts runoff flowing down the hillside. Thus, this hillside area mostly drains to the Canoas Creek watershed, however especially during floods, some water will flow into the canal then to Almaden Lake in the Alamos Creek watershed.
- 10. Randol Creek.** This tributary to Alamos Creek bears the name of a president of the Almaden Quicksilver Mining Company. Here the creek occupies an engineered channel, designed to provide some natural habitat, and at the same time control flooding and erosion. Concrete grade control

- 11. Almaden Quicksilver County Park.** Step back in time to the 1800s mining town of New Almaden along the banks of Alamos Creek. The New Almaden Mine extracted rich deposits of cinnabar, an ore of mercury, or quicksilver, used in gold mining. Park at the trailhead and hike up Mine Hill, or visit the museum at the Casa Grande in town. Because of the mercury contamination in the stream sediments, fish caught from nearby streams or reservoirs should not be eaten.
- 12. Calero Creek Trail.** From Harry Road, hike east or west along the creek and enjoy beautiful views of large oak trees shading Arroyo Calero. This trail is a branch of the 3.6-mile Los Alamos / Calero Creek Trail, which begins at Almaden Lake to the north.
- 13. Santa Teresa Springs.** An Ohlone legend credits a female spirit dressed in black robes for creating this spring that saved a nearby village from sickness. Early Spanish explorers presumed the spirit of the legend to be Santa Teresa de Avila and so named the spring. The Bernal Ranch, established in 1626, relied on this spring water for drinking, livestock watering, and irrigation. Later, in the early 1900s, the water was considered so healthful the Bernal family bottled and sold it in San Jose. Today, the spring discharges about five gallons per minute into an artificial pool overlooked by a viewing platform on the park trail. Remnants of an altar, which once held a statue of Santa Teresa are visible to the left of the arched spring.
- 14. Laurel Canyon Nature Trail.** A short hike along the south side of the Coyote-Alamos Canal from Bernal Road leads you to the mouth Laurel Canyon in Santa Teresa County Park. The trail turns up the canyon to follow the creek and passes signs naming the major trees and bushes. You may well see soil disturbance from roosting by feral pigs, a common problem in this watershed. Within one-quarter mile, the trail reaches a shaded rocky rock that in wet winters hosts a lovely waterfall.

- 15. Calero Reservoir.** Built in 1935, this reservoir impounds the water of Arroyo Calero, also known as Calero Creek, and can receive additional water from Almaden Reservoir via a canal. Its primary purpose is the gradual release of water throughout the year to fill the percolation ponds downstream, thus recharging the groundwater of the basin. In addition, it provides some domestic water supply.
- 16. Calero County Park.** Hike the headwaters of Arroyo Calero in this expansive county park. Open only to hikers and equestrians, the park offers many miles of quiet trails, perfect for nature study. All the areas you see between the grassy hills nearest the reservoir and the forested ridges to the south drains into Calero Reservoir. Visit during a heavy rainstorm to see hydrology in action. At first, water may disappear as the dry soil gulps it up. Once the soil is saturated, excess water will begin to run off the surface. Follow a ridgetop on its downhill journey to see where it goes.
- 17. Coyote Creek Trail at Metcalf Park.** Hike, bike, or ride your horse along the Coyote Creek Trail. Metcalf Park provides access either north or south to fifteen miles of paved trails along the creek. The adjacent Coyote Percolation Pond, filled by Coyote Creek, allows water to percolate down and recharge the groundwater. The trail provides a good view of Coyote Percolation Dam, a steel-lined dam built in 1935 that can be removed to pass high flows. The curved fish ladder, built in 1995, allows fish to swim upstream around the dam.
- 18. Laguna Seca.** The name means dry lake and, depending on what time of year you visit, it may or may not be dry. In the winter, runoff from large storms fills the groundwater basin and the laguna has standing water. A ditch drains excess water from the laguna into Fisher Creek. In the summer, the laguna dries to a marshy flat. There were once other similar marshes in the basin, but most have been drained and covered with buildings and streets.

- 19. Coyote Ridge.** This long ridge that bounds the east side of the valley is the location of focused efforts to preserve natural habitats within the watershed. A special habitat underlain by soils derived from serpentine bedrock, the ridge is home to the bay checkerspot butterfly, which feeds only on plants that grow in serpentine soils. See this greenish gray rock with shiny faces in the road cuts in Metcalf Canyon.
- 20. Coyote Canal at Twin Pipes.** Built in 1936, this canal originally carried water from Anderson Lake (located off the map southeast on Coyote Creek) to fill percolation ponds and irrigation ditches as far away as Almaden Lake and Evergreen Valley. Water was deliberately routed around Coyote Valley to keep groundwater levels there from becoming too high. With its destruction canals now abandoned, the Coyote Canal now delivers water only as far as Twin Pipes, located at the entrance to the Field Sports Park on Metcalf Road. Here the canal splits into two pipes under the road – a western canal, which delivers water back to Coyote Creek for groundwater recharge, and an eastern canal, called the Coyote Canal Extension, which is now abandoned.
- 21. Coyote Canal Stream Crossing.** During the winter when the canal is not in use, the storm flows from small streams that cross the canal generally go into the canal through opened valves and continue on their way. If the valves are closed or plugged with sediment, water will flow down the canal until it reaches another open valve. The canal also collects winter runoff from the hillside, which in like manner will flow down the canal to an open valve.
- 22. Fisher Creek.** Fisher Creek drains the low hills on the south side of Coyote Valley and is quite small compared to Coyote Creek. Fisher Creek did not historically connect with Coyote Creek. Instead, it split into multiple channels (green, forked symbol on the map) and spread out northwest into the low part of Coyote Valley. In large floods, the water from Fisher Creek would make its way across this low area (dashed green line), through the gap in the hills (solid green line) and into Laguna Seca marsh where it would slowly evaporate. To drain agricultural fields, farmers dug a network of channels (red lines) connecting Fisher Creek to Coyote Creek.