CREEK & WATERSHED MAP
of the
Pleasanton & Dublin Area

By Janet M. Sowers, William Lettis & Associates, Inc.

This map shows the current waterways of the Pleasanton and Dublin area, including the creek and storm-drain network and present-day watershed boundaries. It also shows the historical creeks, and the willow marsh and lagoon of former Tulare Lake. In the valley floor, most of these historical features have disappeared. Development has resulted in the construction of culverts and engineered channels, and the draining of the marsh and lagoon.

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 creeks, channels, and storm drains are not shown. Where the entire creek flow is carried by a culvert buried in a former creek bed, only the culvert symbol (red dots) is shown on the map.

How this map was made: Storm drains, engineered channels, present-day creeks, and water bodies were compiled from city and county maps, 1996 and 1999 aerial photography, and field inspection. The historical locations of creeks were compiled primarily from 1939 and 1949 aerial photography. The boundary of the willow marsh of Tulare Lake is taken from the *1874 Official Map of Alameda County* by G. F. Allardt. The 1867 boundary of the lagoon was taken from a 1912 report to the City of San Francisco by Cyril Williams. Complete documentation can be obtained from Janet Sowers at William Lettis & Associates, Inc. in Walnut Creek, or www.museumca.org/creeks/pleasantondoc.html. The base map (showing present geographic features) was prepared in 1980 by the U. S. Geological Survey. Major new roads were added using data obtained from the cities.

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 or, if dashed, to within 500 feet on either side of the line shown. Present-day creek and storm-drain locations are considered accurate to within 100 feet on either side of the line shown.

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POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Forest Home Farm. Oak Creek was an important asset to this historical farm, recently donated to the City of San Ramon by the Boone family who owned it since 1900. The city is restoring the farm and plans to open it to the public in 2004. It will be a working farm with activities, demonstrations, tours, and a creekside picnic area.

2. San Ramon Creek at the Iron Horse Trail. From Alcosta Boulevard, walk south on the Iron Horse Trail, which follows the abandoned grade of the Southern Pacific Railroad. South San Ramon Creek is on your left and although not a natural channel (compare to green lines on map), the creek provides excellent habitat for waterfowl. Stop at the footbridge for a good view.

3. Alamo Creek Park. Alamo Creek makes a wide bend around this city park, providing opportunities for viewing this beautiful natural section of creek. Similar meander bends upstream and downstream were filled in (green lines) and rechanneled (red lines) when residential development took place. The new channels were revegetated to match the natural channel. Can you tell the difference?

4. Tassajara Creek Regional Park. This small park is a great spot for bird watching, with American Kestrels, White-tailed Kites, Western Scrub Jays, and other species. A quaint wooden bridge spans Tassajara Creek, with large oak and willow trees providing shade for the views up and downstream of this natural creek reach.

5. Shannon Park. Koopman Canyon Creek is a central feature in this community park. Look for native riparian species and birds in this tree-shaded reach. Downstream from the last bridge, the tree canopy opens up and the creek flows through a sunny marshland before entering a canal. The canal then flows into a storm drain underneath San Ramon Road.

6. Martin Canyon Creek Trail. From Silvergate Drive, walk upstream on the south bank along a newly restored reach of Martin Canyon Creek. The City of Dublin has established a graded trail, 0.6 miles long, with excellent views of the meandering creek and good shade from oak and bay trees. Revegetation efforts are in progress, so be mindful of new plantings and flagged areas.

7. Alamilla Spring. This natural spring, located near the historical marker on San Ramon Boulevard, was the site of the 1826 home of Jose Maria Amador, the first settler in this valley. Look for an elongated pond lined with cattails and covered with bright green duckweed on the grounds of the apartment complex.

8. Tassajara Creek Project. This project illustrates a current approach to flood control. The natural creek was left alone as much as possible but the flood plain was widened to contain flood flows. Native vegetation was planted to enhance wildlife habitat. Hike the Tassajara Creek Trail from Dublin Boulevard north to Gleason.

9. Disappearing Creeks. Not all creeks drain to other bodies of water. Here in the Livermore-Amador Valley, many of the creeks emerge from the canyons onto the flatlands and disappear! On the flatlands the creek channel divides into many small channels called distributaries. There the water soaks into the ground and the water-borne sediment is dropped. Thick deposits of this sediment underlie the valley floor.

10. Moller Ranch Trails. From the upper trailhead parking lot, a steep, narrow trail descends into a beautiful little canyon shaded by bay trees. This tributary to Gold Creek is in a virtually undisturbed condition -- a real treat!

11. Moller Park. Gold Creek, the central feature of this shaded city park, heads in the hills to the east, where in 1871, a man prospecting for coal found a gold nugget . This "find" inspired a brief but unprofitable gold rush. The name Gold Creek stuck, however.

12. Arroyo Mocho Trail at Hopyard Road. This point is the approximate center of the old lagoon, *Tulare Lake*, which once occupied the center of the Amador Valley. Channels such as this one were originally dug to drain the lagoon for farming, then later enlarged to provide flood protection for the rapidly urbanizing valley. Although the lagoon is gone, the old marsh clays still crack and heave causing damage to streets and houses in the neighborhood.

13. Arroyo Mocho Trail at Santa Rita Road. This point is very close to the edge of the old lagoon and marsh. The original Arroyo Mocho channel did not reach this spot (see green lines on map); most of the water sank into the ground before it reached the lagoon. During floods, the channel split into distributaries that dropped sediment in finger-like lobes on the flat valley floor.

14. Chain of Lakes. Lake I is a former gravel mining pit, one of a series of abandoned pits that will soon be sites for water storage and groundwater recharge. Beginning in 2003, Zone 7 Water Agency will release water from the South Bay Aqueduct and convey it down the Arroyo Mocho channel. This water will be diverted into Lakes H and I where it will soak into the ground, recharging the groundwater basin.

15. Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreation Area. The Livermore-Amador Valley is a geologically subsiding (gradually sinking) valley, which, over thousands of years, is slowly filling with sediment eroded from the surrounding hills. Gravel deposits average 400 feet thick in the center of the valley. This popular swimming and fishing hole was an active gravel quarry in the 1950s and 1960s. It has been a regional park since 1971. Visitors pay a small entrance fee.

16. Levee Trail at Shadow Cliffs. Running along the top of a levee that was built to keep Arroyo Valle away from the gravel pits, this trail offers a panoramic view of the quarries and the arroyo. The arroyo itself was the site of considerable gravel mining in the 1950s and 1960s. Now, with its bed dug out and its flow controlled by the Del Valle dam upstream, this chain of ponds bears little resemblance to the original creek. However, 30 years of idleness have allowed a lush wetland community to flourish.

17. Bernal Well Field. The thick, gravelly and sandy deposits of Arroyo Valle store abundant high-quality groundwater which has been pumped up for drinking water since the 1880s. Wells in this field still serve residents of Castlewood. From the early 1900s to 1949, water from this field was pumped south to the Sunol Water Temple and from there to the City of San Francisco!

18. Gaging Station on Arroyo Valle. Visible from Division Street, a small wooden shed houses a gaging station where water flow and water quality data are collected by Zone 7 Water Agency. Beneath the shed, an electrical conduit runs down into the water to instruments that take measurements and send the data back up to a computer. Walk east along the paved trail to a kiosk that presents flow data for several gaging stations. A significant proportion of the water released from Del Valle reservoir sinks into the ground water basin before reaching this station. In the summer months the creek at this station may be dry.

19. Wayside Park. Kottinger Creek, also known as St. Mary's Creek, emerges from beneath First Street to flow through this strip park along the railroad track in downtown Pleasanton. Though not in its natural channel, the creek has flowed here along the railroad track since at least 1887, the date on the Angela Street Bridge.

20. Kottinger Park. Kottinger Creek is the centerpiece of this city park. Large trees, including oak, willow, cottonwood, and eucalyptus provide shade for a paved trail along the creek. Cattails line the creek bed for much of its course. The original meanders of the creek, visible on 1939 aerial photos, have been straightened and a landscaped lawn added.

21. Ponds Along Hearst Drive. During construction of this neighborhood, parts of Kottinger Creek were filled in and replaced by underground storm drains. These two marshy ponds represent tributary areas that were left to function as detention basins, where floodwaters could rise and be slowly be released downstream into Kottinger Creek. Both ponds also provide wildlife habitat.

22. Sycamore Creek. The channel here is an artificial one constructed when the creek was relocated to build the adjacent subdivision. Over the next several years watch this channel take on a more natural appearance as the creek begins to sculpt its bed.

23. Verona Bridge. No longer used by cars, this historical truss bridge arches over Arroyo de la Laguna (Creek from the Lagoon). Although the lagoon is now drained, the runoff from the entire Livermore-Amador Valley and surrounding hills still flows beneath your feet. The stream meanders between alternating gravel bars that were deposited in recent floods. Note the vertical bank on the southeast side where erosion exposes colorful layers of sediment that were deposited by the creek thousands of years ago.

24. Oak Tree Trail. Park here for access to the extensive trails of Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park. A 1.2-mile hike will take you to the top of the ridge for a superb view of the valley. The trail follows the ridge north for 2.7 miles, then descends 0.9 miles to Sinbad Creek. From here, walk, bicycle, or ride a horse 3.8 miles up the creek to its headwaters.

25. Niles Canyon. The master stream for eastern Alameda County, Alameda Creek has carved this spectacular, deep canyon through the hills. Each year winter floods laden with sediment course through the canyon on the way to San Francisco Bay. Drive your car through the canyon, or enjoy a round-trip excursion from Sunol to Niles on the historic Niles Canyon Railway. Steelhead trout from the ocean once made a similar trip until artificial barriers in the channel prevented their passage. Barriers are now being removed in hopes that the fish will return.

26. Sunol Water Temple. Built in 1911, this Greek-style temple celebrates the bringing of drinking water to San Francisco. Inside the temple, visitors could see the water from gravels beneath Alameda Creek (lower level) mixed with water piped from the Bernal well field (upper level), and from there delivered to San Francisco. See Point # 17.

EXPLANATION

Creeks
- forked where channel disappears on alluvial slope

Former creeks, buried or drained
- dashed where exact location is uncertain

Underground culverts & storm drains

Engineered channels

Tulare Lake:

Willow marsh, 1874 boundary

Lagoon, 1867 boundary

Artificial bodies of water

Present watersheds draining to the bay

Present watersheds draining into the ground

1 ½ 0 1 MILE
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 .5 0 1 KILOMETER
SCALE