

- POINTS OF INTEREST
1. **Heritage Oak Park.** Permanente Creek flows through this park shaded by a canopy of oak, bay, California buckeye, and walnut trees. Notice that within the natural channel is an old dam. Flashboards could be inserted to regulate the depth of water behind the dam.

2. **Permanente Creek Diversion Channel.** Permanente Creek occupies a concrete engineered channel for about 1000 feet north of Portland Avenue. Because of repeated flooding from winter storms, the Santa Clara Valley Water District engineered this segment of the natural creek channel in 1959. Flooding persisted and in the 1960's the District built the diversion channel to carry floodwater from Permanente Creek one mile east to Stevens Creek. Low flows continue down Permanente Creek.

3. **Stevens Creek Trail and Mountain View High School.** One day the Stevens Creek Trail will extend from Shoreline Park and the Bay Trail all the way to Mountain View High School. Northern portions are complete; construction on the southern portions of the trail should start in the summer of 2006. When finished, Mountain View High School will be the southern-most trailhead for this popular creekside trail. Notice that the map shows an old distributary channel less than half a mile southeast of the high school where Stevens Creek overtopped its banks during a flood.

4. **Stevens Creek and Fremont Avenue.** The Fremont Avenue Bridge is a wonderful place to appreciate a relatively undisturbed section of Stevens Creek. From the bridge, look closely for fish in the creek. Stevens Creek is one of the few in the South Bay that supports steelhead trout. The lush vegetation and large trees that line the creek provide shade that keeps water temperatures cool.

5. **Permanente Creek Trail.** The Permanente Creek Trail is a popular trail that follows the creek through Rancho San Antonio County Park. The park hosts a wide variety of habitat ranging from mixed riparian to coastal woodland. Explore this habitat on over 20 miles of hiking trails accessible from the park, including the Bay Area Ridge Trail, the Black Mountain Trail, Wildcat Canyon Trail, and many other trails in the Midpeninsula Open Space District. A short hike along the Coyote or Lower Meadow Trail will take you to Deer Hollow Farm, a working homestead and educational center. A slightly longer hike (2.1 miles) along the Chimney Trail will take you to Duveneck windmill pasture, an open grassy area perfect for a picnic.

6. **McClellan Ranch Park.** Located along the banks of Stevens Creek, this park has a very nice interpretive trail that follows the creek. This park is a wonderful place for birding. Along the trail look for chestnut-backed chickadees, bushitts, or acorn woodpeckers. Trail guides available at the Audubon Society office describe the natural history, the natural habitat, and the native animals of the area. In 1776, Don Juan Bautista De Anza named the creek Arroyo de San Joseph de Cupertino. It was later renamed after Captain Elisha Stephens, who settled along the bank of the creek in 1855.

7. **Stevens Creek Reservoir and Stevens Creek County Park.** Completed in 1935, Stevens Creek dam was one of eight dams in the Santa Clara Valley built in the 1930s and 1950s to impound and store winter storm water. During dry seasons, water is slowly released into Stevens Creek and diverted to McClellan percolation ponds. The county park that surrounds the reservoir contains miles of trails open to hikers, bikers, and equestrians. Natural meadows in the water may make fish unsafe to eat, so check with the park personnel for local fishing recommendations.

8. **Jollyman Park.** What you see, or more importantly, don't see in this park is an example of the city's urbanization has brought to the natural environment. In 1939, Regnart Creek flooded through the park then soaked into the porous alluvial soil of the flatlands well before reaching Calabazas Creek. Presently, the creek is in an underground pipe through the park and connects to Calabazas Creek via an engineered channel.

9. **Prospect Creek.** A natural reach of Prospect Creek passes beneath Prospect Road. Notice the thick oak canopy, which prevents growth of smaller plants on the forest floor and shades the creek allowing for cooler water temperatures that support aquatic species. The creek makes a small meander bend here which through time may shift position as erosion cuts into the outer bank and sediment builds up on the inside of the bend. A trail bridge that crosses Prospect Creek south of the road provides a good vantage to view the riparian habitat.

10. **Creekside Park.** Along the western edge of Creekside Park is a natural reach of Calabazas Creek. From the small footbridge on the western side of the park, notice the thick vegetation lining the side of the creek. Vegetation that is too thick can slow down water flow and increase the likelihood of flooding. For this reason, the Santa Clara Valley Water District regularly removes obstructing vegetation. However, some vegetation helps to prevent bank erosion and to provide shade and wildlife habitat. On the north side of the footbridge, notice the concrete channel of Regnart Creek joining Calabazas Creek.

11. **Calabazas Creek and Miller Road.** In the 1980s, flooding overtopped this bridge across Calabazas Creek. In 1998, the Santa Clara Valley Water District re-engineered the creek under the bridge to handle larger flows. The district installed several benches inscribed with information that describes past flooding and how engineered improvements will reduce future flooding.

12. **Junipero Serra Channel.** This engineered drainage channel collects storm water from the striped watershed area. Unlike other watersheds that flow to a single creek or channel, a double-pipe diversionary structure located south of Highway 280 splits the channel flow so that equal portions flow north to the Sunnyvale East Channel and Sunnyvale West Channel (on the next map to the north) were dug to carry storm water to the bay. Recently, several hundred feet of the channel's eroded earthen banks required repair near Braly Park.

13. **Braly Park.** Sunnyvale East Channel borders the west side of this park and Braly Elementary School. Historically, there were no creeks in this part of the valley between Calabazas Creek and Stevens Creek. To prevent flooding of this poorly drained area, Sunnyvale East Channel, and Sunnyvale West Channel (on the next map to the north) were dug to carry storm water to the bay. Recently, several hundred feet of the channel's eroded earthen banks required repair near Braly Park.

14. **Bracher Park.** Historically the channels of San Tomas Aquino and Saratoga Creeks did not join. Both creeks soaked into the porous alluvial soil one-half mile south of El Camino Real in Santa Clara (see map). Farther downstream near Bracher Park, the water reemerged from a single spring feeding San Tomas Aquino Creek and flowing to the bay. This sinking and reemerging is common in Santa Clara Valley creeks. Prior to 1939, the channels of these creeks were dug across the sinking reaches to reduce flooding.

15. **Homestead Park.** Gabions, wire mesh containers filled with large rocks, line the banks of Saratoga Creek near Homestead Park. Gabions are designed to prevent bank erosion and allow some creekside vegetation to grow between the rocks.

16. **Maywood Park.** Saratoga Creek flows along the northwest side of the park in a natural channel that is accessible from Pruneridge Boulevard. Notice that the creek channel has a wide, coarse-gravel bed here. Past high-flow episodes brought the gravel from upstream. Future high flows will move this gravel further downstream, and replace it with more gravel from upstream. The thick canopy of riparian vegetation along the banks of the creek provides a nice shady spot for wildlife watching.

17. **Murdock Park.** Located along the natural banks of Saratoga Creek, the park is a trailhead for the Saratoga Creek Trail, which follows the creek for 2.3 miles between Bollinger Road and English Road.

18. **Starbird Park.** San Tomas Aquino Creek flows in a trapezoidal engineered channel along the eastern side of the park. From McCoy Avenue across the flat lands to the bay, engineered channels and underground culverts have entirely replaced the natural channel of San Tomas Aquino Creek. Historically and immediately south of the park, San Tomas Aquino soaked into the porous alluvial soil and then reemerged down slope. This feature appeared on an 1878 map of Santa Clara County. See forked symbols on map.

19. **Rodeo Creek and Sumner Drive.** This site beautifully illustrates how many creeks, which flow here only seasonally, support a lush riparian habitat including California buckeye, live oak, and cottonwood trees. Notice the concrete grade-control structures in the creek channel. These structures were intended to prevent channel erosion and keep the bottom of Wildcat Creek at its current elevation.

20. **Saratoga Springs.** This resort and campground, located within the headwaters of Saratoga Creek, lies on a historic site. Here in 1847, William Campbell established the first water-powered sawmill in Santa Clara County. Then, in the late nineteenth century, R.V. Smith built a saloon, hotel, and picnic grounds. Local residents frequented to escape the summer heat. Saratoga Springs is nestled in the steep-sided valley created by Saratoga Creek. Notice the large boulders in the creek, which probably tumbled or slid down from the valley walls. Eventually, weathering will break down the rocks into pieces small enough for the stream to carry away. There is a fee to park.

21. **Wildwood Park.** Located on Saratoga Creek, this park is just a short walk from downtown Saratoga and features lush vegetation along the banks of this natural creek. The town of Saratoga was so named, in 1885, because of the similarity of the water in a mineral spring in Congress Springs Canyon upstream from the 1939 aerial photographs show this creek ending a short distance past this point, soaking into the alluvial soil.

22. **La Rinconada Park.** This park is located along the banks of Smith Creek. At the northern end of the park is Vasona Canal. From 1936 to 1969, the canal diverted water from Vasona Reservoir to irrigate local orchards and add recharge water to San Tomas Aquino Creek. For the last 35 years, the canal has carried only local runoff. Pay close attention at the intersection of the canal and Smith Creek; the canal was designed to carry water over the creek, but now it is diverted into the creek. The Rinconada Water Treatment Plant is nearby.

23. **Forbes Mill Museum.** Built in 1854 of cut granite, Forbes Moumill stands in Old Town Los Gatos where it produced wheat flour from crops grown in south San Jose. Water diverted from Los Gatos Creek powered the mill. From the mill, proceed south under the Main Street overpass. Follow the trail until you find Los Gatos Creek entering the culvert under Highway 17. Continuing upstream, the creek is at first natural, then confined to a concrete channel alongside highway 17. Notice the small ribs added to the sides of the concrete channel to slow the flowing water.

24. **Vasona Reservoir and the Los Gatos Creek Trail.** Built in 1936, Vasona Reservoir stores over 400 acre-feet of water behind a 36-foot-high dam. The reservoir impounds winter storm water to recharge the groundwater basin of the Santa Clara Valley. Water released from the reservoir flows down the creek and is diverted into percolation ponds in Los Gatos Creek County Park. There the water is purified as it soaks down to the water table where it is stored for later pumping from wells. The Los Gatos Creek trail follows the creek for nine miles from Meridian Avenue in San Jose through Los Gatos Creek County Park and Vasona Lake County Park south to Lexington Reservoir. While exploring the trail, look for egrets, belted kingfishers, bullfrogs, muskrats, and raccoons among the sycamore and alderberry.

25. **Lexington Reservoir.** Treat yourself to a beautiful hike or adventure exploring the banks of Lexington reservoir. The county park and designated open space surrounding the park have many miles of hiking trails in the beautiful foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Water from Lexington Reservoir is diverted to ponds in the Santa Clara Valley (on the next map to the east) to help recharge the groundwater and prevent ground subsidence in the Santa Clara Valley. For more information regarding the water budget of Santa Clara Valley, see the reverse side of this map.

CREEK & WATERSHED MAP

of West Santa Clara Valley

By Robert W. Givler and Janet M. Sowers, William Lettis & Associates, Inc.

This map shows the current waterways of the western Santa Clara Valley, including the creek and storm drain network and present-day watershed boundaries. Also shown are historical creeks.

Urban development noticeably changed the natural drainage. Creeks that once spread out and dropped their sediment on the flatlands now connect to the bay with engineered channels. Parts of some creeks now flow in underground storm drains. New storm drains have been built as increased pavement area has resulted in more runoff. In the hills, creeks are impounded to create reservoirs.

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 compiled from 1939 aerial photography, previous work by the San Francisco Estuary Institute, and historical maps. Complete documentation can be obtained from Janet Sowers at William Lettis & Associates, Inc. in Walnut Creek, or at www.museumca.org/creeks/westvalleydoc.html. The base map (showing present geographic features) was prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey in 1973 and 1980. We added major new roads and streets.

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. Where a culvert, buried in a former creek bed, carries the entire creek flow, only the culvert symbol (red dots) is shown on the map. Engineered channels include natural creeks significantly reinforced by concrete, rip rap, etc., as well as 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

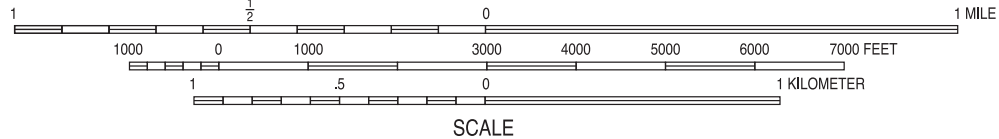
considered approximate. There is error in the historical maps, in the transfer of historical information to modern maps, and in the modern maps themselves. In addition, natural shifting of creeks can be expected both before and after the historical maps or photos were made. Former creek locations are accurate to within 200 feet on either side of the line shown. Present-day creek and storm drain locations are considered accurate to within 100 feet.

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EXPLANATION

- Creeks
- Former creeks, buried or drained dashed where location uncertain
- Underground culverts & storm drains
- Engineered channels
- Water spreads over the ground
- Water seeps out of the ground
- Artificial bodies of water
- Present watersheds
- Area of overlapping watersheds (see Point of Interest #12 for explanation)

