

Watershed Operations

May 2009

Flood Control and Habitat Improvement Along Lower Silver Creek, California

Introduction

This watershed project builds upon \$40 million of flood control and environmental enhancement work done by partner organizations on Lower Silver Creek. More than 250,000 people use nearby highways and infrastructure that could be imperiled by flooding.



Lower Silver Creek is in Santa Clara County, California.

Project Description

- **Location:** San Jose in Santa Clara County, 15th and 16th Congressional Districts
- **Federal Funding:** \$19,000,000 (Phase 1 and 2)

The project combines public safety, job creation, and environmental and community enhancement, by completing flood protection on 2.3 miles of a 3.8-mile stretch of creek. The green design combines sound engineering with community and environmental enhancements.

Partners

- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Santa Clara County Water District

Benefits

When completed, the project will provide flood protection along the 2.3-mile stretch of creek for 16,000 people as well as businesses, schools, highways, and infrastructure used by 250,000 people. It will create 3.4 acres of urban wetland habitat and low flow channel for fish passage and 6.3 acres of riparian plants adding shade, habitat and creekside aesthetics. Citizens will enjoy community beautification, and public health and safety improvements.

Funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, this project is part of the Obama Administration's plan to modernize the nation's infrastructure, jump-start the economy, and create jobs. NRCS is using Recovery Act dollars to update aging flood control structures, protect and maintain water supplies, improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands. NRCS acquires easements and restores floodplains to safeguard lives and property in areas along streams and rivers that have experienced flooding.



In Reach 3, an already completed section of the project, trapezoidal concrete was replaced with multi-benefit designs combining flood control, habitat, and community parks and bridges.

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Economic Opportunities

This project will protect 16,000 residents from flooding, as well as highways and infrastructure used by a quarter million people. This project will create or save jobs in an area of 12 percent unemployment. While the main purpose of the project provides flood protection, wetland and upland habitats will also be restored. The work should provide a significant infusion to construction and nursery businesses with the planting of trees, shrubs, and grasses.

Statewide Perspective

Approximately 250,000 people live in or commute through the Lower Silver Creek project area.

The community is 60% Hispanic, 25% Asian, has an unemployment rate of 12% and income levels about 34% below the area mean.

This project will relieve the community of the threat of catastrophic flooding. Community infrastructure in the project area includes five parks, Mexican Heritage Corporation, five elementary schools, two middle schools, one public and one charter high school, one neighborhood center, and two community centers.

For More Information

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Building on previous work, this phase on Lower Silver Creek will bring flood protection, economic revitalization and aesthetic improvements to the diverse communities that straddle the waterway.

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