

Our Arroyo Ecosystem

About The Arroyo

The Arroyo Vista Recreation Center center was named after the Arroyo Simi. The Simi is one of several tributaries of the Calleguas Creek Watershed, which drains an area of approximately 343 square miles, predominantly in southern Ventura County.

In its natural state, the Arroyo Simi was an ephemeral body of water. After winter storms were spent and warmer weather arrived, the arroyo dried into a landscape dominated by desert chaparral. Over time the stream and the entire watershed of which it is a part has changed dramatically. Today it has a year-round flow of water.

The water comes from many sources, including water from wastewater treatment plants, urban runoff, and agricultural drainage. Thanks to a voter-approved measure to import water into the county in the late 1950s, most of this water originates as snow melt from the Sierra Nevada in Northern California. It is delivered via the State Water Project by way of the State Aqueduct. The Metropolitan Water District funnels the water through a tunnel in the Santa Susanna Mountains and deposits it into the Arroyo Simi near Simi Valley. From there it begins its westward flow, supplying cities and farms along the way until it empties into the Pacific at Mugu Lagoon.

This perennial water source has done much to change the relationships of man, flora and fauna to the watershed. Perennial water has allowed urbanization and farming, but intensified use has increased storm water runoff, streambed and bank erosion. The resulting increased levels of flooding and sedimentation and accompanying increases in levels of salts or pollutants are being actively counteracted on a continuing basis by the Calleguas Water District to protect and enhance potable water. Also being addressed are enhanced recreational uses and the promotion of a healthy watershed's habitat. These efforts are helping native plant and animal species adapt to an altered watershed and compete with the influx of non-native invasive species.

Today a broad coalition of local property owners, water and wastewater agencies, citizen environmental and agricultural groups, governmental entities and other interests are working together to develop strategies to protect and restore aquatic ecosystems to safeguard human health and preserve other natural resources.

With thanks to the generous help of the Calleguas Metropolitan Water District.

