



Stormwater overflowed from Penitencia Creek and flooded Penitencia Creek County Park in 2023.

## Upper Penitencia Creek Flood Protection Project

### About the Project

Valley Water works to reduce the risk of flooding and keep our communities safe. The Upper Penitencia Creek Flood Protection Project will provide flood risk reduction to creekside communities from Dorel Drive downstream to its confluence with Coyote Creek in San José. This project will provide a 100-year level of flood protection to impacted communities. A 100-year flood has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year.

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#### YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK



**Safe,  
Clean  
Water**  
and Natural Flood Protection



**Safe, Clean Water**  
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**PRIORITY E**

**PRIORITY E** Provide flood protection to homes, businesses, schools, streets and highways



Safe, Clean Water  
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PRIORITY E

## Upper Penitencia Creek Flood Protection Project

**PRIORITY E** Provide flood protection to homes, businesses, schools, streets and highways  
**PROJECT E4**

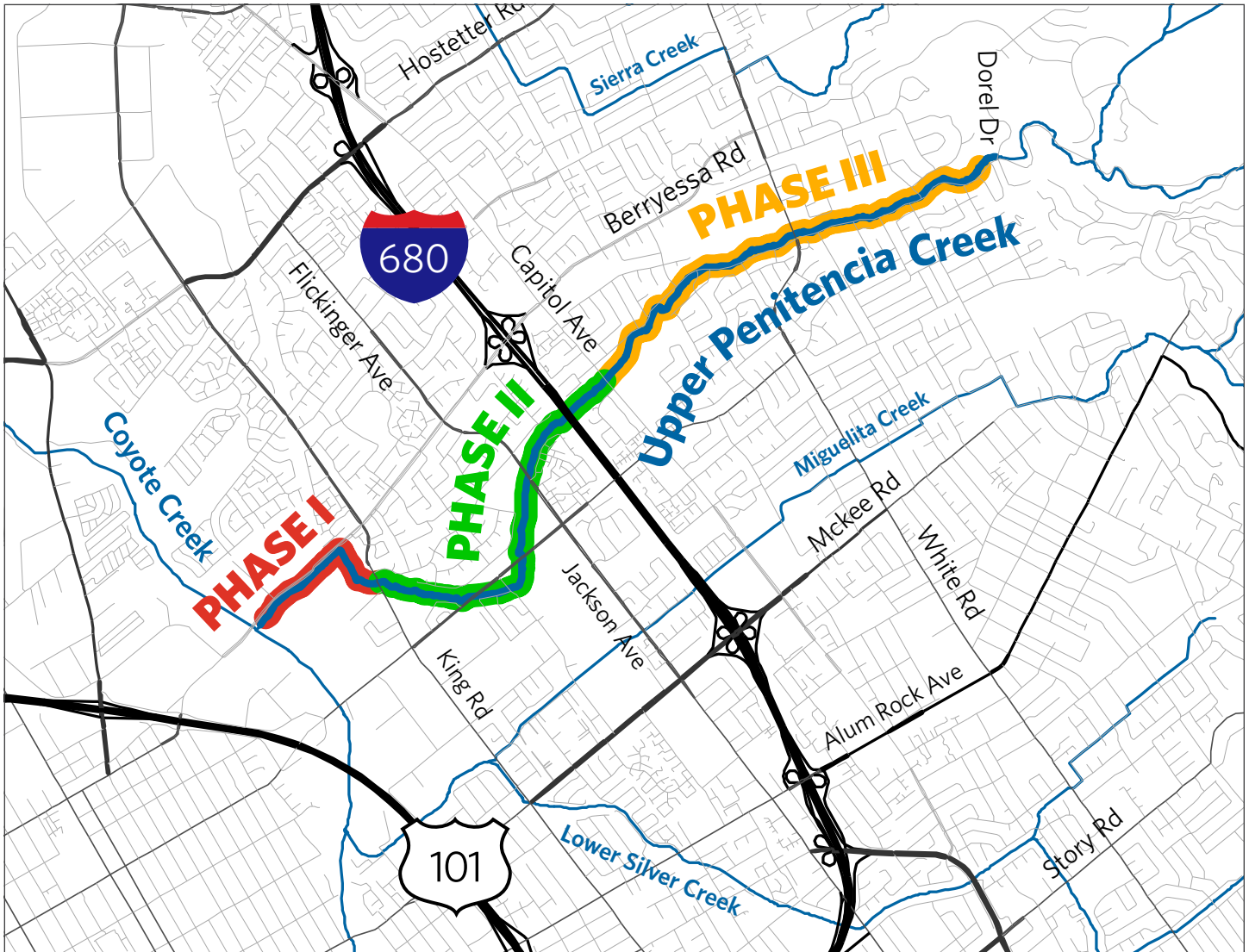
YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK



Valley Water

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Clean  
Water

and Natural Flood Protection



The Upper Penitencia Creek Project extends 4.2 miles through the City of San José, from the Penitencia Creek and Coyote Creek confluence upstream to Dorel Drive near the entrance to Alum Rock Park.

## Project objectives

Valley Water's Upper Penitencia Creek Flood Protection Project is focused on flood improvements along 4.2 miles of the creek. The project has three phases:

- Phase I, Coyote Creek to King Road
- Phase II, King Road to Capitol Avenue
- Phase III, Capitol Avenue to Dorel Drive

In addition to providing flood protection, the project offers an opportunity to:

- Maintain and possibly enhance water supply potential as the creek flows past the Dr. Robert Gross Groundwater Recharge Ponds.
- Improve water quality in Upper Penitencia and Coyote creeks.
- Preserve and enhance existing aquatic and riparian habitats.
- Reduce sediment build-up to allow stormwater to flow safely and streamline maintenance needs.
- Identify opportunities to integrate recreation improvements consistent with the City of San José and Santa Clara County Parks master plans.



The Upper Penitencia Creek Flood Protection Project will provide a 100-year level of flood protection to impacted communities. A 100-year flood has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year. The project creek area of 4.2 miles has less than a 10-year capacity, which means it has a 10 percent chance of flooding in any given year. Once completed, Phases I and II will protect approximately 1,250 parcels of land with homes and businesses, including the Berryessa BART station. An additional 6,750 parcels will be protected when Phase III is completed.

## History of flooding

Penitencia Creek collects rainwater from the Alum Rock Canyon highlands and has a long history of flooding our Valley from the 1950's through today. The 1982 flood caused between \$1 to \$2 million in damages. The February 1998 flood impacted many homes, businesses and local streets, disrupting both commuters and residents. In 2017, the creek caused minor flooding when it overflowed its banks near Independence High School in San José. Most recently in 2023, stormwater from Penitencia Creek overflowed its banks and flooded the San José Flea Market and Penitencia Creek County Park, leaving debris and mud.

## Looking ahead

Phases I and II of the Upper Penitencia Creek Flood Protection Project are in the design stage and are estimated to be completed in the spring of 2027. During the design phase, several milestones will be achieved, including securing permits from state and federal regulatory agencies. They include:

- Designing the recommended project alternative, which was developed in coordination with the City of San José, Santa County, Eastside Union High School District, property owners, resource agencies, stakeholders and the public.
- Hosting public input meetings
- Receiving approval of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Obtaining regulatory permitting from various State of California and federal agencies
- Securing the necessary land parcels before construction

Regulatory approval can take a year or longer to obtain, and construction can take up to three years to complete. For more details, please visit [valleywater.org/upper-penitencia-creek-project](https://valleywater.org/upper-penitencia-creek-project) to sign up and receive project updates.



Stormwater from Penitencia Creek flooded the parking lot located between the San José Fleamarket and Berryessa BART Station.



Upper Penitencia Creek will be redesigned to allow more stormwater to pass safely under the City of San José's King Road bridge.



Upper Penitencia Creek downstream of Highway 680 is one of several sections of the creek that are shallow and limit the amount of stormwater it carries.

## Your investment at work

This project is part of the Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program approved by voters in November 2012 and the November 2020 Measure S, which renewed the program. Valley Water is also securing federal funding for the first two phases of the Upper Penitencia Creek Flood Protection Project. This funding will help with the design phase and project construction. State and federal funding sources for Phase III, the final project phase, are also being identified and pursued.

## About Valley Water

Valley Water manages an integrated water resources system that includes the supply of clean, safe water, flood protection, and stewardship of streams on behalf of Santa Clara County's 2 million residents. Valley Water is the flood protection authority for Santa Clara County, annually preparing creeks for winter rains through levee maintenance, sediment removal, bank repair and vegetation management. Valley Water has invested more than \$1 billion in flood protection efforts to protect nearly 100,000 parcels with many more projects planned. Valley Water performs work annually under its Stream Maintenance Program to repair damages to creeks to reduce the risk of flooding and keep our communities safe.

## You're in a watershed

A watershed is the area of land that drains a common waterway. In Santa Clara County, our creeks catch rain and runoff from storm drains and carry the water north to San Francisco Bay or south to Monterey Bay. Along the way, some of the water fills reservoirs for drinking water, replenishes the underground aquifer and creates better habitat for fish and wildlife.

The Upper Penitencia Project is in the [Coyote Watershed](#). Sixteen major creeks drain this 322-square-mile area. The county's largest watershed extends from the urbanized valley floor upward to the vast natural areas of the Diablo range. Coyote Creek, its main waterway, is the longest creek in the county.



A full list of projects in the **Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program** can be found at [valleywater.org](https://valleywater.org).

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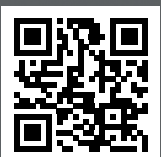
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## Learn more

For information and updates on **PROJECT E4: Upper Penitencia Creek Flood Protection**, email [jvillarreal@valleywater.org](mailto:jvillarreal@valleywater.org) or visit [valleywater.org/upper-penitencia-creek-project](https://valleywater.org/upper-penitencia-creek-project).

## CONTACT US

To find out the latest information on Valley Water projects or to submit questions or comments, use our **Access Valley Water** customer request system at [access.valleywater.org](https://access.valleywater.org).



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