

## Preserving trees for a healthy watershed

As stewards of Santa Clara County’s watersheds and hundreds of miles of streams, the Santa Clara Valley Water District maintains trees to preserve stream habitats. Native trees and plants are critical to the long-term viability of the stream corridor.

The District’s tree maintenance policy balances preservation of native plant life with the community’s needs for flood protection, fire prevention, safety and avoidance of property damage.

## District right-of-way defined

This sheet provides information about the District’s maintenance of trees on District property and easements. District right-of-way includes:

- Property owned by the District in fee title which is managed with available resources consistent with federal, state and local laws and ordinances;
- Property where the District has an exclusionary easement, meaning that the underlying fee property owner is effectively excluded from actively using the property; and
- Property where the District has an easement for flood protection, storm drainage or water conservation purposes.



Guadalupe River between Blossom Hill Rd. and Almaden Lake Park, San Jose.



Blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) near Smith Creek, Los Gatos

## Managing trees on District property

The District conducts inspections and welcomes information from the community to identify and prioritize trees needing maintenance on its property.

Depending on the availability of staff and equipment, the District may take action to manage trees when:

- A hazard is present: A certified arborist or qualified District staff certifies trees or limbs are hazardous with the potential to cause injury or significant property damage.
- Another public safety hazard is present: Trees or limbs obscure traffic lines of sight, lean precariously or require removal or trimming to comply with a city ordinance.
- District business is affected: trees impede access to inspect and maintain District facilities or an invasive tree species is present.

## Managing trees on property where the District has an easement

Easements typically provide the District with the right, but not the obligation, to trim or remove trees on those properties.

At its discretion, the District may remove or trim trees for reasons consistent with the terms of the easement. Tree maintenance on easements for flood protection purposes is prioritized, otherwise tree maintenance must meet one or more of the conditions noted earlier.

The District will not perform tree maintenance on easements on private property for concerns such as:

- Nuisances such as dropping leaves, seedling volunteers or insect pests;
- Aesthetic considerations;
- Overhanging growth that does not create a hazard; or
- Line-of-sight issues not related to public safety, such as blocking of business signs or views.

## We speak your language

Si habla español y tiene preguntas sobre el contenido de este mensaje por favor de comunicarse con José Villarreal al [JVillarreal@valleywater.org](mailto:JVillarreal@valleywater.org) o (408) 630-2879.

Nếu bạn nói tiếng Việt và có thắc mắc về nội dung của thông báo này, xin vui lòng liên hệ với Triet Trinh tại [TTrinh@valleywater.org](mailto:TTrinh@valleywater.org) hoặc (408) 630-3211.

如果你說中文並對上述訊息有疑問，請聯繫 Jane Zhou, 電郵 [JZhou@valleywater.org](mailto:JZhou@valleywater.org), 或者電話:(408) 630-2631.

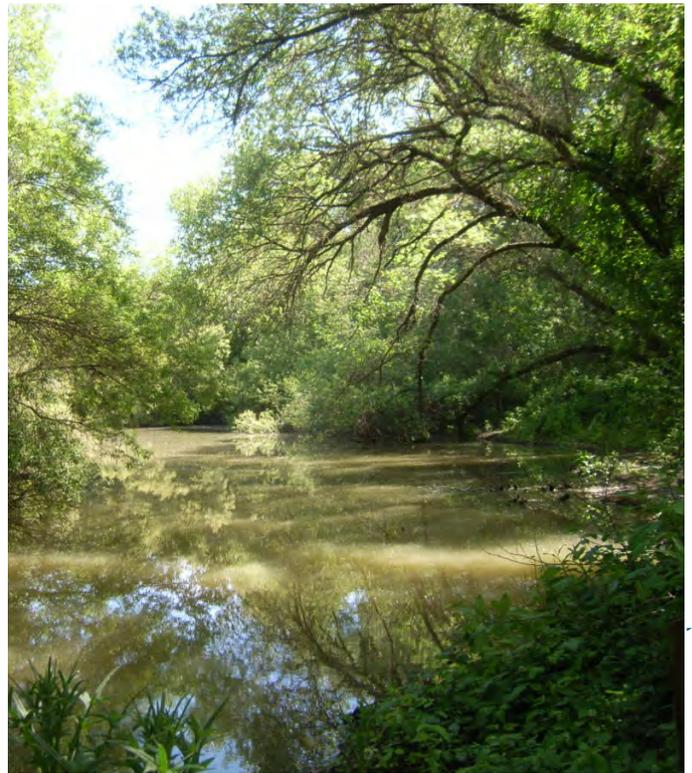
Kung ang wika mo ay Tagalog at kailangan mo pa ng impormasyon, tawagan mo si Benjamin Apolo III sa (408) 630-2042 o sumulat sa [BApolo@valleywater.org](mailto:BApolo@valleywater.org).

## Managing trees on private property

Private property owners are responsible for maintaining the trees on their property, even if the District has an easement.

Landowners next to District property have the right to trim overhanging branches of trees growing on District property. However, property owners must first contact the District to determine whether they need an encroachment permit, especially if they must access District property to maintain the trees.

Tree removal on private property may be subject to local city or county permits. For tree pruning or removal along creeks, owners may be required to secure permits from regulatory agencies such as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, [www.wildlife.ca.gov](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov).



Streamside vegetation, Pajaro River in South Santa Clara County.



### CONTACT US

For more information, contact **John Chapman** at **(408) 630-2645** or visit our website at [valleywater.org](http://valleywater.org) and use our Access Valley Water customer request and information system. With three easy steps, you can use this service to find out the latest information on District projects or to submit questions, complaints or compliments directly to a District staff person.



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