

Preserving trees for a healthy watershed

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

Valley Water'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.

Valley Water's right-of-way defined

This sheet provides information about Valley Water's maintenance of trees on Valley Water's property and easements. Valley Water's right-of-way includes:

- Property owned by Valley Water in fee title which is managed with available resources consistent with federal, state and local laws and ordinances;
- Property where Valley Water has an exclusionary easement, meaning that the underlying fee property owner is effectively excluded from actively using the property; and
- Property where Valley Water 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 Valley Water's property

Valley Water 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, Valley Water may take action to manage trees when:

- A hazard is present: A certified arborist or qualified Valley Water 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.
- Valley Water's business is affected: trees impede access to inspect and maintain Valley Water facilities or an invasive tree species is present.

Managing trees on property where Valley Water has an easement

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

At its discretion, Valley Water 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.

Valley Water will not perform tree maintenance on easements on private property for concerns such as:

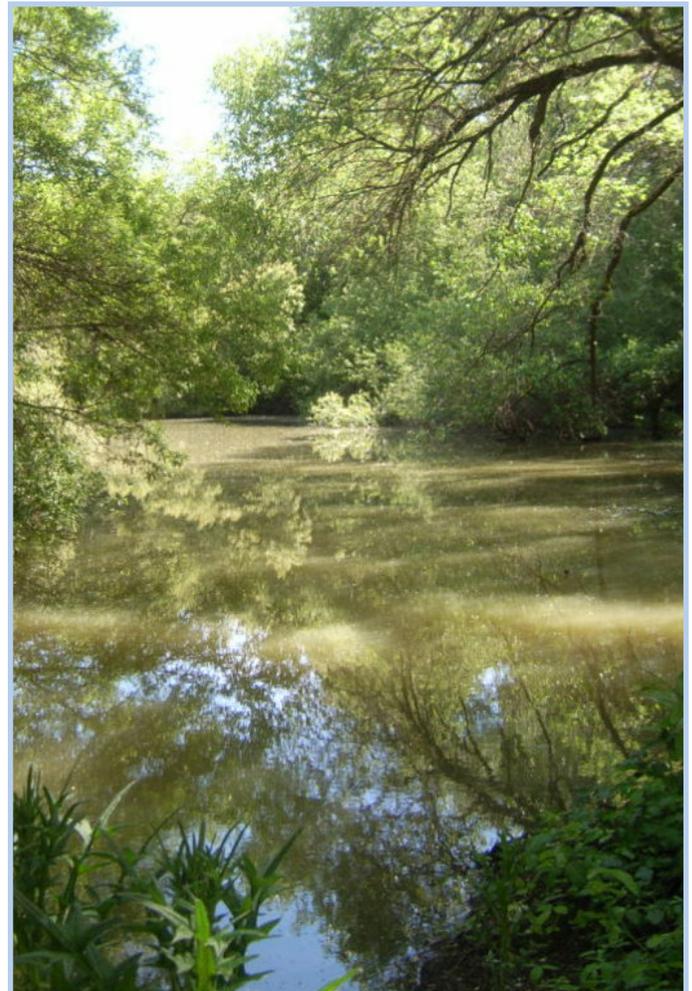
- Nuisances such as dropping leaves, seedling volunteers or insect pests;
- Aesthetic considerations;
- Overhanging growth that does not create a hazard; or
- Line-of-sight issues not related to public safety, such as blocking of business signs or views.

Managing trees on private property

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

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



Streamside vegetation, Pajaro River in South Santa Clara County.

Si habla español y tiene preguntas sobre el contenido de este mensaje por favor de comunicarse con José Villarreal al 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 Ngọc Nguyen tại NNguyen@valleywater.org hoặc (408) 630-2632.

如果你說中文並對上述訊息有疑問, 請聯繫 Sarah Young, 電郵 SYoung@valleywater.org, 或者電話: (408) 630-2468.

CONTACT US

For more information, contact John Chapman at (408) 630-2645. Or use our **Access Valley Water** customer request and information system at <https://delivr.com/2yukx> to find out the latest information on Valley Water projects or to submit questions, complaints or compliments directly to a Valley Water staff person.



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