

Why are you cutting down all the eucalyptus trees?

The eucalyptus trees along Saratoga Creek are non-native and were likely planted as a wind screen for orchards that existed in the area before homes were built. The recent multi-year drought weakened the eucalyptus trees, and wood boring insects along with wood decay fungi have infested many of them, increasing the chance of tree death and failure. Given the trees' proximity to homes and power lines, they must be removed for public safety.



Drought weakened trees pose a significant risk to surrounding residences and infrastructure. In the second photo eucalyptus trees show decay and fungi growth that can spread and weaken other trees.

Will Valley Water be replanting the area after the trees are removed?

Yes, following the removal of the hazardous trees, Valley Water will restore the creek area to a native riparian habitat that is more resilient to drought and pest outbreaks and better suited for local wildlife. The area will be replanted in phases with native riparian trees, shrubs, and vines. The plants will be young when installed and will take time to grow. Drip irrigation will be installed to water the plants, and Valley Water staff will control weeds and non-native invasive plants in the area to encourage regrowth of native plants.



California Buckeye

California Rose

Blue Elderberry

Examples of native plants and trees that are better suited for Saratoga Creek's riparian habitat, local wildlife, and more resilient to drought and pest outbreaks.

What are you doing to protect the wildlife in the area?

Eucalyptus tree removal work will be done in phases over three years due to the scale of the work, limited access and to minimize impacts to local wildlife. Removals will occur primarily during the months of August through October to avoid bird nesting season. Before each work period, a biologist will survey the area to identify any active wildlife that should be avoided during the work. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is reviewing Valley Water's work proposal and may require specific minimization and avoidance measures during project implementation to help protect wildlife.

Will my fences be moved?

The public land under Valley Water's jurisdiction will be needed for the project's access, and for the planting of native riparian plants. This includes lands currently fenced into neighbors' yards. Valley Water will work with individual neighbors to realign fences to the property line to accommodate the mitigation required for the restoration project.

Are you putting in a public trail?

No, a public trail will not be installed. This reach of Saratoga Creek is being restored to its native riparian habitat. Because access is limited, removal of the trees will be done using several methods and access points including from the creek bottom and from the opposite bank using a long reach crane. A maintenance path will be installed to allow for staff access to the planting areas. All new gates and access entrances will be locked and posted with signage to discourage trespassing.

Will you remove the eucalyptus stumps?

The eucalyptus stumps will not be removed. They will be left in place to further stabilize the creek banks until native vegetation has been planted and becomes established. Initially, the stumps will be left at approximately 3 to 4 feet tall. Once debris from the work site is removed, staff will re-cut and treat the stumps with herbicide to stop them from resprouting. Over time, the stumps will decay as roots from the new plantings colonize the site.

