



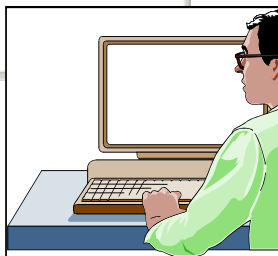
BACKGROUND

Murrieta Creek Flood Control Environmental Restoration and Recreation Project

- The project begins downstream of Old Town Temecula near the Shell Service Station, and extends 7 miles upstream to Tenaja Road in the city of Murrieta.
- Congress has authorized the overall project and declared that the Federal Government would be responsible for funding 65% of the overall project.
- Approximately \$2 million in annual flood damage reduction.
- Elimination of flood insurance requirements for properties within the FEMA floodplain.
- Creation of 163 acres of habitat, natural backwaters, 9 acres of freshwater ponds, and transition zones from fresh water marsh to willow riparian habitat.
- 50+ acres of open space park, including soccer and baseball fields.
- Multipurpose trail system throughout entire length of Project for equestrians, bicyclists and pedestrians.

Let us know about your experiences with Murrieta Creek. How can we help make Clean Up Day better? What suggestions do you have for the Creek? E-mail a note to projectinfo@co.riverside.ca.us if you would like to be added to the mailing list.

The next time you are on the Web, bookmark this page: <http://www.co.riverside.ca.us/depts/flood/>. It's the Riverside County Flood Control District's Web address. Or, from Riverside County's site (<http://www.co.riverside.ca.us>), from the County Department drop-down list select **Flood Control**. As you peruse it, you will soon find out that everything about it is easy - easy to find information and easy on the eyes.



MURRIETA CREEK C H R O N I C L E

Summer 2002

Update

Phase 1 of the project will include channel improvements from southerly of Old Town Temecula near the Shell Service Station upstream to First Street in Temecula. Design activities on this phase are 50% complete. Channel geometry and hydraulics are being finalized. Properties necessary for the channel improvements have been defined in advance of appraisal and acquisition activities. District staff has recently met with representatives of the Cities of Temecula and Murrieta to review the Corps design. All three agencies are working hand in hand to ensure that the Corps' final project will reflect the interests and needs of the area's residents. To that end, the District has recently persuaded the Corps to agree that Phase 1 improvements will consist simply of widening and deepening, then revegetating the existing earthen creek, as opposed to lining the channel sideslopes with rock riprap. Equestrian and pedestrian/biking trails, along with a natural wildlife habitat corridor are being incorporated into the Phase 1 design. The Corps anticipates initiating construction activities on Phase 1 of the Murrieta Creek project in the Fall of 2003.

The District and Cities plan to enter into cooperative agreements late this Fall. Those agreements will address cost sharing, real estate and other important issues that accompany a project of this magnitude. The District, along with an Assessment Engineer, is exploring the possibility of a land-secured financing vehicle to raise a portion of the local funding required for the project. That vehicle would be a Community Facilities District (CFD). Should it be necessary to form a CFD, a bond measure will be taken to the voters, most likely in November 2004.

The District continues to work with developers to excavate material from the detention basin in advance of Phase 3 of the Corps' project. Another 500,000 to 750,000 cubic yards are expected to be removed by the end of the year.

The City of Murrieta successfully applied for Federal aid through the low water crossing provisions of the Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation (HBRR) Program for the Ivy Street Bridge. Design activities are underway and the City has tentatively scheduled the construction of the project for late 2003. The City is also in the process of applying for a grant through the HBRR program for Guava Street Bridge.

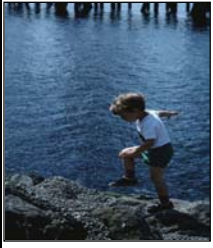
Project Element - Recreation Plan

There is currently a serious need for recreation opportunities within the cities of Murrieta and Temecula. One of the issues brought up in the public involvement effort was that of opportunities to provide trails, wildlife viewing areas, and other features which would provide a sense of connection between the residents and their environment.

The Recommended Plan for recreation would make use of the southeast corner of the detention basin site to create a 49-acre public park. The park would include a children's play area, shade structures, parking, comfort station, barbecues, open space, walks, 4 ball fields and 4 soccer fields, security lighting, and room for additional activities. Located on higher ground within the detention basin, the park site would serve a double purpose by helping to attenuate peak storm flows during times of very heavy runoff.

Small footbridges across both Murrieta Creek and Santa Gertrudis Creek would also provide links from the park to over 7 miles of trails occupying the banks on either side of Murrieta Creek Channel. The trails will be utilized for hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, and other activities such as bird watching.

Santa Margarita River Watershed Trash Cleanup



Here are a couple of reminders to dispose of the trash you pick up in the creeks.

CLEAN UP DAY!

Clean Up Day will be held this year on Saturday, September 21st from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Meet at Temecula City Hall to get trash bags, gloves and meet some new friends.

There will be an organizational meeting at Temecula City Hall on August 7th at 1:30 p.m. to discuss strategies and coordination.

For more information call Carole Bell 909.677.6951 Ext. 223.

Thank you for your support.



BIRD WATCHING AROUND THE MURRIETA CREEK ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION AREA

SNOWY EGRETS Waders with Golden Slippers



Photo by B. Truitt

One of the most beautiful birds in North America is the Snowy Egret, *Egretta thula*. Once killed unmercifully for its gorgeous long feathers used to adorn late 19th and early 20th century ladies' hats, this bird has made a comeback and can be seen mainly along the warmer coastlines as well as in most U.S. states during the summer months.

These birds are snowy white, hence their name, and about 22-27 inches long. Their wingspan is 39-46 inches. It has long black legs, bright yellow feet, yellow eyes, yellow lores (area between the eyes and beak) and a long slim black beak. Both male and female birds look very similar and weigh about 13 ounces on average. Immature birds will have legs that are black in front but yellowish on the back.

Where will you be able to find Snowy Egrets? Look for medium sized egrets along coastlines, in marshes, around the edges of lakes, and of course in the Murrieta Creek Environmental Restoration area.

Watching a gorgeous egret feed is fun. It may run quickly through shallow water to get the fish to move about, then quick as lightning jab down to snare its meal. Or it may stand still in the water, one foot raised slightly that rustles about in the water, stirring up the fish. Both of these methods yield good meals of fish, insects and crustaceans for this bird.

Snowy Egrets often will be seen in loose flocks and breed in large colonies. During this time of year many egrets will have the gorgeous aigrettes, the long lacy feathers. The lores and the feet may also turn a reddish color or even orange. Nests are made of short branches and twigs, making a shallow nesting area. This nest can be found on the ground but also up into the trees or bushes about 7-10 feet off the ground. The female will lay 3 to 5 pale blue-green eggs and will incubate them for 3 to 4 weeks. The nestlings, featherless and dependent on their parents for food and warmth when first hatched, will stay in the nest for almost another month until fledging.

Unsure if the bird is a Snowy Egret? Black legs with bright yellow feet are a good way to identify this bird. If the feet are not visible, look at the beak - it should be solid black. Also be sure to check the lores. If they're bright yellow you've got a match!

Last year the effort to rid our landscape of trash was achieved with fantastic results. The total trash take from Fallbrook to Lake Elsinore was 220 tons!!!

Riverside County Flood Control
and Water Conservation District
1995 Market Street
Riverside, CA 92501