

Stevens Creek

Stevens Creek Is a creek in Santa Clara County, California. The creek originates in the Santa Cruz Mountains on the western flank of Black Mountain in the Monte Bello Open Space Preserve, then flows southeasterly through the Stevens Creek County Park before turning northeast into Stevens Creek Reservoir. It then continues north for 12.5 miles through Cupertino, Los Altos, Sunnyvale and Mountain View before emptying into the San Francisco Bay at the Whisman Slough.



History

The creek was originally named Arroyo San José de Cupertino (Spanish for Saint Joseph of Cupertino Creek) by Spanish explorer Juan Bautista de Anza, who camped along the creek on his expedition from Monterey to San Francisco. De Anza completed the first overland route to San Francisco Bay when he and Father Pedro

Font sighted the bay from a prominent knoll near the entry of Rancho San Antonio County Park.

The Saint Joseph of Cupertino place name is preserved today in the city of Cupertino to the east and in the Saint Joseph of Cupertino Parish Catholic Church in the city. The Arroyo San José de Cupertino became Cupertino Creek sometime before 1866, but was later re-named for Elijah Stephens (how his name was misspelled is unknown), a South Carolina-born blacksmith and trapper who settled on Cupertino Creek in 1848. Stephens renamed his 160-acre property at the base of Black Mountain "Blackberry Farm". Stephens is notable for being the captain of the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party, the first wagon train to cross the Sierra Nevada (two years before the ill-fated Donner Party).

Watershed

Stevens Creek consists of approximately 20 miles of channel, and enters the San Francisco Estuary near Long Point, north of Moffett Field Naval Air Station, at Whisman Slough between Mountain View's Shoreline Park and Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area. It drains a watershed of about 29 square miles.

There is one major impoundment, Stevens Creek Reservoir at 531 feet of elevation. The reservoir was constructed in 1935 to provide storage capacity of winter runoff that could be used to recharge the Santa Clara valley aquifer. The reservoir is managed by the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) and has a current capacity of 3,465 acre feet of water.

Stevens Creek Trail

The Stevens Creek Trail is a 5-mile long bicycle and pedestrian path that runs south continuously from Shoreline Park to Heatherstone Way in Mountain View. Cupertino has now added a 0.7-mile section of trail that runs north along the creek from McClellan Road, then past the 4-H farm and community gardens in McClellan Ranch Park nature preserve and ending (for now) at Blackberry Farm Park. The trail is entirely separated from vehicular traffic, using numerous overcrossings and underpasses. The four cities of Sunnyvale, Cupertino, Los Altos, and Mountain View are cooperating on potential trail alignments with the goal of a completed trail from the Bay to the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Habitat and Conservation

Stevens Creek is one of the prime steelhead habitats within the county. However, there are significant barriers for this anadromous fish. In a 1994 study, the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) found fish ladders at the Central Expressway and Highway 101 often had insufficient flow and/or were clogged with debris and sediment. In addition, the drop structure at L'Avenida Avenue was impassable in all five years of the study. In August, 2003 the Stevens & Permanente Creeks Watershed Council was officially formed to support stewardship of the watersheds. The SCVWD's Fish and Aquatic Habitat Collaborative Effort (FAHCE), has recommended removal of the Denil-type fish ladders at Fremont Avenue, Evelyn Avenue, and Moffett Boulevard which tend to clog with debris and are now classified as partial barriers by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). Adjacent to the fish ladder at Moffett Boulevard is a concrete drop structure built in the 1980s which is another obstacle to salmonid passage. The existing concrete-lined channel extending further downstream to Highway 101 (a distance of 450 feet) is flat and low flows cross it as a thin sheet of water over the concrete bottom. At least 6-inch depth of flow is required for adequate fish passage. Although steelhead continue to spawn in lower Stevens Creek, it is doubtful whether young trout can oversummer for one to two years in its drier, hotter lower reaches. In a 2004 report of factors limiting steelhead trout survival, the key recommendation was to improve access for spawning steelhead in the lower reaches of the creek (which gets very warm or even dry in summer) to the upper reaches of Stevens Creek which have perennial flows of colder water. In addition, if the Permanente Creek Diversion Channel could be modified to accommodate steelhead trout in-migration, then several miles of upper Permanente Creek (which currently has a resident rainbow (the landlocked form of steelhead) trout population would be available for spawning.

The Western Burrowing Owl nests at Shoreline Park near the mouth of Stevens Creek. In 2008, Mountain View evicted a pair of burrowing owls so that it could sell a parcel of land to Google to build a hotel at Shoreline Boulevard and Charleston Road. Eviction of the owls is controversial because the birds regularly reuse burrows for years, and there is no requirement that suitable new habitat be found for the owls. Despite being listed in 1979 as a Species of Special Concern (a pre-listing category under the Endangered Species Act) by the California Department of Fish and Game, California's population declined 60% from the 1980s to the early 90's, and continues to decline at roughly 8% per year. In 1994, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service nominated the Western Burrowing Owl as a Federal Category 2 candidate for listing as endangered or threatened, but loss of habitat continues due to development of the flat, grassy lands used by the owl.

Regnart Creek

Regnart Creek is next to Fremont Older Open Space Preserve and is located in Santa Clara County, California, United States.

Total length – Approx. 4 miles

Drainage – Approx. 3.4 square miles



Tributaries -None, Regnart drains to Calabazas Creek

Headwaters –Fremont older open space reserve