

# Oso Creek Trail



## What is a Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that all drains to the same body of water. Most of Mission Viejo is in the San Juan Creek watershed. In Mission Viejo, Oso Creek is the main route for water to travel through the San Juan Creek Watershed.

## What Has Been Done?

In the late 1970s, the Oso Creek Barrier & Return Water Pump Station was installed. This station captures the water flowing through Oso Creek and sends it back to a treatment facility. The water is treated and then used for irrigating City-owned landscaped areas. Currently, over 70% of Mission Viejo's landscaped areas are irrigated with reclaimed water.

## What can YOU do?

- Pick up after pets
- Do not over water landscapes
- Place trash in tightly covered bins
- Remember: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- Dispose of Household Hazardous Waste properly
- Do not hose off driveways, patios, and sidewalks
- Never blow or sweep anything into the gutter

## Where Does the Water Come From?

Many years ago, Oso Creek was dry throughout most of the year. Today, the development of our City has caused water to flow through the creek all year long. The water also contains pollutants that it picks up while traveling through our streets on its way to the Creek.



California Sycamore

The Oso Creek Trail and the development of the trail system have allowed many users to become exposed to the wonderful plant and animal life that exist along the trail and to experience the local eco system at work. This beautiful creek naturally flows from north of the Santa Ana Mountains and eventually joins the Trabuco Creek and ultimately flows to the Pacific Ocean.

The Oso Creek Valley played a significant role as the Mission Viejo Company uncovered and preserved many rare fossils including baleen and toothed whales, long snouted dolphins, primitive sea lions, sharks, rays and a variety of bony fish along the creek bed. When the grading of the creek was completed, it was engineered to carry increased storm water; and reclaimed water lines were installed along the eastern side of the creek to move recycled water from the Upper Oso Reservoir down to Mission Viejo residential areas for landscape beautification.

The creeks' edge was replanted with indigenous plants that occur along a riparian streambed including Coyote Brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), Mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), Mexican Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), and willows (*Salix* sp.). Over the years, the plant varieties have shifted and changed as Mother Nature takes the creek back to a more natural state. The success of the natural vegetation growth brings increased wildlife back to the creeks edge. The wildlife includes House Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*), Goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*), Costa's Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*), turtles (*Clemmys* sp.) and Great Blue Herons (*Ardea Herofias*, and Great Egret *Ardea alba*).



Olive



Coast Live Oak

The Oso Creek Trail was created using both riparian and drought-tolerant plant material that is sustained with minimal irrigation. Over 60 varieties of plants were planted to create the walking garden of the Oso Creek Trail. The significant tree is the California Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*). This tree survives along the creek bed but is also drought tolerant and can sustain itself with some supplemental water. The City Tree, Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and the Olive tree (*Olea europaea*) are iconic trees of Mission Viejo used along the trail.

The unique combination of the riparian plant material along with more drought-tolerant plants creates a striking and ever-changing walking garden and ecosystem that is accessible to the user. Take the time to see if you can identify the plants and animals listed here as you walk along the trail.



Make the Environment Your Mission



Make Education Your Mission



# HISTORY



The Oso Creek Trail started in April 1997 as a community collaboration where volunteers gather in late spring to celebrate the Earth and the arts of Mission Viejo. The trail is nestled along the riparian corridor of the Oso Creek Valley and conveniently connects residences to City facilities, the commercial core and surrounding neighborhoods.

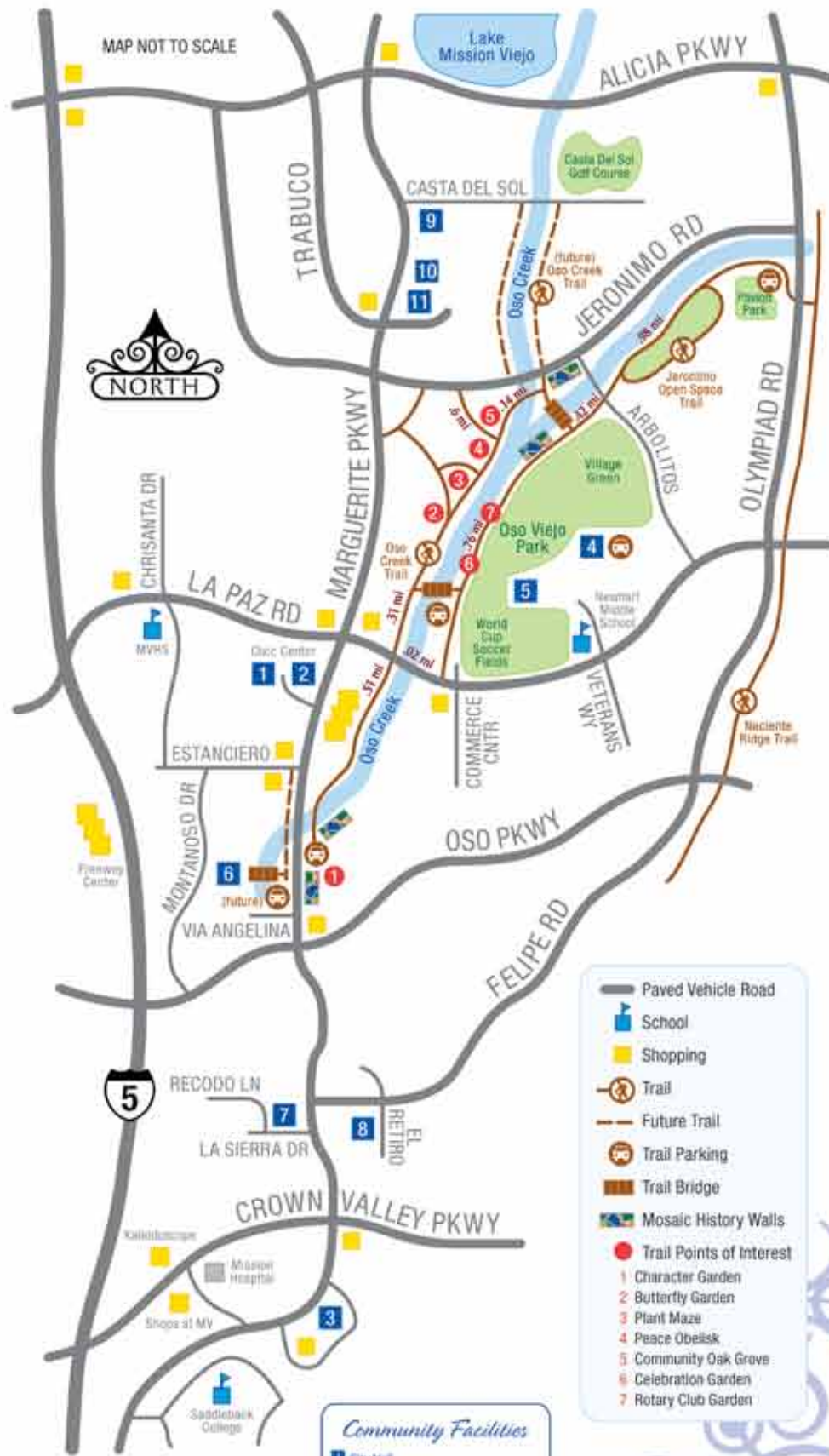
The Oso Creek Trail represents the pro-active efforts of the community and the City to develop a backbone city trail system.

The goal of the community efforts is to produce a long-term benefit for many future generations to enjoy. The trail has been developed with numerous amenities and features that serve to educate and honor the community. These features include the Peace Obelisk to honor victims of 9/11, the mosaic history walls in the Character Garden, the vibrantly painted butterflies, the Celebration Garden, the Wave Wall on the Upper Oso Creek Trail, and the community murals surrounding the Village Green.

The Oso Creek Trail is a walking garden where the spirit of the community is alive and where people gather for a common cause to make a difference.

## Fun Facts

- The Oso Creek Trail contains 5.5 miles of trails
- The word Oso means BEAR in Spanish
- Over 15,000 volunteers gave 70,000 hours of labor, and this number grows each year.
- Over 130,000 plants have been planted by volunteers.



1 Character Garden Trailhead and Mosaic History Walls



2 Butterfly Garden

*"celebrating our past, looking towards our future"*



3 Plant Maze



4 Peace Obelisk

## Public Art



5 Community Oak Grove

7 Rotary Club Garden  
In dedication to the memory of Mission Viejo Rotarians and to all who strive to promote the ideals of world peace and the preservation of this planet earth.



6 Celebration Garden



8 Festival Murals



9 Wave Wall



Make Volunteering Your Mission



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