Accomplishments and Improvements

PROJECT E1: Coyote Creek Flood Protection Project

PRIORITY E Provide flood protection to homes, businesses, schools, streets and highways

YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

Valley Water crews saw and removed logs along Coyote Creek.

Reduced risks along Coyote Creek

Soon after the flood along Coyote Creek in 2017, Valley Water Board of Directors acted on a series of short-term projects to help reduce the risk of flooding there. The actions varied from immediate levee repairs and vegetation removal to advocacy for state and federal funding that would include a flood risk reduction project. The project is comprised of the Coyote Creek Flood Protection Project and Coyote Creek Flood Management Measures Project. The projects include flood reduction elements proposed at different locations along nine miles of Coyote Creek to provide flood protection to the 2017 level of flooding.

In addition, the board formed the Coyote Creek Ad Hoc Committee to help steer efforts to reduce flood risks along Coyote Creek.

Emergency levee repair

Valley Water also repaired a levee damaged when floodwaters spilled over it and entered the Golden Wheel Mobile Home Park. Crews repaired about 150 linear feet of levee that runs along the back of that mobile home community location.

Project extension to include vulnerable communities

The Coyote Creek Flood Protection Project from the voter-approved Safe, Clean Water, and Natural Flood Protection Program was extended by 2.9 miles from Interstate-280 to Tully Road to include vulnerable areas that were impacted by the flood, including the Rocksprings neighborhood. The project extension will allow Valley Water to use local funding to work actively to reduce flood risks in this area of San José.

A repaired levee behind the Golden Wheel Mobile Home Park.

The flooded Rocksprings neighborhood in February 2017.

Flood risk reduction barrier

The Rocksprings, Nordale and Bevin Brook neighborhoods were heavily affected by the 2017 flood. To help alleviate future flood risk, the water district designed and constructed a temporary flood barrier before the next rainy season.

Construction crews installed 400 feet of vinyl sheet pile wall with a maximum height of up to 3-feet tall and 500 feet of earthen berm with a maximum height of up to 5-feet tall. These measures matched the peak water surface elevation seen in this area during the February 2017 flood event.

The permanent flood risk reduction measures will be installed under the Coyote Creek Flood Protection Project in 2024.

A berm, which is similar to a flood barrier, was installed at Rocksprings Park to help reduce future flood risks.

Vegetation removal

The City of San José granted Valley Water access to city-owned property along Coyote Creek to remove approximately 15 acres of invasive vegetation to benefit ecological habitat and improve the creek's capacity to carry stormwater. Additionally, Valley Water removed almost 4 acres of thickets of Arundo Donax. This giant, invasive weed can act as a barrier, preventing water from moving efficiently through the creek during high flows. Valley Water used its stream maintenance crews to remove this invasive vegetation on district and city-owned property.

Valley Water crews perform maintenance work along Coyote Creek.

Emergency Action Plan to reduce the risk of flooding

The Valley Water Board of Directors and San José City Council approved a Joint Creek Emergency Action Plan (EAP), outlining strategies and actions for agency coordination during potential flooding along Coyote Creek and other waterways in the city. The action plan guides decision-making, coordination, and communications for all levels of a flood event, beginning with year–round preparations and projects that reduce flood risk.

San José and Valley Water staff worked to identify flood risks and hazards, develop pre-incident planning, and establish a response plan, including a set of public warning messages based on flood condition levels as defined by the National Weather Service.

Visible stream gauges were placed at various locations along Coyote Creek to provide "real-time" information on water levels.

Installation of flood gauges on bridges

As part of the EAP, district staff repaired existing flood gauges and installed several new gauges at various bridge locations along Coyote Creek. Flood gauges provide visual information on water height in the creek, which helps Valley Water and the City of San José determine necessary responses during a major storm. The gauges also provide the public with real-time information about flood levels in the creek.