

VIEJAS WATERSHED NEWSLETTER



Viejas Creek Pond during the dry season

Non-Point Source Pollution

Non-point source pollution continues to be an area of concern, especially during prolonged dry periods. After a relatively dry wet season (low precipitation), residents must be aware of the risks of dealing with drought conditions in the early spring. During drought periods, pollutants from various sources accumulate on the ground and remain there until stormwater runs over the ground and washes these pollutants into creeks, streams, rivers, and other water bodies. Fertilizers, pesticides, livestock waste, trash, dumpster seepage, and excess sediment wait until a "first flush" of the next wet season leading to a spike in nutrients that will negatively affect water quality and native species. Drought conditions do provide the opportunity to clean out stormwater drains, gutters, and catch basins.

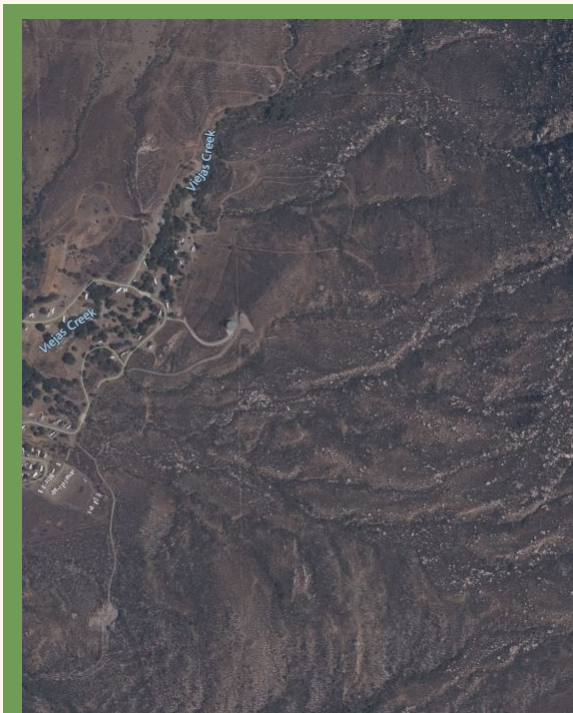


Dry stream bed in Upper Viejas Creek Watershed

Watershed

Characteristics

The Upper Viejas Creek Watershed receives a considerable amount of flow from the tributaries located on the western face of Chiquito Peak. These tributaries lead into Matarawa Pond and the first retainment pond along Viejas Creek. Although the main streambed of Viejas Creek displays a higher amount of vegetation in its riparian corridor, the Chiquito Peak tributaries have diverse and healthy vegetation consisting of Coast live, Engelmann, and Scrub Oak species as well as considerable populations of Manzanita trees.



Aerial view showing tributaries from Chiquito peak leading to Viejas Creek

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

The Viejas watershed is home to plant species that are non-native to this ecosystem. One plant species, commonly known as the Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*), native to central Mexico. Seeds are large and easily carried by wet season rains, finding their way into creeks through storm drains. This allows growth in riparian streams and river corridors which can threaten native biodiversity. If the palm is not regularly maintained and trimmed, dead palm fronds that stay on the tree can create an additional fire hazard. Letting Mexican fan palms dominate the landscape can deprive native tree species of available resources and may convert riparian communities into monospecific strands.



Mexican Fan Palm (*Washingtonia robusta*)