

the Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project

San Pascual and San Rafael

SAVE

SAN PASCUAL PARK



SAVE SAN PASCUAL PARK

- Save San Pascual Park is a grassroots community led group that was formed to stop the Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project at San Pascual and San Rafael, call for their restoration as part of the whole Arroyo restoration
- As a result of our lawsuit, Pasadena/South Pasadena were required to complete an Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for this project. More than 500 DEIR comments were received and over 4000 letters and signed petitions.

Cleanup event 2026



SAVE SAN PASCUAL PARK

INTRODUCTION

- The Arroyo Seco Water Reuse project is a response to a state mandate requiring cities to address water pollution. It is a joint effort by **Pasadena and South Pasadena** with the stated intent to capture and clean water from the Arroyo Seco Channel.

Los Angeles is not a partner in the project and must agree to lease the land. Part of the permanent infrastructure would be built on Los Angeles land in (CD14), which would be leased in perpetuity by Los Angeles City and Recreation and Parks.

- Two sites will be used for DRY WEATHER water capture and infiltration: **San Rafael** and **San Pascual**. About only 40% of water captured will be returned to the Arroyo Seco channel.



For more information please visit:

<https://www.cityofpasadena.net/public-works/engineering-and-construction/construction/arroyo-seco-water-reuse-project/>

SAVE SAN PASCUAL PARK

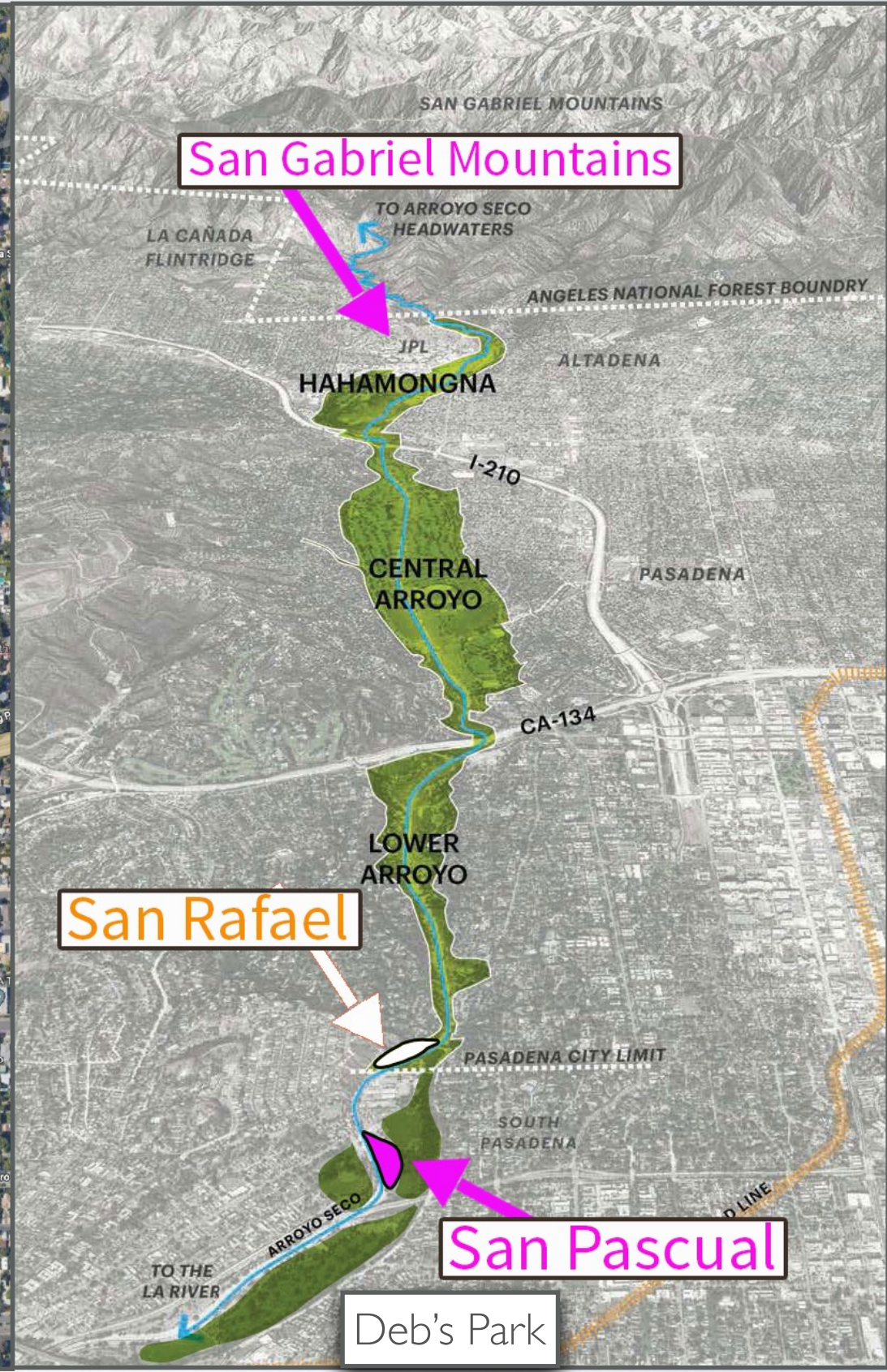
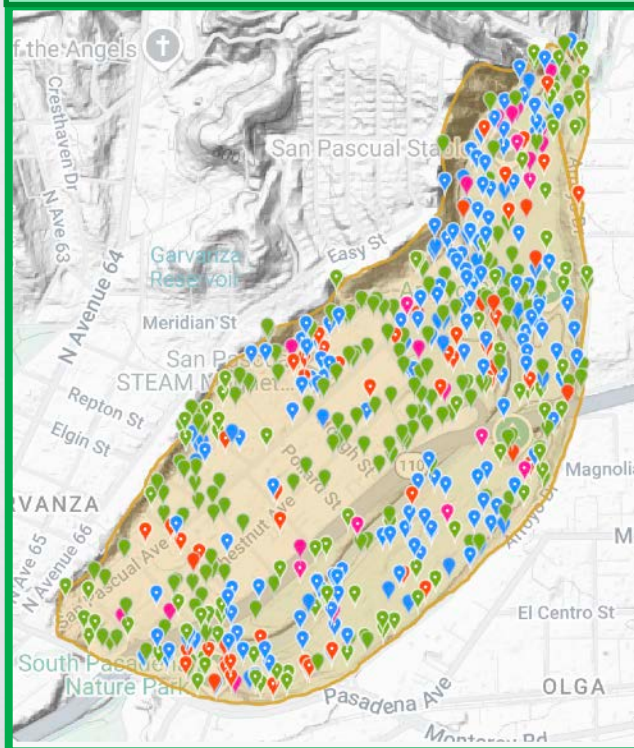
PRESERVE THE WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

Both parks are part of a vital wildlife corridor that connects San Gabriel mountains to Debs Park and the LA River.

These two areas will be destroyed by two years of demolition, which includes cutting and uprooting trees, deep excavation, and the elimination of the water flow. The noise and dust alone will have a detrimental impact on this wildlife corridor and all the animals that depend on it for their survival.

Pasadena is dismissing these negative impacts on the community and the environment.

Inaturalist observations in area of both parks and neighborhood



SAN PASCUAL

Pasadena wants to take one 1/2 acre of LA parkland for this project.



- The area will hold pumps and machinery and will be partially fenced off.
- Los Angeles Charter 594C says: “All lands heretofore or hereafter set apart or dedicated as a public park shall forever remain for the use of the public inviolate”. Public park land cannot be transferred between cities without formal legal steps including public hearings.
- Ysabel Jurado CD14 Councilmember, wrote a strong DEIR letter opposing the project and land giveaway.

SAVE SAN PASCUAL PARK

WATER POLLUTION

- Save San Pascual Park is not opposed to cleaning the Arroyo Seco water. We object to this project, based on its unsustainable nature and destruction of a natural habitat.
- Pasadena and South Pasadena are using old water pollution data to justify this project. Since then, new data and reviews emerged that should have required project modifications, but none happened.
- LA Regional Water Quality Control Board DEIR letter: *“In conclusion, the Project is not required by the TMDL or the MS4 Permit, it will not help comply with the TMDL in wet weather, and it will only help comply with the TMDL in dry weather below the diversion point in San Rafael Creek.”*



Foam indicating pollution



Horse stable runoff

TDML- Total Max Daily Load
MS4-Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit



Dark muck flowing into the River

The community demands:

CLEAN POLLUTION AT THE SOURCE

Stop pollution before it gets to the river! The Water Reuse Project at San Rafael and San Pascual are END OF PIPE projects.

Known sources of pollution:

The Annandale Golf Course

The Rose Bowl Parking lot.

Brookside Golf Course

The Johnston Lake

San Pascual Stables

The South Pasadena Golf Course

Pasadena claims they cannot address known and unknown pollution sources because of cost, jurisdiction or complexity. Cities must forcefully collaborate to stop and prevent this pollution from reaching the river.

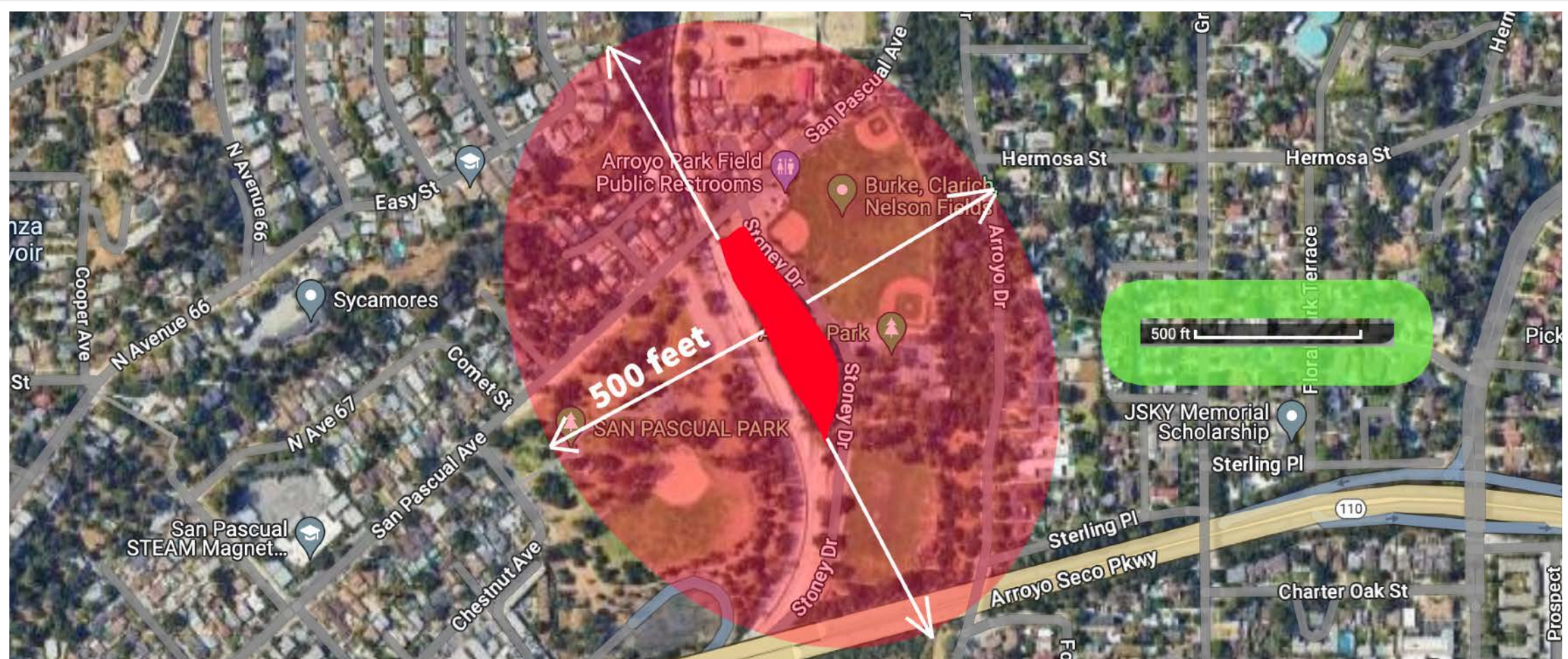


SAVE SAN PASCUAL PARK

POOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH

This project has had poor Los Angeles community outreach since the beginning

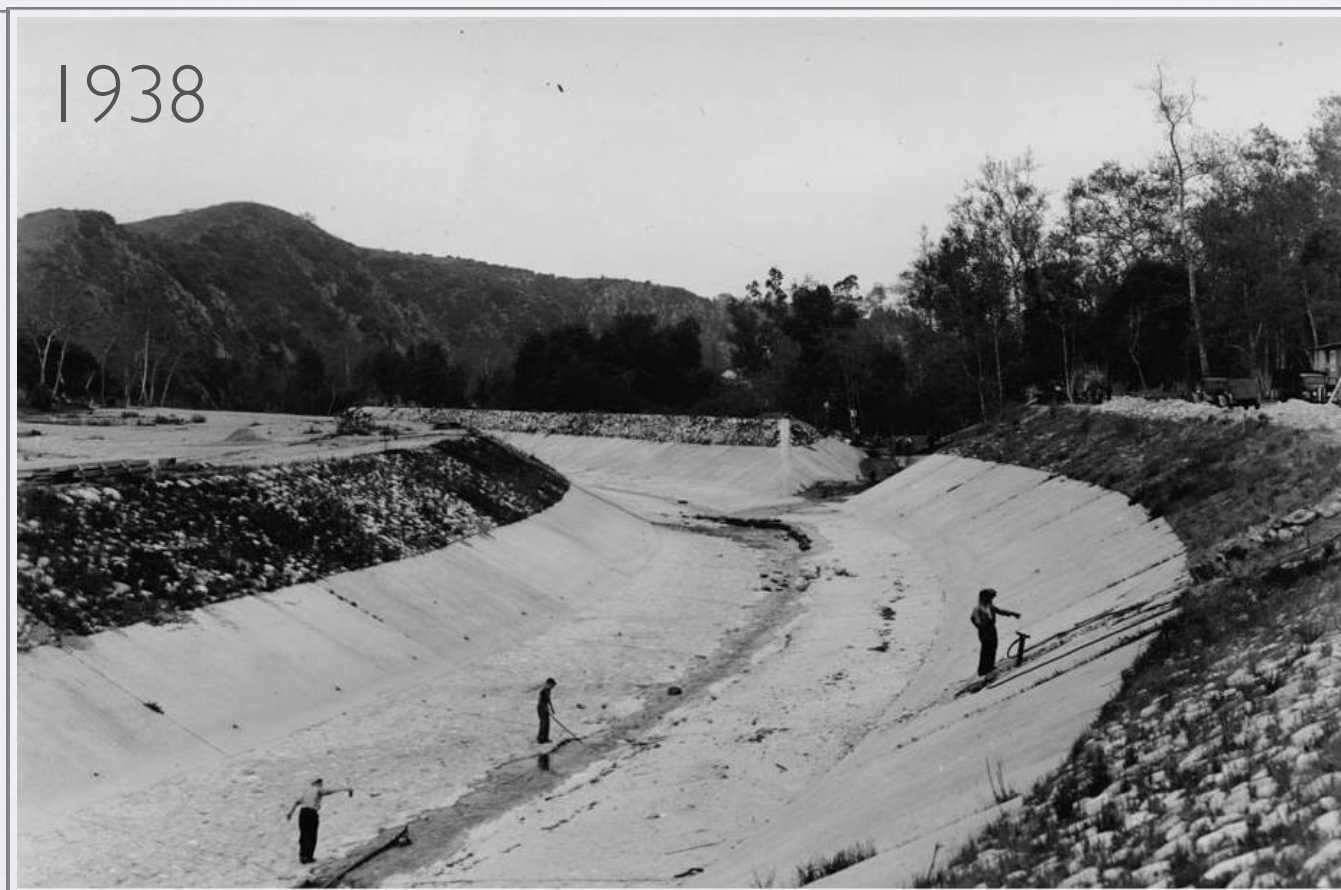
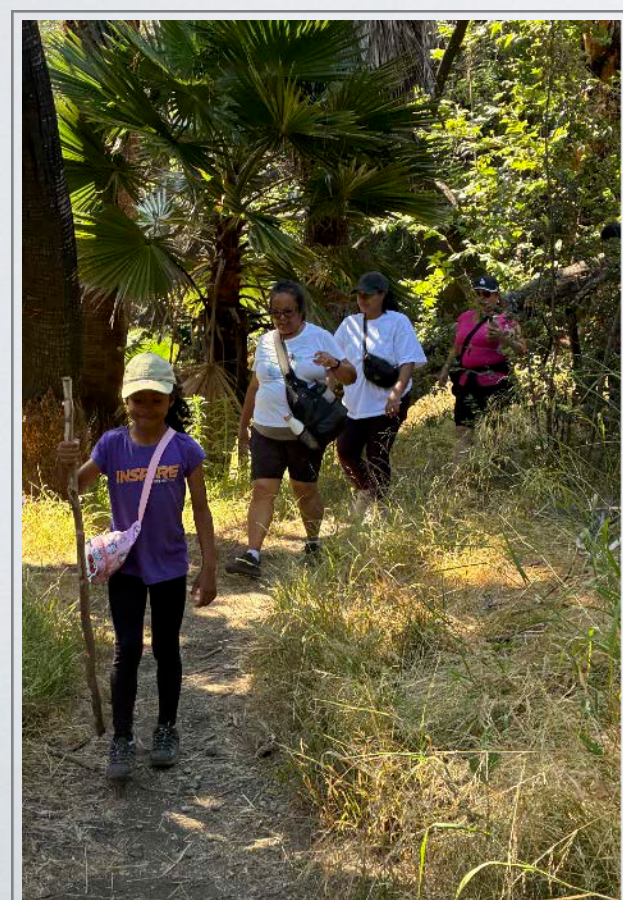
- Pasadena claims to have sent letters about the project to 200 families at 500 feet around the park, announcing the public review period. These were in English only, a violation of Title II of the Civil Rights Act.
- The community that uses this park resides MILES around the park and deserves to be informed about how our public park lands are used. The 500 feet area included very few homes.
- The community has not been involved in any part of the project design, despite the requirement of Measure W to conduct in-depth community engagement.



SAN PASCUAL

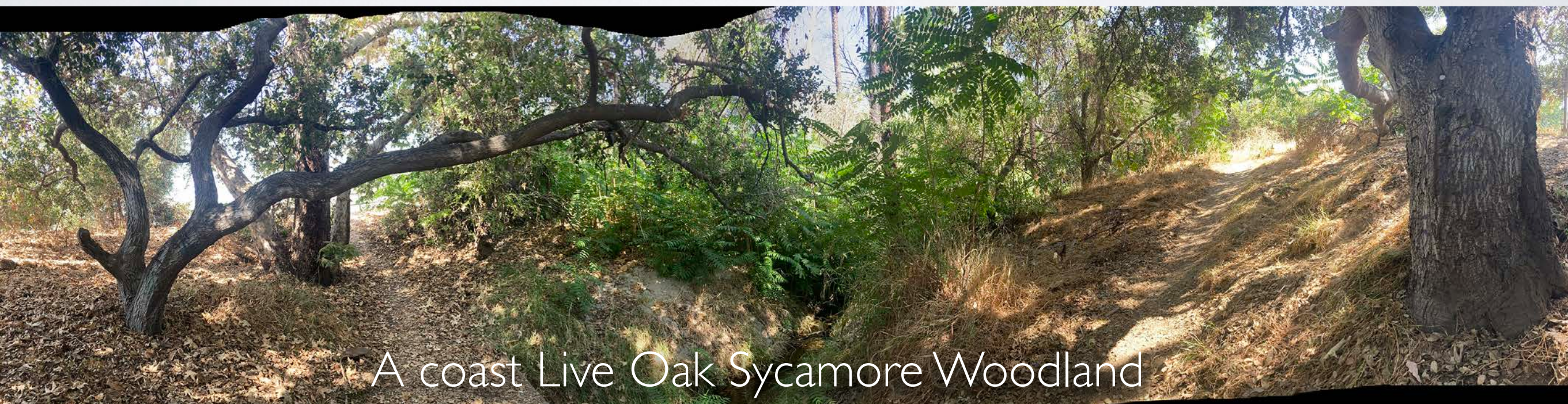
San Pascual is an historic park that belongs first and foremost to the public

- The park is cherished by the community for many decades, and they are opposed to its destruction.
- The area is used daily for a wide variety of activities from sports to sitting by the water and teaching school children about nature. They will be the most affected by this project's negative environmental impacts.
- Their concerns were dismissed in the DEIR.
- The nearby community is 60% linguistically isolated, and were not adequately informed or included in the project planning from the beginning till present.
- This is environmental injustice



SAN PASCUAL

A FUNCTIONING RIPARIAN HABITAT SHOULD BE PRESERVED



A coast Live Oak Sycamore Woodland

SAN PASCUAL

HISTORIC WETLAND RESTORATION

San Pascual Park is a perfect restoration candidate for the channelized Arroyo Seco River. San Pascual is one of the few remaining relics of the original river bend and wetland.

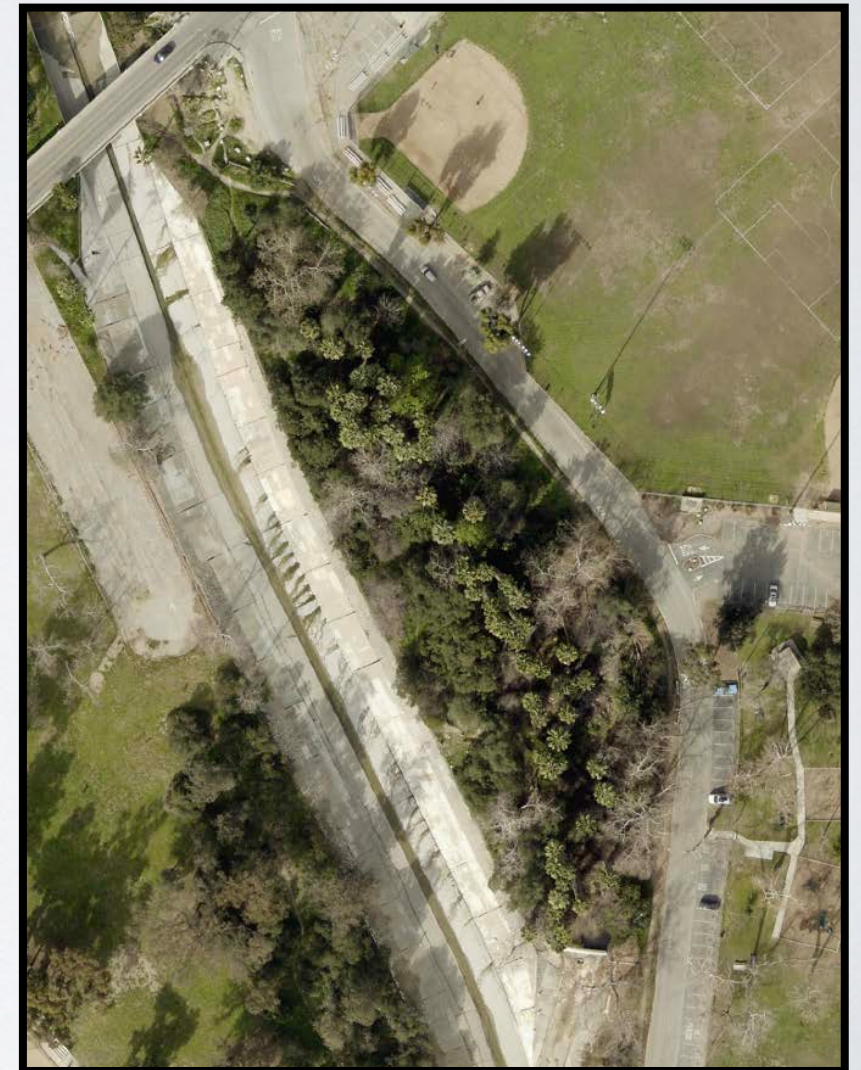


Before channelization 1931



After channelization 1937
South of San Pascual ave

After channelization- present



SAN PASCUAL

SAN PASCUAL IS A SACRED LAND FOR THE KIZH

The Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians, Kizh Nation are opposed to this project.

A Sacred Land Search, identified the Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians, Kizh Nation at this site.

Hereditary Chief Andy Salas, states in a letter to Pasadena:

*“There was never a complete formal consultation conducted with our tribe under CEQA or AB 52, as required by law. Due to the sensitivity of the area and its known connection to sacred sites and tribal cultural resources, we are formally requesting **full avoidance of this location**”.*



SAN PASCUAL

Mature trees and wetland, should be saved and area restored

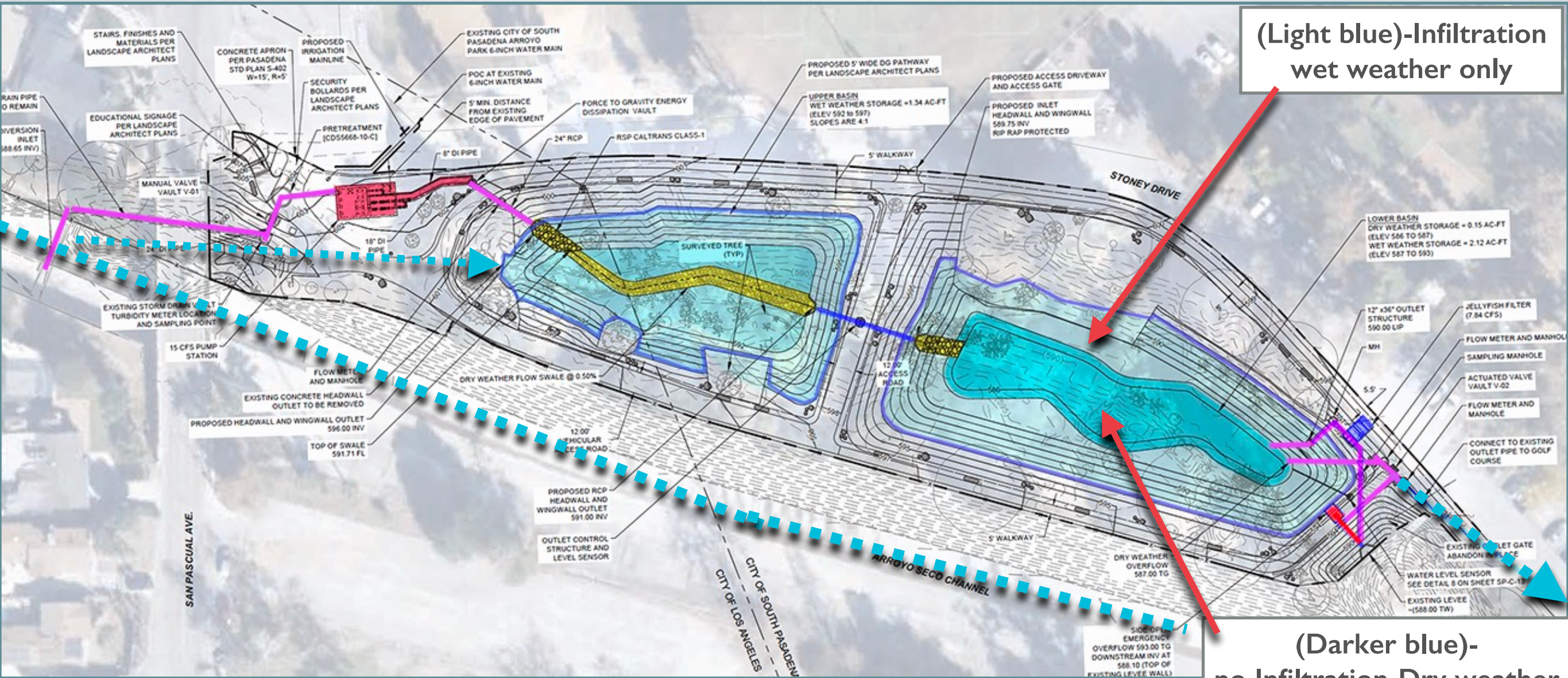
Project proposes extensive destruction of a natural habitat, with massive land excavation, buried infrastructure, over 130 trees removal, artificial lined ponds, no water access for the public, and an uninviting unsafe habitat, that will take 20-50 years to establish, if ever.





SAN PASCUAL

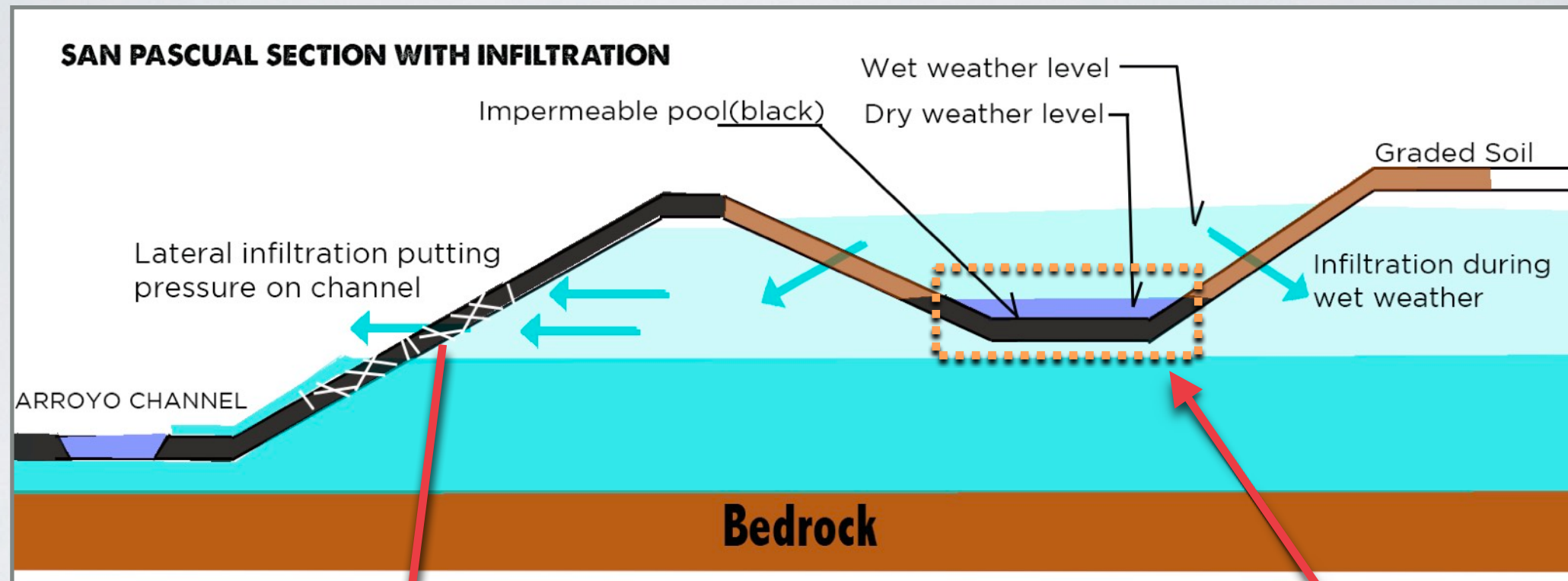
An artificial wetland



Grading and infrastructure

SAN PASCUAL

Drainage, infiltration and impact for the aging Arroyo channel



Impermeable portion

As documented in the DEIR geological report, infiltration will only be lateral, and will not reach the aquifer. Augmented water storage in the new deeper ponds will compromise the Arroyo concrete channel stability. DEIR dismisses this risk

Based on DEIR comment by
Ken Kules and Alexandra Huttinger Ntazinda

SAN PASCUAL

A FOREST DESTROYED

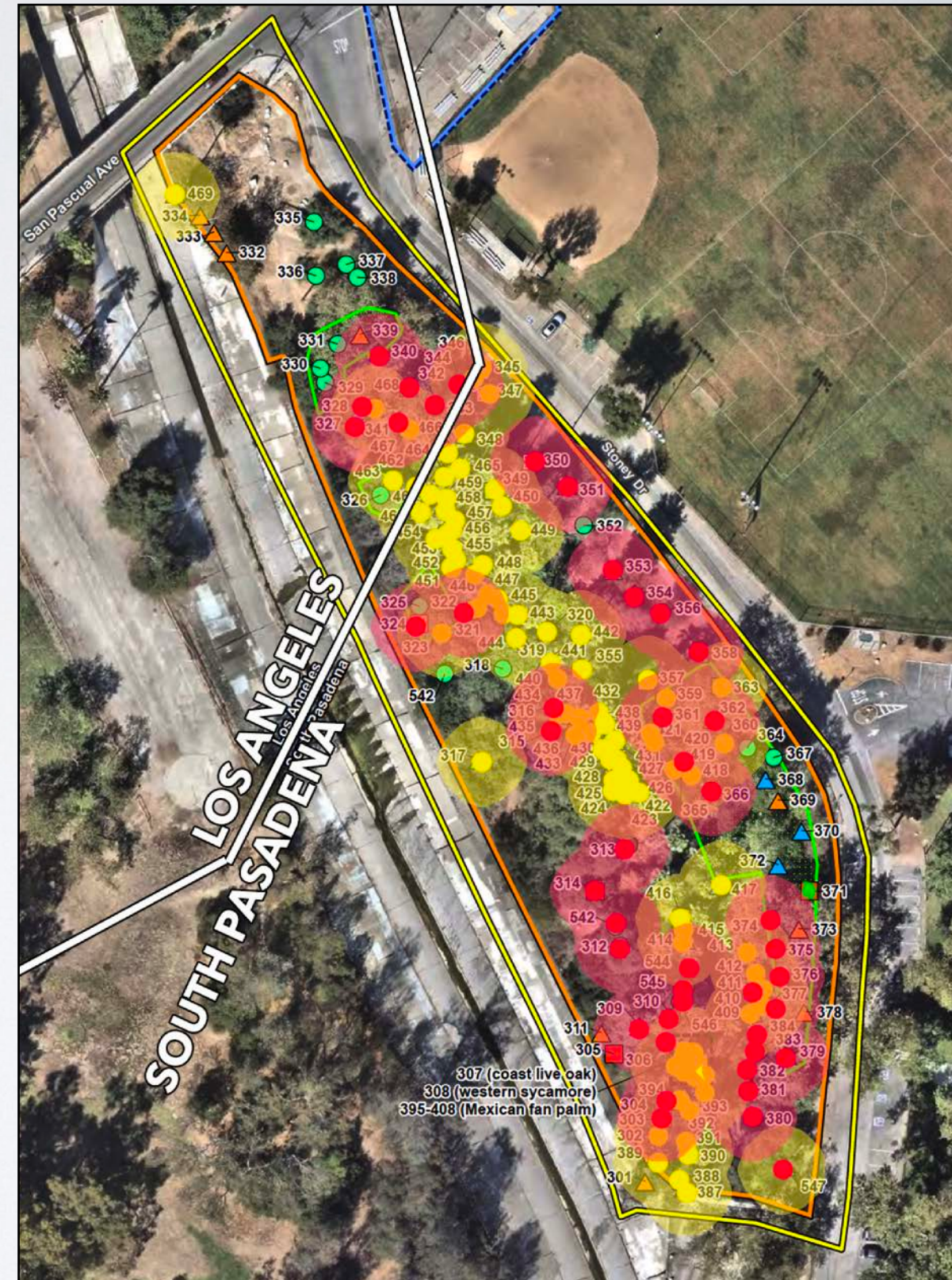
Pasadena intends to cut down over 136 mature trees for this project, which will have a permanent and negative impact on the whole valley and all wildlife that depends on it.

- This diagram shows all the **130** trees removed out the counted* **157** trees in **San Pascual**. Only **27** trees will remain. (86% removed in SP)

- bubble indicates a protected tree to be removed
- bubble indicates a non-protected tree to be removed
- Many of the tree canopies are larger than bubble size.

**There are 40+ uncounted protected smaller native trees such as Holly Cherry, Laurel Sumacs. (Unmarked dark areas on this map)*

Source: DEIR volume 2 pg 655, 662, 663, 666-675



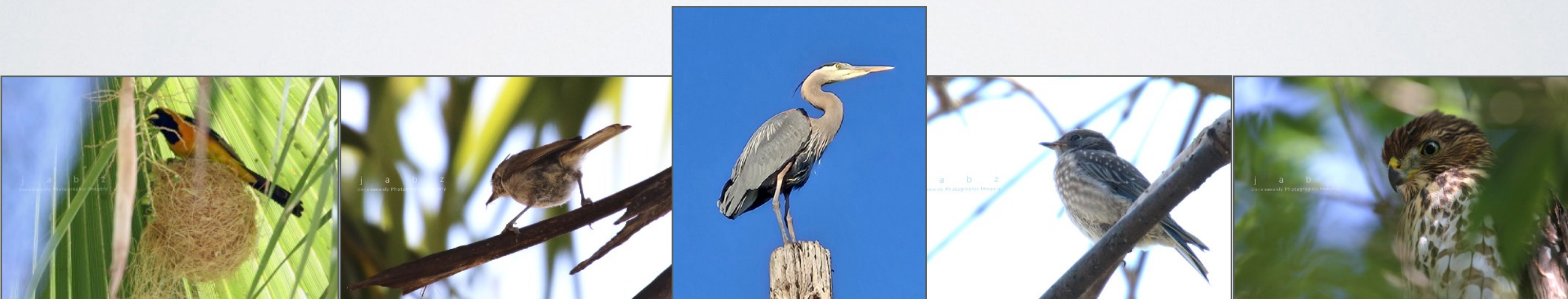
AN ECOSYSTEM LOST

The impact of this project will decimate the current ecosystem

- The demolition and construction process will destroy the food sources for multiple species.
- This biodiversity loss will reduce the survival of all interdependent species and will cascade throughout the area.
- The impact on multiple bird species will be severe regardless of “mitigating” nesting seasons. Their habitat will be destroyed and will take years to restore.
- The DEIR dismissed all potential environmental impacts and did not identify several species.

CDFW Letter : *"the Project's CEQA document should fully identify the Project's potential impacts on stream or riparian resources, including downstream resources, and provide adequate avoidance, mitigation, monitoring, and reporting commitments for issuance of the LSA Agreement."*

LSA(Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement)



Bird photos taken from San Pascual (From left to right):

Hooded Oriole, Oak Titmouse, Blue Heron, Western blue bird, Cooper hawk

(Photos by JBZ and Rosa)

SAN PASCUAL

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

LARWQCB comment letter on the DEIR:

LARWQCB-LA Regional Water Quality Control Board

“In fact, the proposed project would degrade the existing ecological habitat and beneficial uses during dry-weather conditions through the removal of all flow. In addition, the proposed alternative would remove existing vegetation at the sites, which would temporarily increase the heat island effect and decrease shade and tree cover until new vegetation is established.”

What would happen at San Pascual if project moves forward



SAN PASCUAL PARK

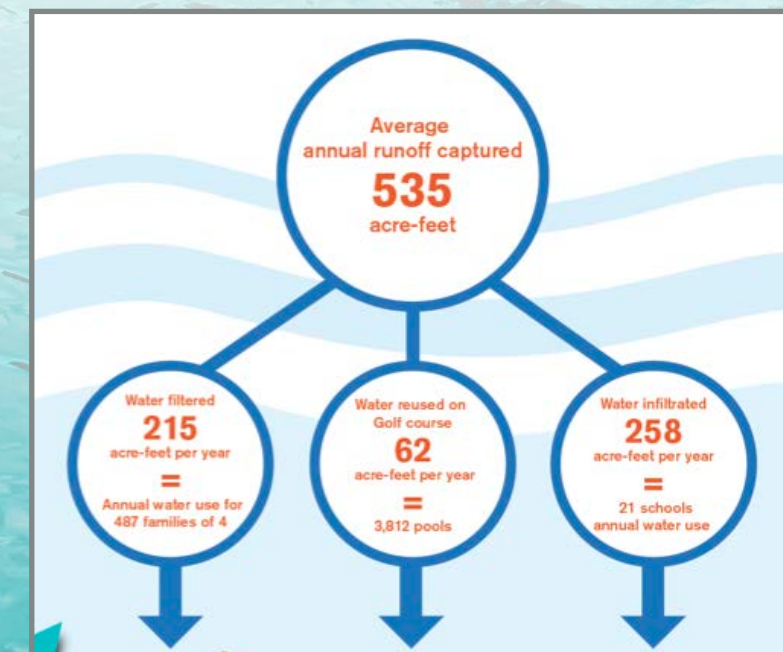
WATER CAPTURE IN SAN PASCUAL

The water capture will undoubtedly have serious repercussions to wildlife all the way down the channel to the ocean, especially in drought years

- The project intends to capture about **175 Million gallons** of water (**535 Acre Feet**) annually on an average year of rainfall at the San Pascual site.
- 60% of the total water captured - over **100 million gallon** of water (**258 AF + 62 AF**) - will be held or diverted annually
- South Pasadena will hold onto about **85 million gallons** (**258 AF**) of water on the site. None of this water will be shared with Los Angeles.
- **20 million** gallons of this water (**62 AF**) will be diverted to the South Pasadena Golf Course for their use. None of this water will be shared with Los Angeles.
- It is questionable if South Pasadena has California Water Rights to divert water from the Arroyo Seco to their golf course.

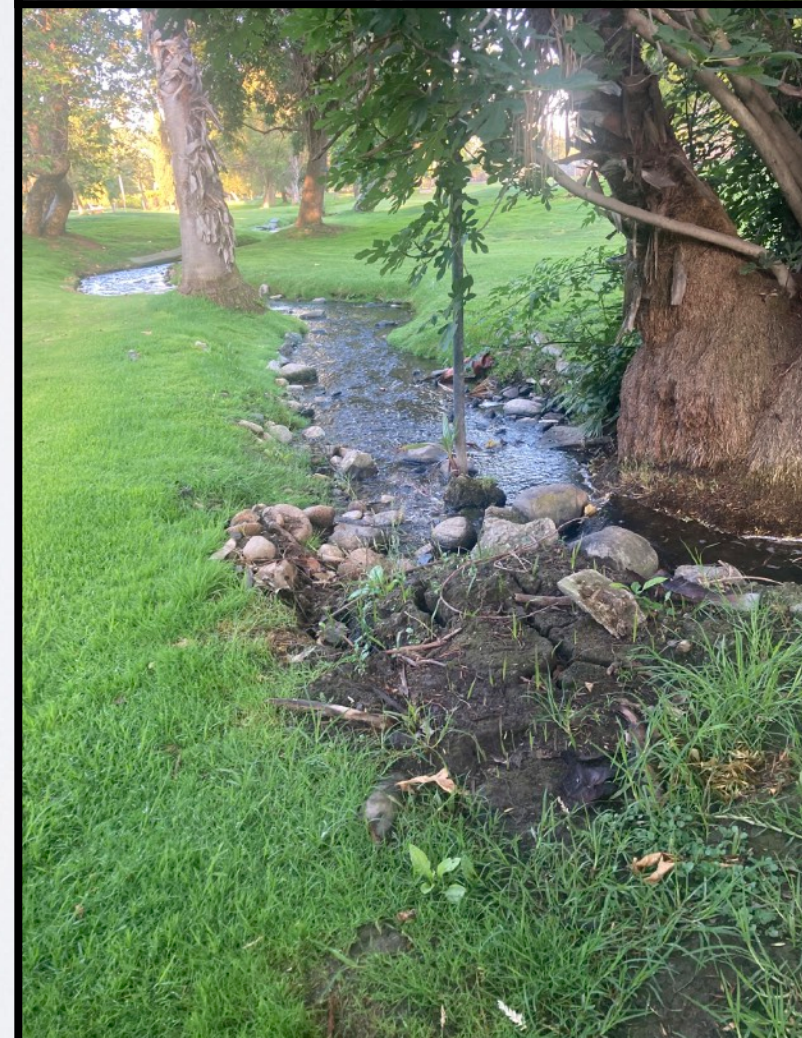
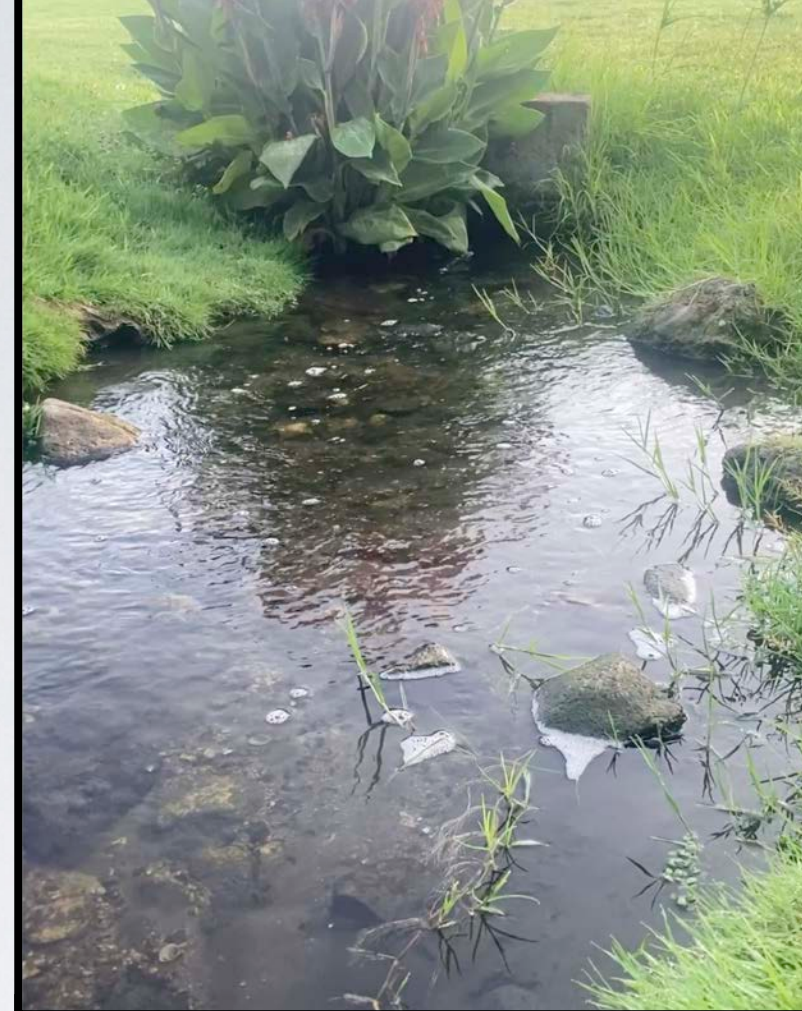
Source of Water Amounts:

<https://www.cityofpasadena.net/public-works/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2023-04-27-Second-Community-Meeting-Graphic-Boards.pdf>



USING SCARCE RIVER WATER

- Both projects plan to use DRY WEATHER waters only.
- Any water taken from an already depleted river affects the ecology of the river and its future restoration. Jenny Newman from LA Regional Water Quality control Board warned against the accumulative affect of depleting the Arroyo in multiple projects.
- Pasadena says it is currently diverting same amount it plans to use in the future, through an historical diversion. MND also said they stopped using water because of pollution.
- South Pasadena has not provided metered documentation for past and current Arroyo water use. Future quantities may be larger than stated.
- Golf courses around the world and LA County are already using recycled water. It is time South Pasadena stops exploiting scarce river water as our climate warms.



Water flowing in the South Pasadena Golf Course



SAVE SAN PASCUAL PARK

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This project will cause permanent negative environmental impacts

Water reduction in the Arroyo

- Less than half the water captured will be filtered and returned to the Arroyo Seco. This will undoubtedly create a negative impact on the downstream ecology.
- 20 Million gallons of water will be also diverted to the South Pasadena Golf Course with no benefit to Los Angeles parks.

Forest destruction

- The plans intend to remove 86% of the existing trees in the area (136 mature trees including protected Oaks, Sycamores, and Elderberries), which will decimate a local ecosystem. This forest reduces heat, noise, and pollution. If these trees are cut down, these benefits will be lost and impact the entire area.
- It will take 20-50 years for replacement trees to bring back the benefits of a mature canopy to the community.

Elimination of a natural ecosystem

- A natural delicate riparian habitat will be destroyed. US Fish and Wildlife Service recognizes this area as a wetland.
- This park is a Coast Live Oak/Sycamore Woodland and sensitive natural community.
- The San Pascual diversion will block fish passage and eliminate stream flow during critical periods.
- No mitigation can save the countless birds, bats, fish and mammals that rely on the San Pascual forest during 2 years of construction.

Reduced quality of life for people

- Overall, this plan destroys the natural beauty of San Pascual Park.
- The benefits of forest on visitor's and community health and well being will be lost.
- Noise, dust, and air pollution during the probable 2 years construction, will affect the community's health.



San Rafael proposal

Most of the area will be excavated with “only” 6 Protected Elderberries removed.
All Sumacs and other unprotected trees will be removed.

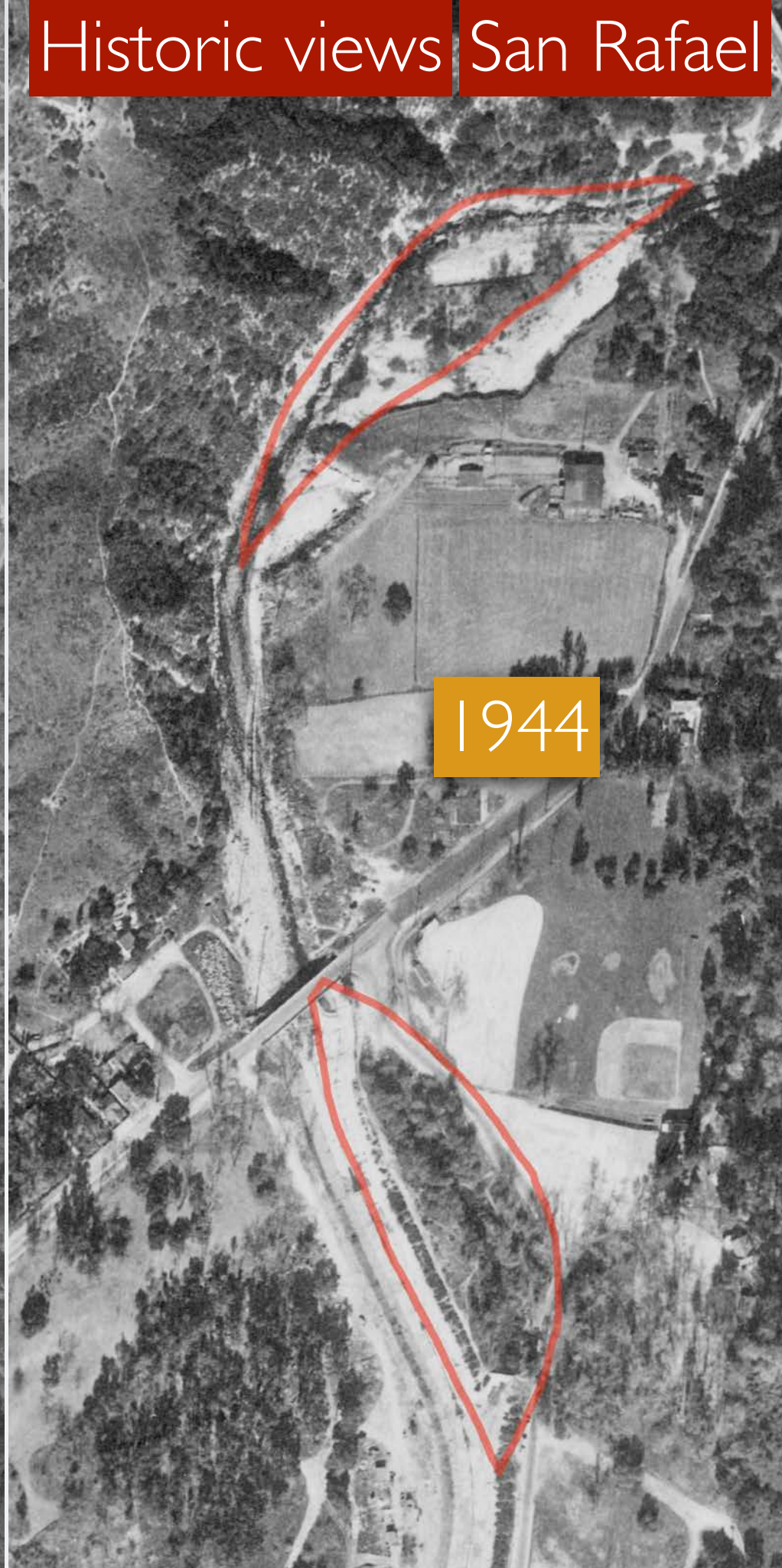


As Is



Project size

Historic views San Rafael

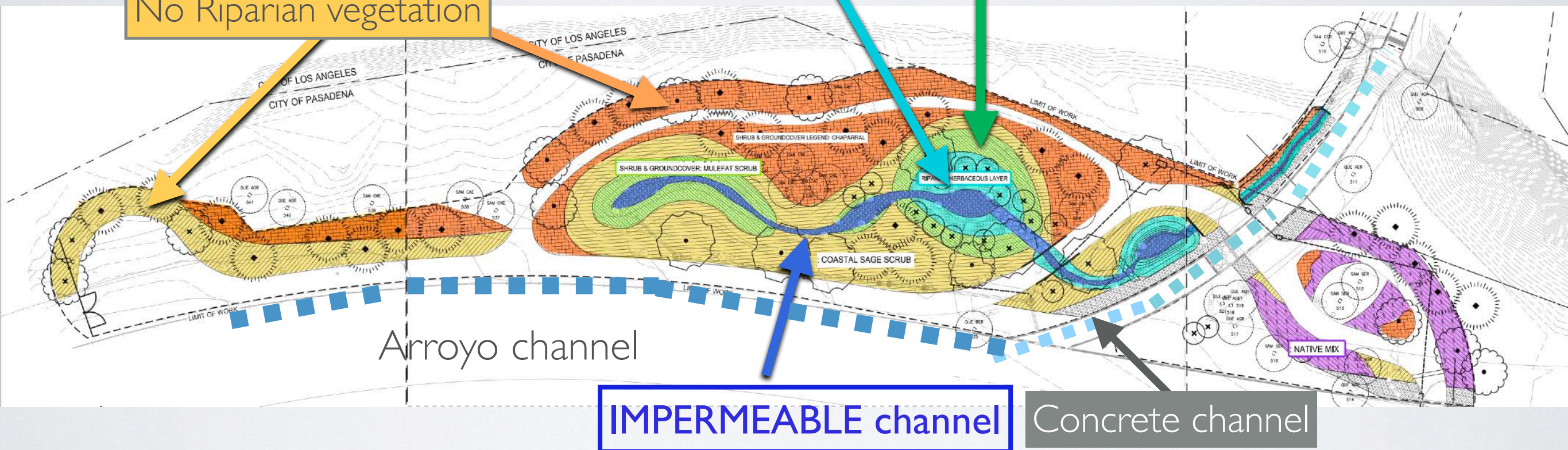


REPLANTING

Very few wetland areas
Most vegetation is Chaparral & Coastal Sage Brush

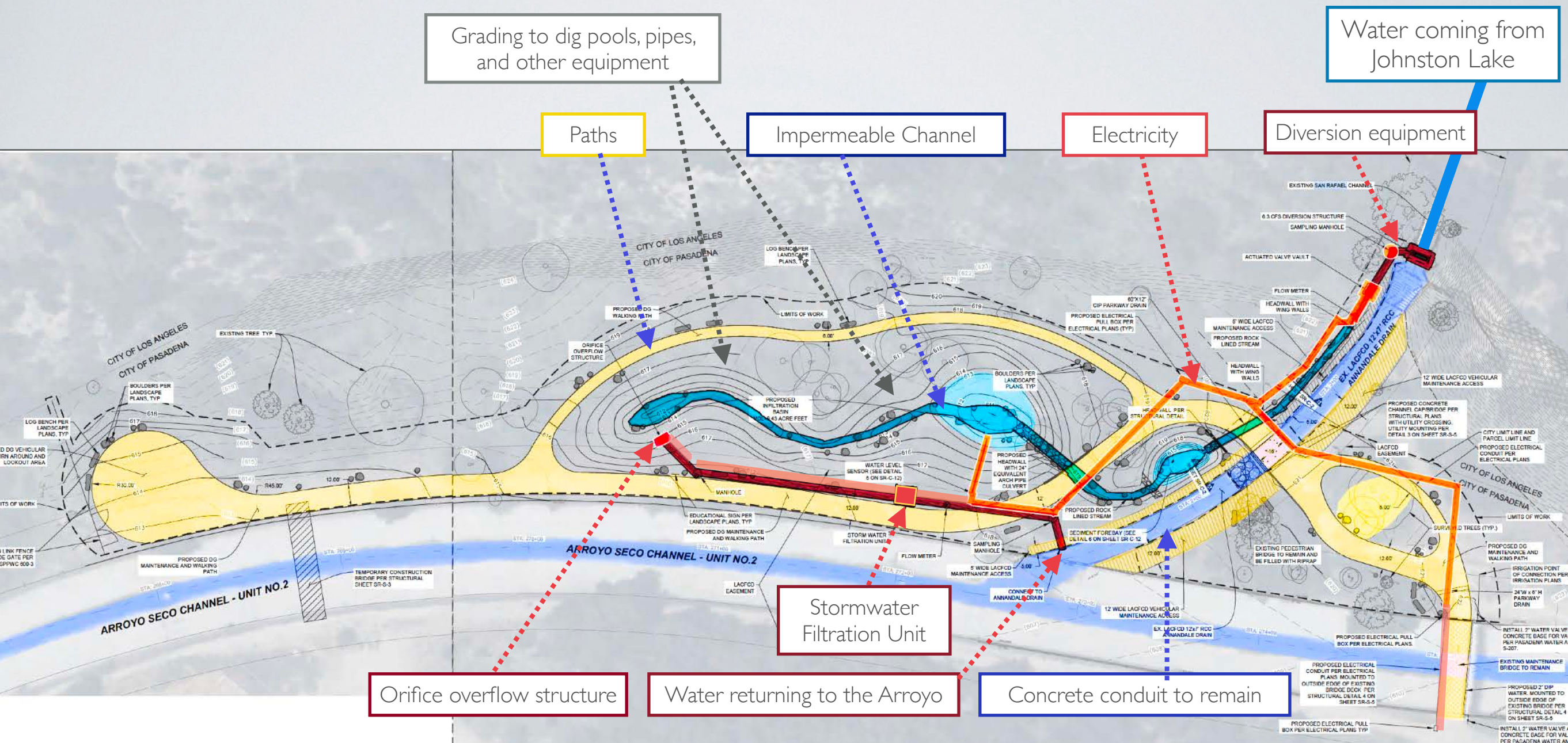
PERMEABLE with vegetation adapted to dry and wet soil

No Riparian vegetation



Project created a very small wetland as seen in the blue areas. Most area will have dry weather vegetation. Project should have included an expanded wetland habitat.

Construction- grading and buried infrastructure



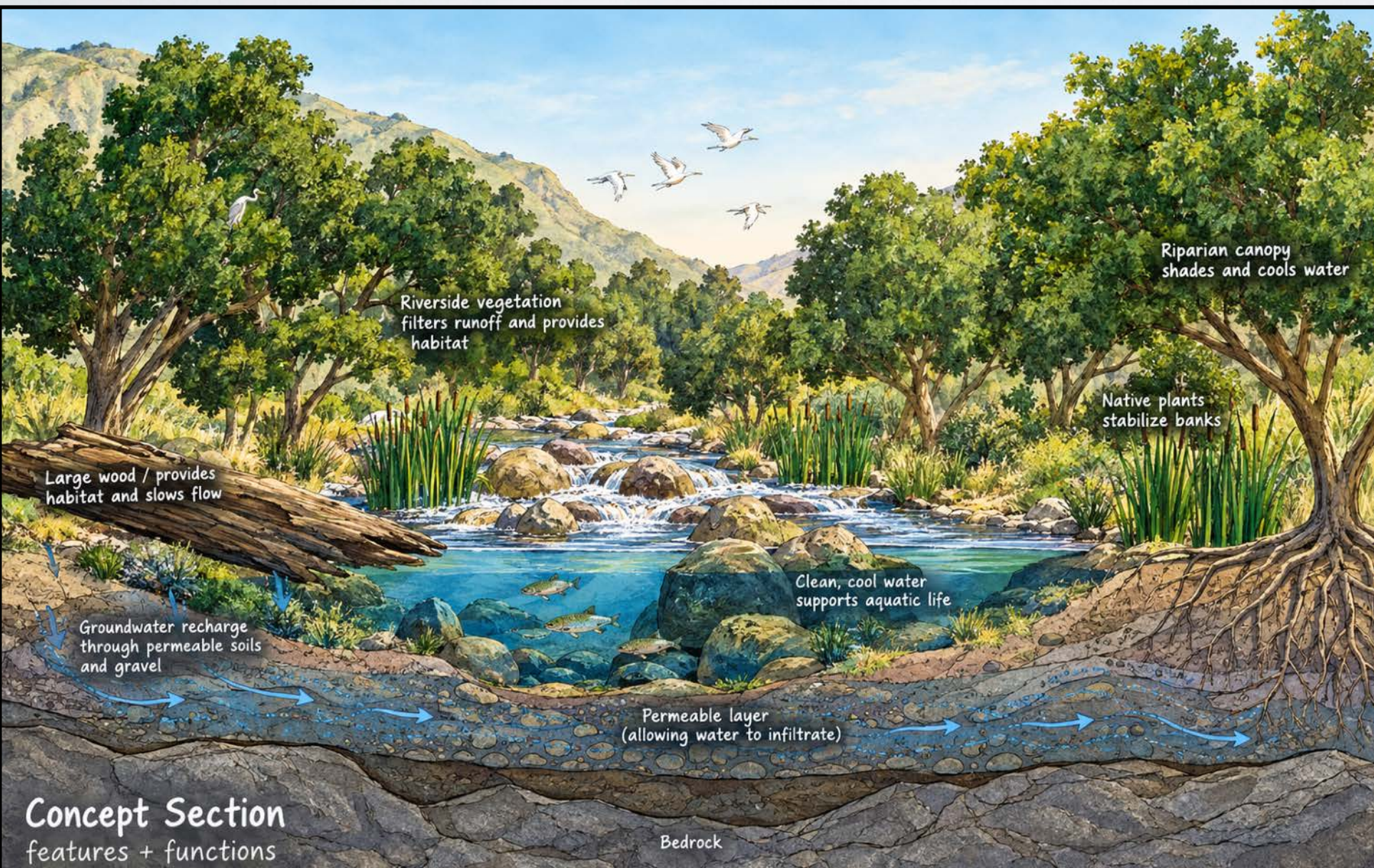
Project consist of excavation/grading/tree removals of almost the whole area.
San Rafael wetland should be restored and concrete conduit removed

Natural Wetland Restoration

The true nature based solution expanding the wetland

San Rafael restoration of the wetland as proposed by
Yuchen Xiong and **Max Frieda**

Department of Landscape architecture and
Environmental Planning, UC Berkeley



Restoration effort of Steelhead trout

Tim Brick is a water and river restoration expert who leads a strong effort to restore the Steelhead trout



For tens of thousands of years, spectacular Steelhead have traveled up and down the Arroyo Seco to the Pacific Ocean until they were blocked by human barriers one hundred years ago.

Today the Arroyo Seco is the key stream for the restoration of the now-endangered Southern California Steelhead.



SAVE SAN PASCUAL PARK

THE DEIR HAS DISMISSED ALL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS as less than significant or insignificant with mitigations

- There will be significant impact and loss considering all aspects of the environment, wildlife, public use, water use, indigenous history, archeology, and neighborhood health and well-being.
- South Pasadena has not produced any documentation to their water rights to the Arroyo Seco.
- Two years of construction will create noise, pollution, dust, and destruction that will impact the whole area and its many users, both human and wildlife. Mitigation at its best cannot save countless nests and animal habitat that will be eliminated.
- Eliminating the water flow and the interconnectedness of the trees during construction will destroy the ecosystems that currently exists.
- It will take 20-50 years to recapture the cool shade, protection, and beauty of the environment that will be destroyed.

Concrete or Nature?

Cities have an opportunity to start restoring the channelized Arroyo. Starting with San Pascual and San Rafael, remove the concrete channel and rebuild a natural river, re-introduce the native Steelhead trout and enrich biodiversity of the whole area, while cleaning the Arroyo and replenish our aquifers. Man made ponds with buried infrastructure cannot do what nature does best- Clean our waters!



SAVE SAN PASCUAL PARK

Parks and natural spaces are public assets and should be treated as such. They offer recreational opportunities, environmental benefits, and a connection to nature that is vital for our well-being.

It's crucial for any decisions regarding these spaces to involve public input, respect the local and indigenous perspectives, and safeguard personal connections to this park and all its living creatures.

It is the obligation of those responsible for preserving natural park and public park lands to ensure these natural resources are safeguarded for current and future generations.

Group and individuals opposed to the Water Reuse Project

COUNCILMEMBER YSABEL JURADO, CD 14

LOS ANGELES SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER, ROCIO RIVAS, BD 2

GABRIELENO BAND OF MISSION INDIANS - KIZH NATION

STEWARDS OF THE ARROYO SECO

FRIENDS OF SOUTH PASADENA NATURE PARK

EAST AREA PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS (EAPD)

SIERRA CLUB

LOS ANGELES AUDUBON

LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY FORESTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CFAC)

CLAW CITIZENS FOR LOS ANGELES WILDLIFE

COYOTL MACEHUALLI

LOS ANGELES CLIMATE REALITY PROJECT

SAN PASCUAL ARROYO SECO WILDLIFE PRESERVATION

HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

ARROYO SECO NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

LINCOLN HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

LOS FELIZ NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

GARVANZA IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

HISTORIC GARVANZA COALITION

HIGHLAND PARK HERITAGE TRUST

MONTECITO HEIGHTS IMPROVMENT ASSOCIATION

NORTH EAST LOS ANGELES SAVE OUR OPEN SPACES (NELA SOUL)

AND OVER A FOUR THOUSAND INDIVIDUALS FROM OUR COMMUNITIES