

## Executive Summary

The Rose Creek Watershed is a 36-square mile area that extends from the Miramar Marine Corps Air Station sixteen miles along San Clemente and Rose creeks through Clairemont Mesa and University City to the east end of Mt. Soledad; later draining to the 4,235.6-acre Mission Bay Park in eastern Pacific Beach where Rose Creek meets the ocean. Rose Creek is a gateway to the City of San Diego, the community of Pacific Beach, and to Mission Bay Park.

The watershed contains great natural beauty and biological diversity. There are huge Sycamore trees in both Rose and San Clemente canyons that offer shade and rest to hikers and cyclists as well as wildlife. Many areas contain native habitat that supports a rich array of wildlife including endangered and threatened species. The ecological value of the undeveloped land in the watershed is in its diversity of native vegetation communities, which provide a wide variety of essential animal habitats.

Unfortunately the watershed suffers from many of the same ills as other watersheds at the edge where wild lands meet urban development. Invasive exotic (non-native) species have overrun many areas and urban problems such as crime and vagrancy are acute in the lower watershed. While the overall health of the Rose Creek Watershed is better than many urban-wildland watersheds, the lower watershed, in particular, is unhealthy, unsafe and a detriment to water quality in Mission Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

Fortunately, steps are being taken to make the watershed a healthier and safer place.

The California Coastal Conservancy, the County of San Diego, the City of San Diego and San Diego Earthworks have joined together to create the Rose Creek Watershed Opportunities Assessment (Assessment), a comprehensive analysis of opportunities and recommendations to enhance the natural, cultural, public safety, and recreation attributes of the Rose Creek Watershed. San Diego Earthworks is acting as the project manager; the consulting team includes [KTU&A Landscape Architects](#), biologists [Merkel and Associates](#), and archaeologist Dr. Susan Hector.

This Existing Conditions report is the first step in the Assessment. It along with three associated technical memorandums, Recreational Trails; Biological Resources; and Erosion/Sedimentation, has been prepared to help create a baseline documentation of the current health of the watershed. The consultant team consolidated information contained in numerous studies and is augmenting this information with field assessments. This report contains 10 sections documenting what is currently known about the watershed, with a special attention on the natural areas that are the primary focus of the Assessment.

Recommendations from the public on the Existing Conditions report and associated technical documents, along with additional analyses, will result in the development of a subsequent document, the Rose Creek Watershed Opportunities Assessment. The Assessment will include recommended enhancements such as better public access (for example, trails), improved water quality, restoration of natural habitat to support wildlife and removal of non-native "exotic invasive" plants, all of which will enhance both public safety and public enjoyment of the watershed.

The Assessment will engage and inform the public, guide volunteers and professionals, and build policy level support within the appropriate public agencies for implementation. With public support, the Assessment can become the guiding document for planning activities throughout the watershed, especially in its natural areas.

San Diego Earthworks has developed a public steering committee known as the Rose Creek Watershed Alliance to help guide the development of the Assessment, as well as the implementation of its future recommendations. A number of community, business and environmental organizations have joined the "Rose Creek Watershed Alliance" and are developing a comprehensive vision for the Rose Creek Watershed for incorporation into the final Assessment. More information can be found at [www.rosecreekwatershed.org](http://www.rosecreekwatershed.org).