

A Successful Volunteer Trail and Urban Stream Restoration Project

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Willow Glen Neighborhood Association;
Santa Clara County Parks & Recreation Commission
September, 2000

the Willow Glen Neighborhood Association

Los Gatos Creek

Urban Stream Restoration Project

funded by a grant from the

California Department of Water Resources

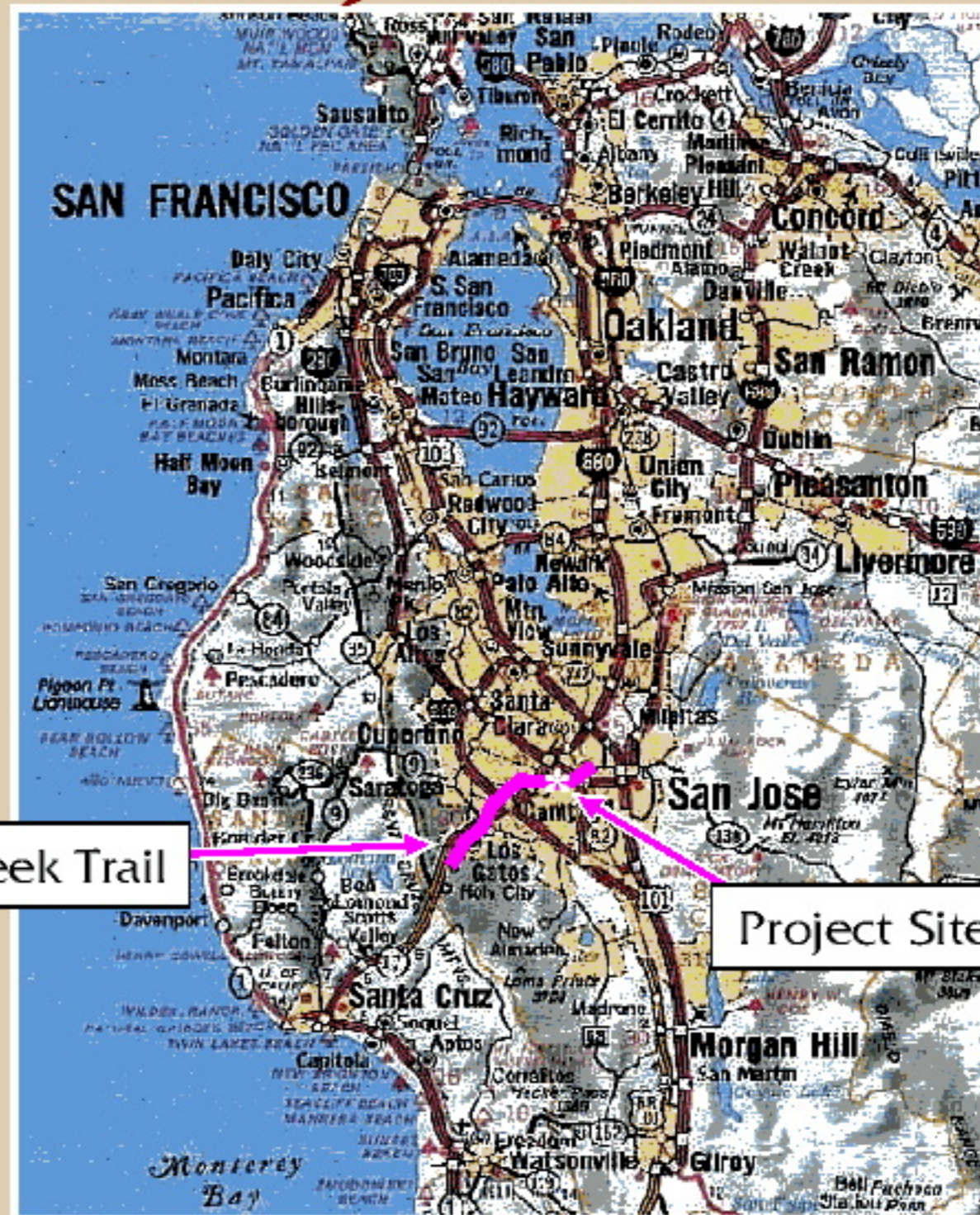
cosponsored by the County of Santa Clara

and the Santa Clara Valley Water District





Project Site



Los Gatos Creek Trail

Project Site





WGNA

- ◆ ~650 member households
- ◆ founded in 1973
- ◆ community volunteers involved with:
 - traffic & parking
 - zoning & land use
 - political awareness (e.g., candidate forums)
 - neighborhood preservation & enhancement
 - parks / openspace / environment

WWW.WGNA.NET



Los Gatos Creek Trail



- ◆ 12 miles long
 - Santa Cruz Mountains to downtown San Jose
 - paved, car-free
- ◆ Popular
 - hundreds of users/hr.
 - joggers, bikers, roller-bladers, baby buggies, skateboards, dog-walkers, fishing, ...
- ◆ Grass-roots beginning in 1970's
- ◆ One mile left to complete



“Before”



the SCVWD property (closed to the public)

1993

measuring “nothing” w/ a 50’ tape

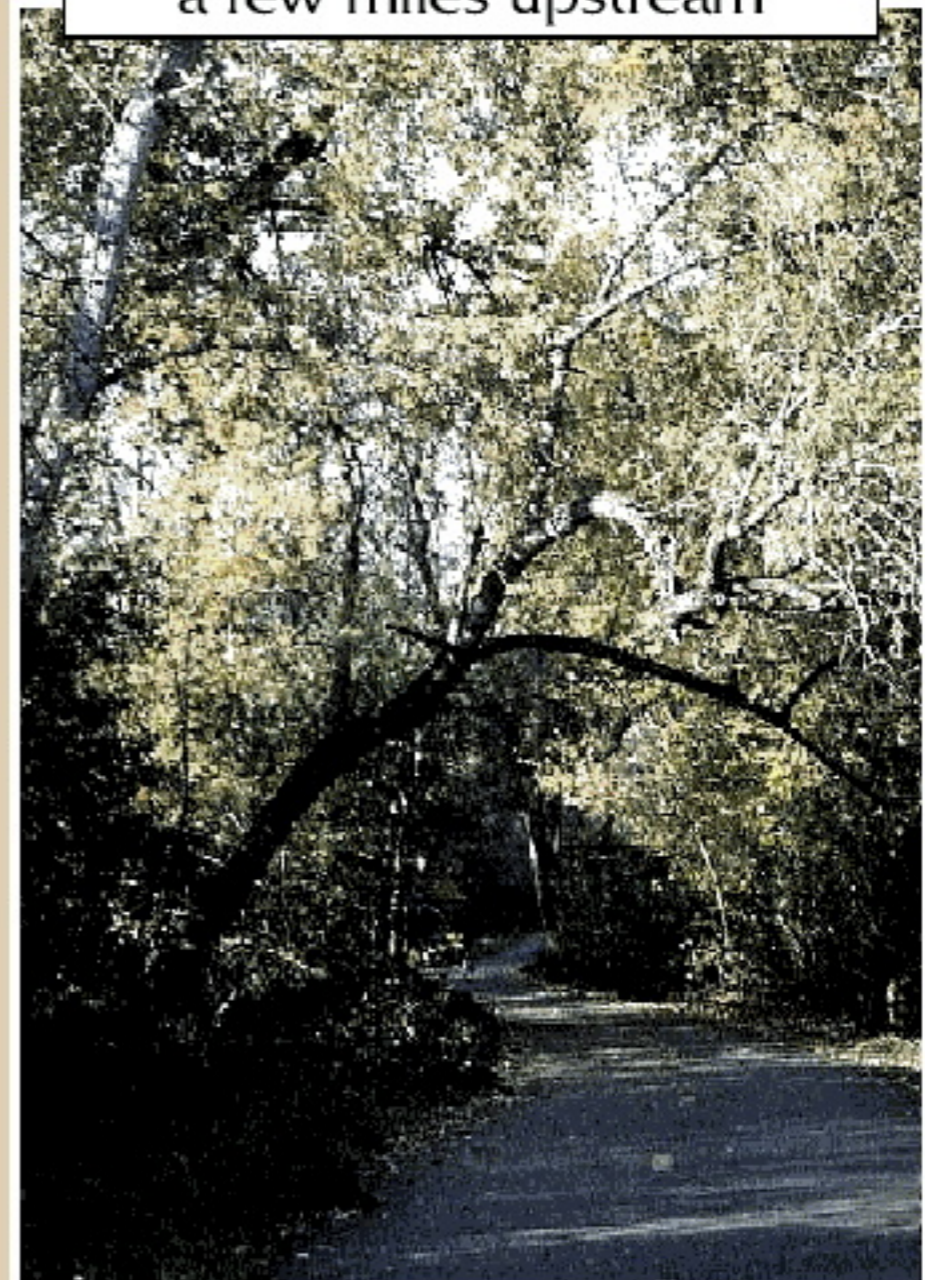


Great Possibilities




in the stream
a few blocks downstream

existing trail
a few miles upstream





Many Different Tacts



- ◆ Alternative Transportation
 - ◆ ADA
 - ◆ Livable Communities
 - ◆ In conjunction with highway upgrades
 - ◆ Flood control / erosion reduction
- 


Purpose of Project



- ◆ Control overbank erosion,
 - ◆ Restore native riparian habitat,
 - ◆ Educate the public on creek preservation,
 - ◆ Create public openspace greenway/park,
 - ◆ Increase political awareness of Los Gatos Creek Trail Master Plan, and
 - ◆ Change state regulations that had kept the land barren.
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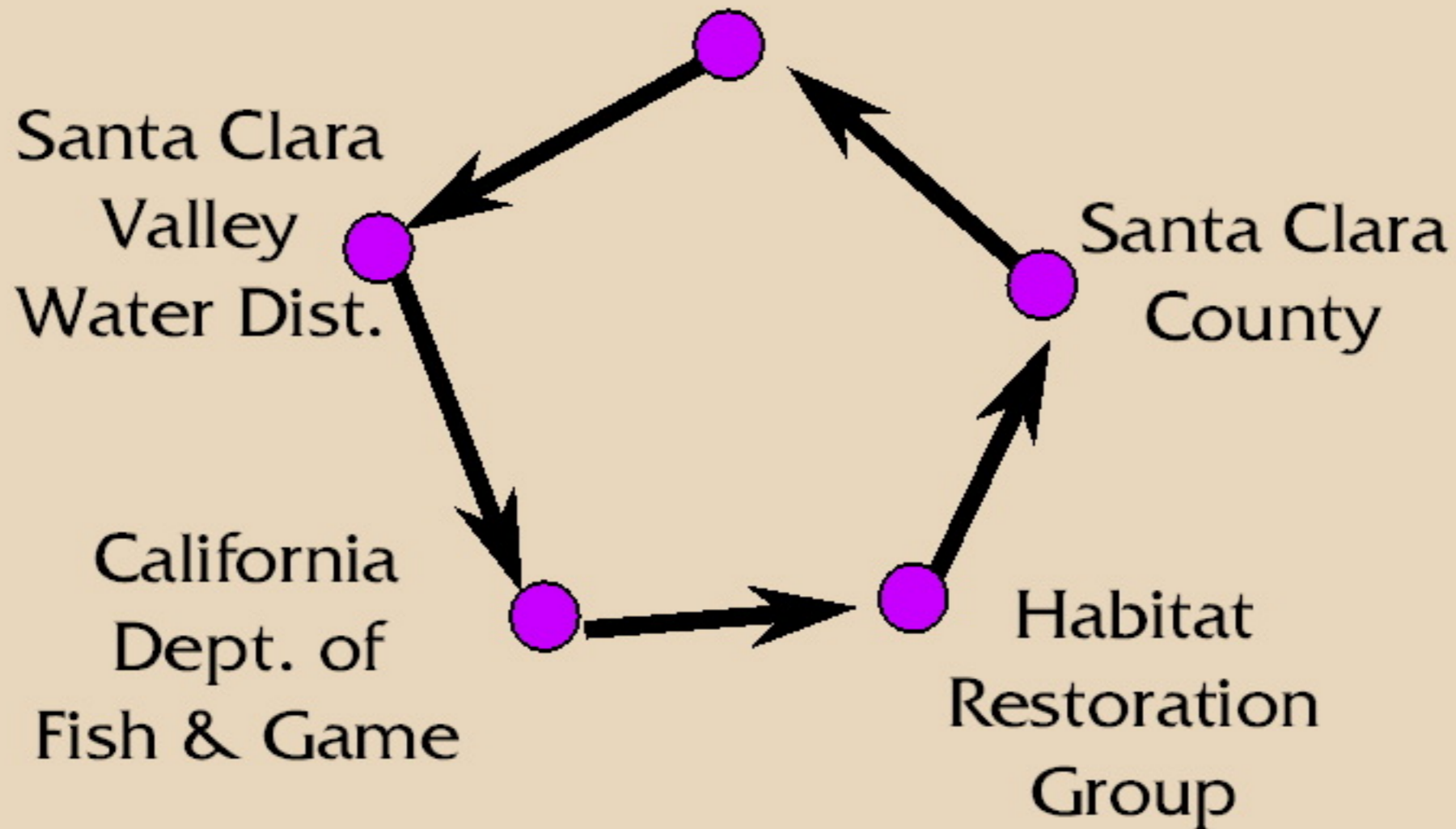
Advance Mitigation



- ◆ Work out Memo of Understanding (MOU)
 - ◆ Evaluate habitat “Before”
 - ◆ Restore habitat
 - ◆ When mitigation req’d, evaluate “After”.
 - ◆ Apply difference as mitigation
 - ◆ (Reimburse DWR in cash or kind for portion of project claimed.)
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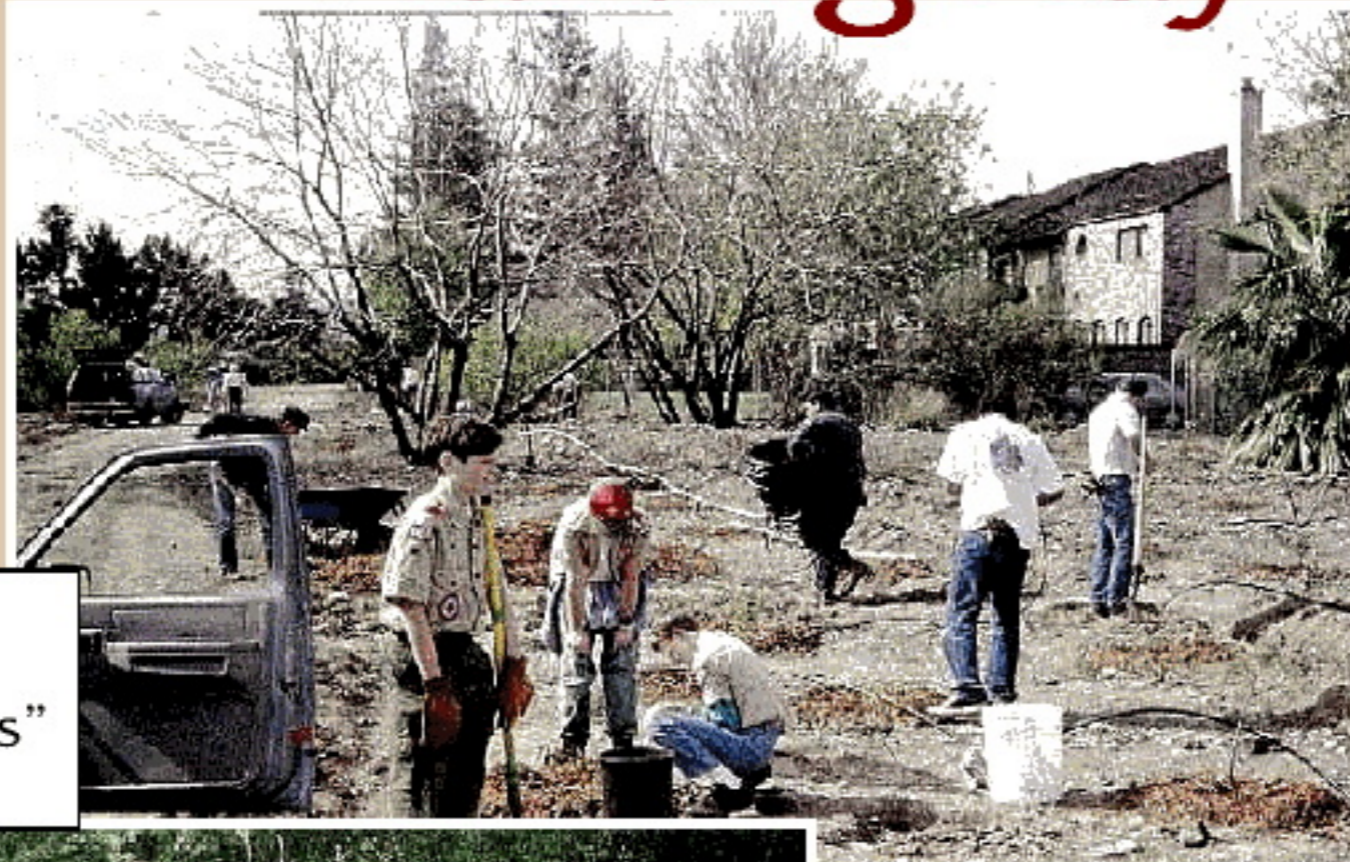
Approval Cycle

Dept. of Water Resources





“Planting Day”



1996

members
of the
“muddy hands”
club

great
photo op!





Results

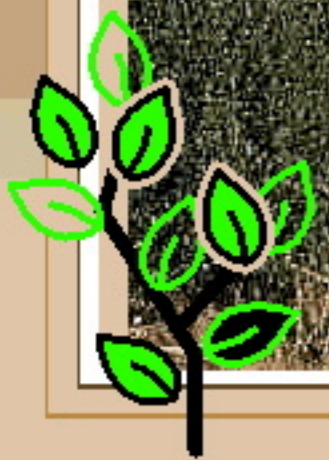
- ◆ 200 volunteers, 1000 native trees/plants;
1/2 mile of irrigation system
(used for 3 yrs to help the plants establish);
- ◆ State procedure for Advance Mitigation;
- ◆ City & County riparian corridor policies
(Riparian Restoration Action Plan);
- ◆ Awareness/support for creek & trail
 - public, official, agency (SCVWD);
- ◆ Federal grant to build trail;
- ◆ Enlivened the community
 - created 10-acre openspace greenway.



“After”



2000



Restored Habitat





Timeline

- ◆ Dec. '92: learned of grant program
- ◆ Jan. '93: application deadline
- ◆ Apr. '93: awarded grant
- ◆ Nov. '93: public mtg., ground breaking
- ◆ July '95: site preparation; MOU
- ◆ Dec. '95-Apr. '96: plantings
- ◆ June '96: celebrate completion





Trails Enhance Property Values

Village at Lark: large townhomes in Los Gatos

San Jose Mercury News

3/30/00

Promotional material
VILLAGE AT LARK

Los Gatos, known for its restaurants, boutiques, architecture and well-rated schools, has a new creek-side townhouse development: the Village at Lark.

The community can be found just off Highway 17 on Lark Avenue between Los Gatos and Winchester boulevards. It is near Vesna Park, downtown Los Gatos and the Los Gatos Creek Trail.

Priced from \$689,000 to the high \$700,000s, the homes have four

bedrooms or three bedrooms plus a den. Living space ranges from about 2,000 to 2,200 square feet per plan.

The homes, which come with attached two-car garages, feature kitchens with marble and limestone counter tops, hardwood floors and cherry or maple cabinets.

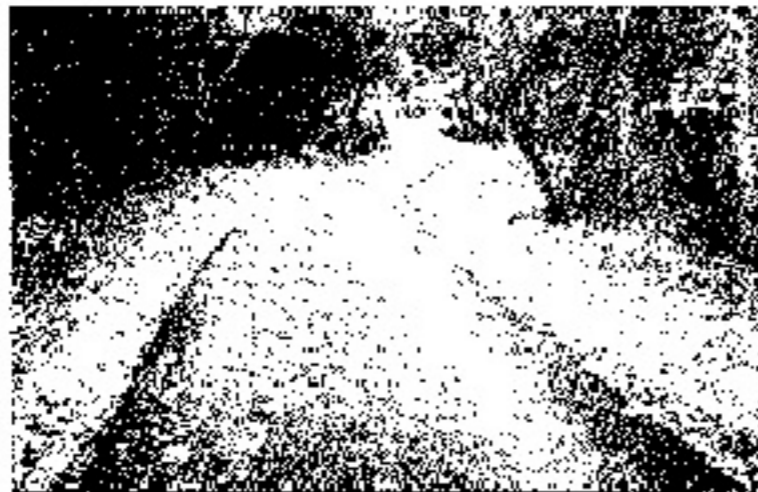
Master bedrooms have walk-in closets, large bathrooms with over-size showers and Roman style tubs finished in imported slab marble. In addition, most master bedrooms have fireplaces.

To ensure that sufficient open space was saved, the planning process

leading up to the construction of the Village at Lark took about two years.

To visit Village at Lark, take Highway 85 south to Bascom Avenue then west to Lark Avenue, or take Highway 17 toward Santa Cruz/Los Gatos to Lark, then go right one block.

For more information about Village at Lark, call (408) 355-7430.



The Village at Lark is near the Los Gatos Creek trail, a popular gathering spot for hikers and bicyclists.

they don't even show a picture of the condos, just a photo of the trail!



Public Access Enhances the Environment



CLOSED TO PUBLIC:
Littered with trash.
Homeless encampments.
“Out of sight, out of mind”



OPEN TO PUBLIC:
Heavily used trail
on both sides of creek.
Healthy environment.
“Public stewardship,”
“pride of ownership”





Summary

- ◆ Funding comes in many guises
- ◆ Public access does not mean habitat threat
 - Precedent set for “advanced mitigation”
- ◆ Volunteers can make things happen
 - Don’t have to be “professional”
 - Get involved: “knowledge is power”
 - It’s fun and rewarding!

