



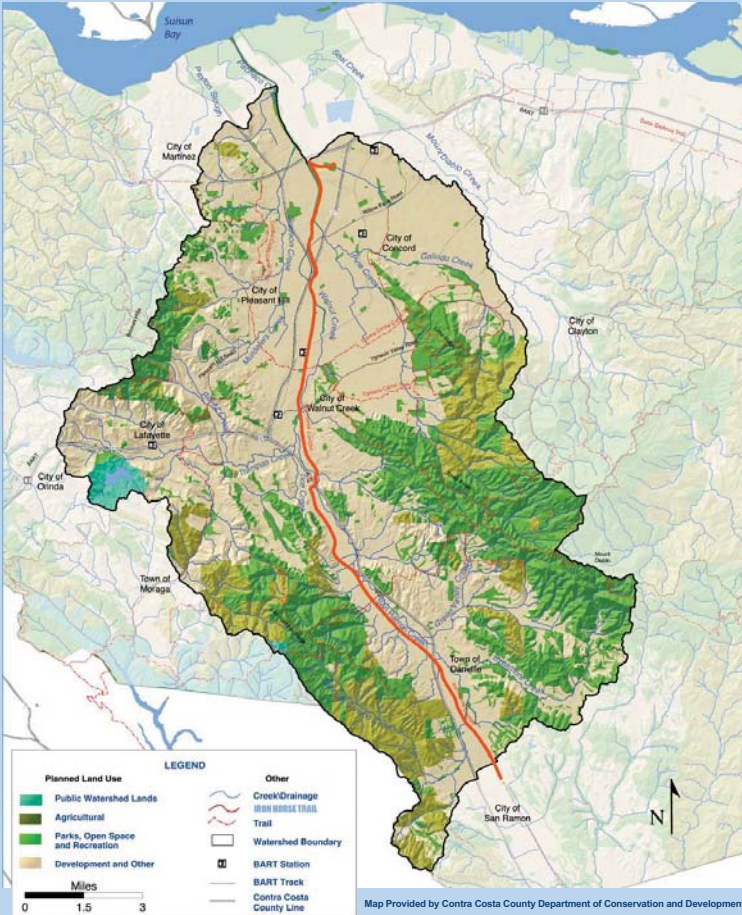
## WALNUT CREEK WATERSHED



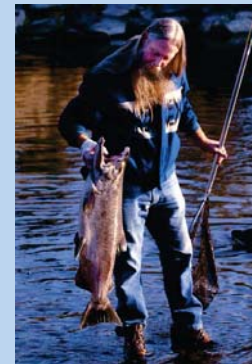
The San Ramon Bypass Channel was built by the US Army Corps of Engineers in the late 1980's to provide flood protection for downtown Walnut Creek. This channel takes stormwater from San Ramon Creek through the old railroad corridor and delivers it to just south of Ygnacio Valley Road.



Flooding from San Ramon Creek at Broadway Shopping Center in 1958



Students observe Walnut Creek from the bridge in Civic Park during a watershed awareness program.



Native salmon once spawned in the upper reaches of the Walnut Creek Watershed, but are now limited to a small percentage of downstream habitat. Man-made flood protection structures block their passage.

A watershed is the land area that drains to a body of water (river, lake, bay, ocean etc.). Watersheds are nature's geographical units. An occurrence in one part of the watershed can have effects elsewhere in the watershed, e.g. a summer fire in the headwaters may cause flooding miles away the following winter when extra mud and debris is washed downstream by rainstorms. This underscores the need for planning on a watershed-wide basis.

At approximately 90,000 acres, the Walnut Creek Watershed is Contra Costa County's largest, with the headwaters in Bolinger Canyon and the receiving waters in Suisun Bay. Tributary creeks flow through three major valleys. Numerous cities have grown up along these creeks and the main stem of Walnut Creek. As the population has boomed, we have greatly altered the land and the creek channels. These alterations have had major consequences for the ecology of the area.

Restoring Walnut Creek as a salmon spawning stream would require improvements in streamside habitat and water quality as well as removal of significant barriers to fish passage. A group of concerned individuals, organizations and agencies has begun meeting to consider ways to protect, enhance and restore the Walnut Creek Watershed. To learn more about this group and the watersheds of Contra Costa County or to get involved in monitoring local creeks, you can visit the Contra Costa Watershed Forum's website: [www.cocowaterweb.org](http://www.cocowaterweb.org).

This sign was prepared by LifeGarden, a Contra Costa County based 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization ([www.lifegarden.org](http://www.lifegarden.org)) with a Civic Pride grant from the City of Walnut Creek and a matching grant from Contra Costa County's Iron Horse Corridor Trust Fund. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of staff from the Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development and the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District in the development of this panel.