

Protecting Aliso Creek

In an effort to make Aliso Creek more aesthetically pleasing, Village Management Services staff teamed up with regulatory agencies and wildlife biologists, who recently approved two additional selective cattail removals per year in addition to the annual winter removals.

This authorization requires a wildlife biologist to survey the entire creek area for active nests or breeding ponds prior to starting work. Bird nesting season regulations also restrict activity in the creek to avoid disrupting the natural habitat of birds and other wildlife. Once these nests are located and safety buffers developed, crews can remove cattails from the remaining areas of the creek. A biologist monitors the work in progress to further ensure no habitat is disturbed.



Crews removed cattails by hand.

While crews and biologists surveyed Aliso Creek, they discovered several non-native species living in the creek—including goldfish, American bullfrogs and red-eared sliders. These three species are former house pets and don't belong in the wild. They may even threaten the creek's sensitive habitat and native species living there, like the western pond turtle (WPT).

Aliso Creek is home to the WPT, which is a protected species. The bullfrog, which you can hear bellowing in the evenings, is an invasive species that has spread throughout the state and is a known predator of WPT. Adult bullfrogs prey on juvenile pond turtles and breed in such large numbers that adults can eventually eat so many hatchling turtles that few survive to adulthood. After the existing WPT adults die off, nothing is left of the population in that location.

Since the WPT is the only native freshwater turtle in its historic range, it did not develop the ability to successfully compete for resources with other turtle species. For example, red-eared sliders produce nearly twice as many offspring, which overwhelm and out-compete the pond turtle population for resources.

That is why Aliso Creek must remain a habitat for native wildlife. Biologists will clear the creek of any non-native species they find there. Releasing pets into the wild is harmful for the pets, the native wildlife and our beloved creek. If you see anyone placing anything in the creek, please call Security or Landscaping.



Before cattail removal



After cattail removal