

THE NATIVE VEGETATION OF MOUNTAIN HOUSE CREEK

The Town of Mountain House is located on the lower, nearly level alluvial fans derived from the Altamont Hills which have settled at the southern edge of the Delta along the Old River reach of the San Joaquin River. Due to the rainshadow created by the Altamont Hills this area is relatively dry with a small watershed that drains towards the Town. Prior to modern agriculture, surface water was available only in the winter and spring and arrived as rainfall, brief runoff from the adjacent Coast Ranges, and occasional regional flooding from the Delta onto the lower end of the Town. At that time numerous low swales and depressions captured some of the wet season water, which then supported alkali meadow, vernal pool, seasonal marsh tributary, and

limited riparian habitats along Mountain House Creek. The drier plains of the Town location undoubtedly supported California prairie, alkali scrub, and possibly valley oak savanna habitats. As the area was converted to agriculture in the early 1900's most of this native vegetation was grazed, plowed, leveled, drained and replaced by crops, irrigated pasture, and by non-native plants.

Today's Mountain House Creek is a restoration of the many plant communities which originally existed both formally along the creek as well as in the general area of Mountain House. Three essential plant communities (tributary, wet meadow and perennial marsh) have been

retained and enhanced in the corridor, and four ecological communities restored (seasonal marsh, riparian, native prairie and oak woodland). These areas have been planted and managed to promote the development of desirable native vegetation. Possibly most important, however, is that both the contouring and hydrology of Mountain House Creek have been restored in such a way that native plants will have the ability and opportunity to thrive again. For the survival of the native plants along Mountain House Creek to be successful, restoration must occur at all scales from the smallest wildflowers to the largest oaks. Below is a brief introduction to some of the native plants found along the Creek corridor.

NATIVE GRASSES & FLOWERS



Top: *Brodiaea coronaria* (California Hyacinth) is found along the creek edge.
Bottom: *Muhlenbergia rigens* (Deer Grass) grows in areas with seasonal water.

Top: *Allium pensulare* (Wild Onion) is found in dry uplands of the creek corridor.
Bottom: *Hordelymus jubatum* (Foxtail Barley) is found in areas that have moist soils.

NATIVE SHRUBS



Top: *Cephalanthus occidentalis* (Buttonbush) grows in permanently wet areas.
Bottom: *Baccharis pilularis* (Coyote Bush) is found on dry ground of the creek uplands.

Top: *Baccharis viminea* (Mule Fat) flourishes in riparian areas.
Bottom: *Rosa californica* (California Wild Rose) can be found on moist to dry banks.

NATIVE TREES



Populus fremontii (Fremont Cottonwood) is a common tree along creek bottoms and other areas that have seasonal moisture.

Quercus lobata (Valley Oak), the archetypical tree of the California landscape, thrives in the dry grasslands found on the upper terrace of the creek corridor.

MOUNTAIN HOUSE CREEK PARK
PARK OPEN SUNRISE TO SUNSET | SENSITIVE CREEK HABITAT PLEASE STAY ON PATHS & DESIGNATED AREAS

| WALKING DISTANCES | | | |
|------------------------|------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| GREAT VALLEY PARKWAY | 1.1 MILES | DE ANZA BOULEVARD | 0.6 MILES |
| WEST ENTRANCE | 1.0 MILES | BYRON ROAD | 0.7 MILES |
| TOWN CENTER | 0.4 MILES | NORTH COMMUNITY PARK | 0.9 MILES |
| CENTRAL COMMUNITY PARK | 0.15 MILES | OLD RIVER REGIONAL PARK | 1.8 MILES |
| CENTRAL PARKWAY BRIDGE | 0.3 MILES | VIA CENTRAL PARKWAY OVERPASS | |

LEGEND
— PEDESTRIAN/BIKE PATH
— PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION
R RESTROOM
I INTERPRETIVE PANEL
P PARKING
A POCKET PARK/PICNIC AREA