

# ARROYO VIEJO CREEK / KNOWLAND PARK

## OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA



- 01 Park Plan
- 02 Outdoor classroom
- 03 Path through grassland
- 04 Exploring the creek using the creek side steps



Arroyo Viejo at Knowland Park is representative of a typical East Bay creek environment. As such, the Environmental Education program at the adjacent Oakland Zoo chose to restore and interpret the site. Prior to restoration, the site's riparian habitat and south facing hill slope had been overtaken by invasive Acacia and Eucalyptus tree species leaving little native riparian vegetation within the park.

The Restoration Design Group was commissioned to complete the design of an environmental education program and restoration plan for the riparian and hill slope areas of the site. RDG developed a complete restoration plan that transforms the hill slope into a native oak grassland, and the creek into a native riparian corridor.

The interpretive program centers on "The Life of a Stream", telling the story from a broad watershed perspective before focusing on the creatures and plants located in the immediate vicinity.

Traveling along a crushed stone path, individual visitors and students enter a series of classrooms of stone and recycled eucalyptus logs to learn about stream processes. The pathway and classrooms form a border between the traditional picnic grounds of Knowland Park and the natural park setting of Arroyo Viejo Creek.

The client acknowledged that this creek side environment is a powerful counterpoint to the adjacent zoo exhibits. The restored riparian ecosystem within Knowland Park immerses the visitor in the local landscape. This is in contrast to the zoo, where visitors are mesmerized by the exotic. The juxtaposition of the native and exotic reveals their dissimilarities and aids in teaching the environmental education curriculum prescribed for Knowland Park.