

CONFLUENCE RIVER MONUMENT

For many cultures, including the Native American, confluence points are sacred. The power of the blended waters is believed to offer eternal spiritual realization. A few hundred feet north and west of this place, Los Gatos Creek and the Guadalupe River converge.

Both Los Gatos Creek and the Guadalupe River are part of the Guadalupe River Watershed. What is a watershed? Technically, it's the land from which surface water drains or seeps into a marsh, stream, river, lake, bay, or other body of water. All the water in the creeks and rivers in the Guadalupe Watershed, including water from storm drains, flows into the Guadalupe River, which in turn flows north into the San Francisco Bay.

When this park was created, riparian habitat-water loving vegetation that grows within fifteen feet of the river that was once removed was restored. Riparian plants and trees shade the water from direct sun, keeping it cool for fish, and filter pollutants before they reach the water. Their roots hold soil in place along the stream bank preventing erosion. Why was this restoration so important? The wellbeing of the city depends on the wellbeing of the river and the many tributaries that feed it. Half the water for a million people comes from the 170-square-mile watershed of the Guadalupe.

As San José grew up, new development neglected the river as an important urban feature. The park restores the Guadalupe River to its rightful place as a focal point in the city's urban center and the huge underground bypass system on which you currently stand protects our downtown from the unpredictable forces of nature.