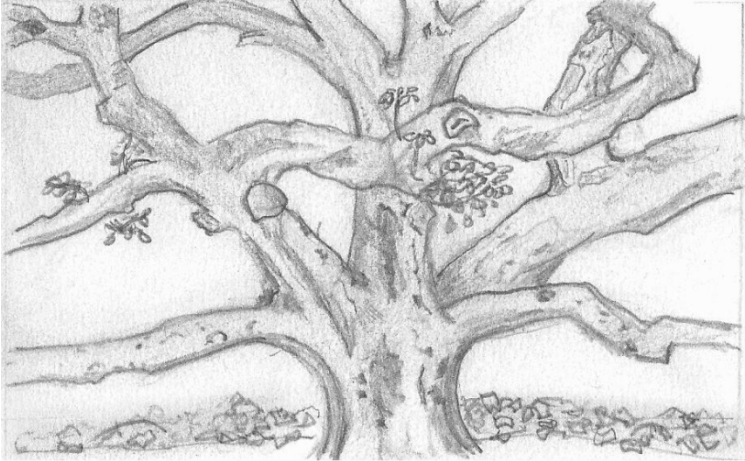


⑨ Back between the Coast Live Oaks turn right  
Then a very quick left, where the trail dips out of sight.  
Your path twists and turns amongst the Bracken Ferns.  
Darker beneath the canopy, beckons an ancient oak tree.

If this tree were a picture of the watershed, which branches would represent each creek? (Hint: Look at the map on the front cover.) Label the creeks on the tree branches.



The branches of a tree carry water and nutrients, just like creeks and salmon do. Water flows to the ocean and the salmon swim with it, then return two years later and bring nutrients upstream. Coho salmon are on the brink of local extinction (extirpation) in the Russian River watershed.

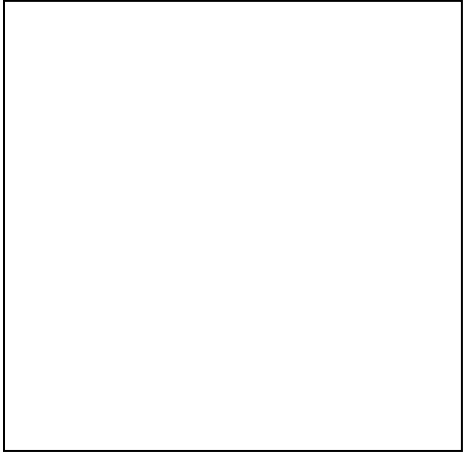
⑩ Walk beneath the outstretched branches, from end to end.  
You'll need to count your steps my friend.

When you're done counting steps, return to the trunk. Look back up the hill and spot the little red Madrone tree to the right of the path. Walk that same number of steps, continuing past the Madrone to the back of the next oak tree. Circle around, looking four feet up. The Quest treasure box is sitting attached to the trunk.

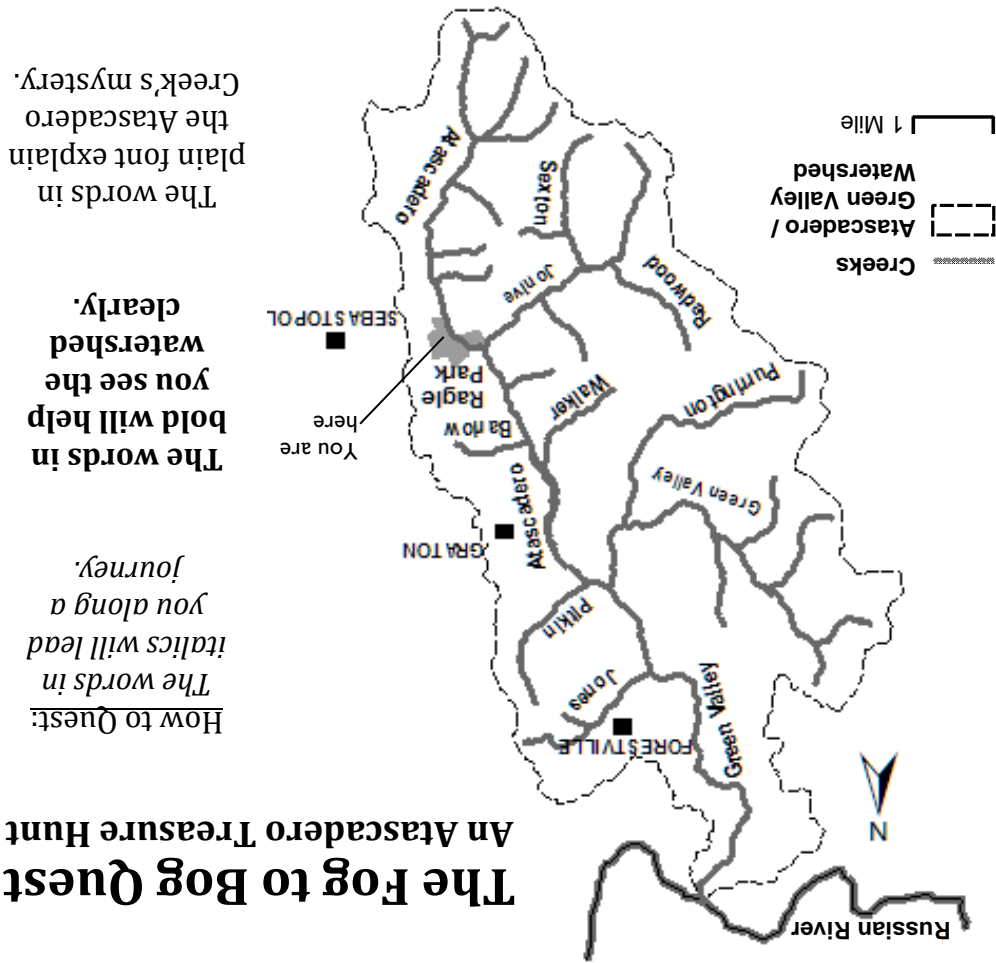
Open the box to find your treasure: a green stamp for your quest! Please sign our guestbook and enter the water quality data you have collected. Then re-hide the book and stamp for the next guest on this Quest. Thanks!  
We hope you've had fun!

*\*To get back to the beginning,  
Go past the oak tree  
And turn right at the road.  
Or, go up the hill and follow  
The trail across the meadow.*

To see the data collected by others on this Quest and to find more Quests in the region, go to [www.agvwc.org](http://www.agvwc.org) and [www.ccwi.org](http://www.ccwi.org).



Press Stamp Here



What plants did you see on your Quest in this watershed?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| __Cattail <i>Typha latifolia</i>             | __Arroyo Willow <i>Salix lasiolepis</i>     |
| __Curly Dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>            | __Red Willow <i>Salix laevigata</i>         |
| __Nut Sedge <i>Cyperus esculentus</i>        | __Rattlesnake grass <i>Briza major</i>      |
| __Common Rush <i>Juncus patens</i>           | __Coast Redwood <i>Sequoia sempervirens</i> |
| __Mistletoe <i>Phoradendron tomentos</i>     | __Coyote bush <i>Baccharis pilularis</i>    |
| __Himalayan Blackberry <i>Rubus procerus</i> | __Coast Live Oak <i>Quercus agrifolia</i>   |
| __California Blackberry <i>Rubus ursinus</i> | __Bracken fern <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>   |
| __Valley Oak <i>Quercus lobata</i>           | __Madrone <i>Arbutus menziesii</i>          |



Community Clean  
Water Institute



The creation of this Quest was sponsored by an education grant from Save the Redwoods League ([SaveTheRedwoods.org](http://SaveTheRedwoods.org)), along with support from Atascadero / Green Valley Watershed Council and Community Clean Water Institute.



① Pass through the gate. Travel 10 steps down.  
Stop at the first wooden post that is brown.

What's up in the sky? Is it cloudy or clear?  
Draw the ridges and all you see here.

See the ridge that separates the land from the sky? This ridge is the edge of the "bowl" that is the Atascadero - Green Valley Watershed. Every raindrop that falls to the ground within this bowl, if it stayed on the surface would move toward Atascadero Creek, north into Green Valley Creek, and down through the Russian River to the ocean. What happens to the water as it reaches redwoods, roofs, and roots? Which way does it travel? Does it get caught or does it keep moving?

Continue on, like the raindrops that roll  
Down through the pastureland of old.  
Pass through oaks; an orchard on your right;  
Stop at the fork – the cattails in sight.

These plant species are wetland indicators. Circle the ones you can see.



Cattail



Curly Dock



Nut Sedge



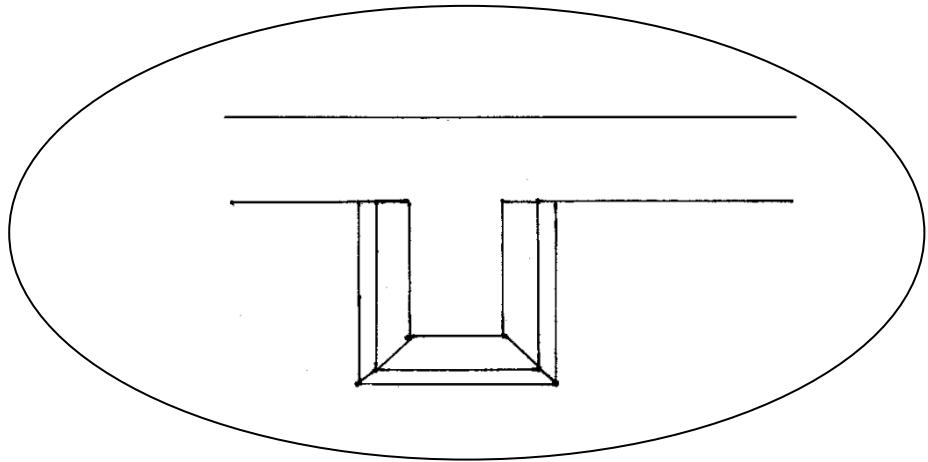
Rush

Atascadero is Spanish for "boggy place". This is a seasonal wetland—it fills with water the more rain it gets, and filters that water, making it clean. You can tell where the water sits in the wet season by looking at where the plants that like water are growing.



③ Scan the high places for balls of Mistletoe  
Proceed left through the curve; you haven’t far to go.  
Take the wooden walk and surprise!  
Find a resting place to sit and open your mind.

In the space below, mark where you are with an X. Sit still and listen to the sounds around you for 10 breaths. Then create a “sound map” by writing or drawing the sounds where you heard them.



Wetlands are high in biodiversity—they are home to many species of birds, insects, amphibians, mammals, and plants. How many different sounds did you hear? \_\_\_\_\_

④ Cross the bridge, and through sweet blackberry row  
Follow to a second bridge, under willows and oaks you go.  
On this bridge take a pause from your Questing  
It’s time to do a little water testing.

\*How CLEAR is the water? (circle one)    CLEAR    CLOUDY    MUDDY

\*How DEEP is the water?  
Face upstream and look at the deepest part in the middle of the stream, just below the bridge. (circle one)

LOW    INTERMEDIATE    HIGH    FLOOD

\*How fast is it FLOWing?  
Drop a leaf off the bridge and count how many “Atascadero’s” it takes to reach the other side.

- It traveled 4 feet in \_\_\_\_\_ Atascadero seconds.  
(write the number)

As it rains, the water **FLOWS** into the creek. The water level rises and the creek gets **DEEPER**. Here the creek spreads out, creating a wetland, and filtering the water. The wetland is like a leaking sponge and it slowly releases life-giving water downstream. Atascadero Creek flows into Green Valley Creek where the endangered Coho Salmon and Steelhead fish need clean, **CLEAR** water to live.

⑤ Step back off the bridge the way you came.  
Notice two types of blackberries along the lane.  
Thick stems, big thorns and leaves of five are invasives.  
On the right, leaves of three and smaller thorns are natives.



Non-native Blackberry



Native Blackberry

Pass beneath Valley Oaks, one, two, three.  
Look up at the branches and many galls you will see.  
As the trail curves right, look off to the side.  
Find the place where a waterway opens wide.

Go to the bank and with the dirt play.  
Does it feel granular like sand? Or roll into worms like clay?

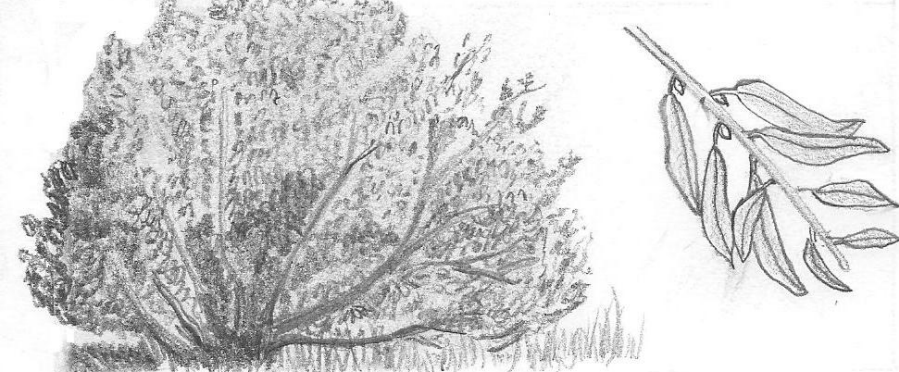
This pool fills with water when it rains. The bottoms of the plants are darker where they sometimes sit in the water. Look along the edges: Can you see the high water mark?

Journey back to the first bridge through gardens of sound  
Until you see the place where the cattails were found.

\*

At the Y, turn left where the large willow stands  
Touch the round-stemmed rushes on your way to the sands.

Touch the bark of the willow trees on both sides of the sand.  
Can you feel the difference?



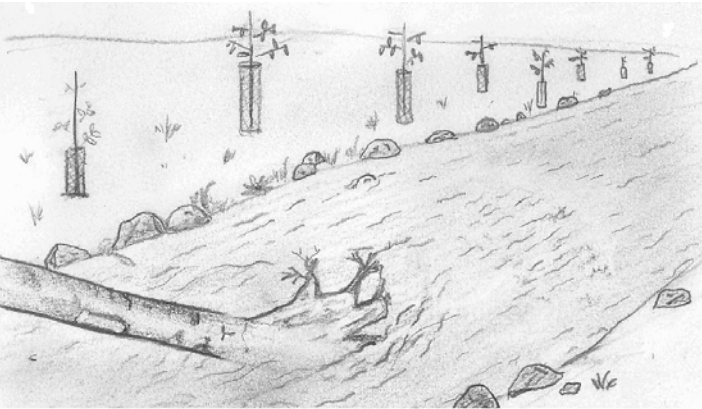
The Arroyo Willow has smooth, gray bark. The Red Willow has rough, textured bark. Willow trees are an important source of medicine and basketry materials for the native people. Willows live here because they love wet feet. By looking at the path of the willows you will know where the water flows in the landscape. Look back as you continue up the trail.

⑦ Continue up the trail, from low to high  
From willows wet to grasses dry.  
Shake the Rattlesnake Grass seed head  
As to the “Restoration” sign you are led.



What does it mean to restore habitat?

Many waterways have been altered by humans in ways that have been harmful to the fish and other living things. Through restoration we try to help re-create the environment these species need to live in. When trees shade the creek, the water temperature is cooler and holds more oxygen. When old trees fall down in the water, pools are created for the fish to live in. In restoration work, we help by planting trees on the stream banks and placing large woody debris in the creek.



⑧ Keep on climbing, then sit down on wood.  
The throne of a King has a view that is good.  
A Coyote Bush grows behind  
And the watershed view from here - divine.



Can you find the redwood trees on the rims and in the canyons of the watershed?

Out of the redwood forest-covered hills that you see in the distance flows Redwood Creek. It pours its clear waters into Jonive (pronounced Ho – neev) Creek, which intersects Ragle Park at its northwest corner before meeting Atascadero Creek below. Coast Redwood trees play an important role in the health of this ecosystem. They catch fog and shade the creeks, helping to cool the waters and keep them flowing with oxygen year-round.