

Roads and Trails- The dirt road has some major ruts after our astonishing series of atmospheric rivers. It is still not as bad as some years in recent history, but care does need to be taken to cross the ruts strategically. Once on our property, the paved road is relatively free of debris (Johnson moved the large boulder and tree stump with his tractor). The first segment of the Red Trail was damaged during the heavy rain, but Rob West and I have excavated the railroad tie stairs as well as reinforced the hillside to preserve the traversing section of trail. We also helped re-establish the path in the second half, beyond the large oak tree. The Green Trail is fairly easy to follow. The White Trail is much more difficult and may have been blocked by a fallen tree (below). I have not inspected the Blue Trail lately, but the approach to it has been changed by high water in the creek.

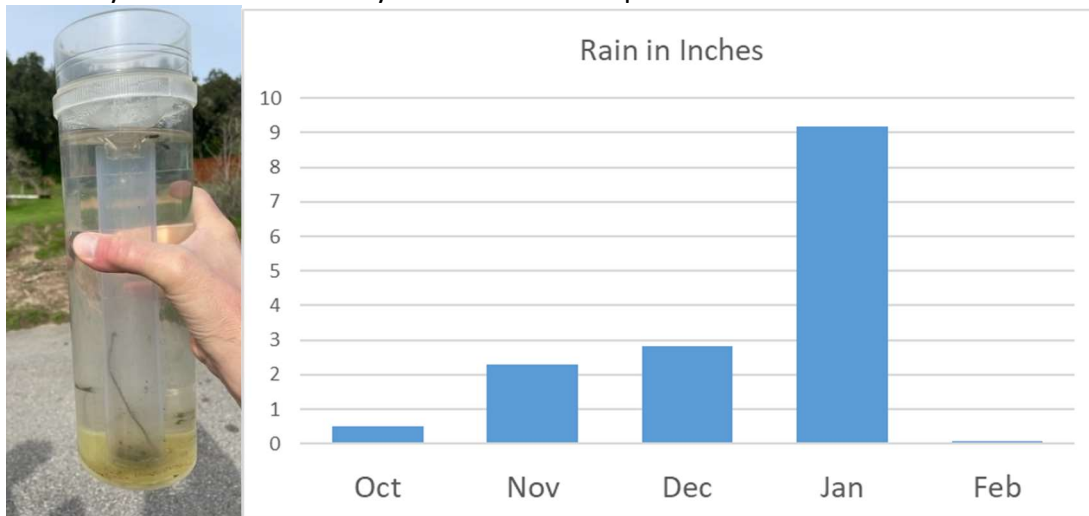


Buildings/grounds/equipment- All main buildings are in good shape. The pavilion roof shows some additional damage, likely from one of the short but intense Santa Ana wind events. I have begun to dismantle the old burnt walking bridge, which collected storm debris, with the hopes of preserving some of the wood for stabilization projects. There has been some vandalism on-site, including cutting the cable lock and removing the camera from the housing on the wildlife camera that overlooks the creek crossing near the start of the Red Trail.



Gold Creek Usage- On December 9 I visited with my 3 LACC Geography Honors students. We surveyed the cross section under the burnt walking bridge, repeating measurements that I have taken many times over the years. I do not know of any LACCD student usage during Winter Session 2023, but I visited with my CSUN graduate students on January 13 and January 27. They are completing vegetation surveys along the creek to ground-truth the drone images they have already taken in months past.

Abiota- . Since our last meeting, a relentless series of atmospheric rivers brought 10.8" of rainfall to the weather station. Almost 9" of that came between January 1 and January 16. Although hourly rates did not match those from October, January 10th saw more than 2.5" of rain. We have received 14.8" of rain this water year so far (beginning October 1). The creek shows signs of high flows (rafted debris), but is flowing safely on a nice slow recession. The major rains did not generate any debris flows, but some alluvium washed across and was deposited on the paved road where it crossed the smaller drainages. No rain is in the forecast, February will almost certainly be drier than the previous months.



Biota- There is definitely an abundance of grasses sprouting. Low-to-mid elevations in the San Gabriels are showing an impressive emerald hue. I found a number of downed bird nests, likely due to wind events. I'm sure there will be intense blooms in the coming weeks and months, but at this point most of the vegetation is still waiting to explode.

