

Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed

A Publication of Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed

friendsofpinolecreek.org

Winter 2017 - 18



Photo: Ann Moriarty

< At last, a healthy creek and a place for wildlife to thrive: Pavon Creeks.

increasing diversity of wildlife: Western pond turtles, the endangered red-legged frogs, killdeer, egrets, blue herons, and buffleheads make their home in the seasonal wetlands.

Monitoring will continue for another 3 years as the site becomes permanently established. Thereafter, the creek and wetland restoration will be maintained in perpetuity for the benefit of sensitive fish and wildlife species. It was a great day to tour the Pavon Creeks site and experience first-hand the beauty of our watershed. ■ — Ann Moriarty

Chelsea Wetlands Restoration Update



Chelsea Wetlands covers 12 acres in the lower Pinole Creek Watershed. Many organizations have been working on a plan to restore 7 acres of this area to a tidal wetlands since 2009 and had hoped it would be constructed in 2018. Unfortunately, the construction has been delayed until 2019. However, Ducks Unlimited, the partner agency in charge of the restoration, has made significant progress in getting permits and the majority of the \$2.4 million needed, and they are committed to the project. The biggest challenge is securing an additional \$500,000. Fortunately, tidal marsh habitat restorations are in demand for remediation and DU believes that a turn-key project like this should be looked upon favorably. ■

— Carol Arnold

Did you know?

The Pinole Creek Watershed covers approximately 15 square miles in the north-west part of Contra Costa County.

To report spills or trash in the creek call: (510) 724-9010 or (800) NO DUMPING.

To report graffiti in the Pinole Creek area, contact the City of Pinole Public Works at (510) 724-9010.

A Thriving, Healthy Ecosystem!

Pavon Creeks, which flow into Pinole Creek, are fed by an extensive sub-watershed that reaches into the Briones Hills. It is home to a fabulous variety of wildlife and native plants that reflect the watershed's health.

One on-going threat to most creeks is the build-up of sediments that erode from crumbling hillsides and wash into the water during seasonal floods. Just such a problem exists at Pavon Creeks, located at "the Y" at the intersection of Castro Ranch and Alhambra Valley Roads.

A major restoration project was completed by East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) in 2011. The project included the construction of a series of seasonal wetlands and sediment traps as well as riparian planting to stabilize creek banks.

In April 2017, after the intense

rainy season, FOPCW joined other members of the community to tour the site and discover the changes that have occurred since FOPCW's tour in 2012. A wonderful story unfolded as Bert Mulchaey and representatives from Balance Hydrologics, who designed the project, shared the current status.

Willows are thriving in the various channels, their roots slowing down the flow of water and silt. The sediment forebays have trapped a large portion of the silt that washes down in a typical year. As a result, the lower ponds (closest to the road intersection) are home to an

FOPCW News and Events



Photo Virginia Northrop

Pinole Valley Clean-up

FOPCW met in the upper Pinole Creek watershed in August 2017 to take advantage of the Alhambra Valley Road closure and clean up trash. FOPCW, East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) and the Contra Costa County Watershed Program organized and hosted the event, providing equipment and a BBQ lunch to finish off the day.

EBMUD ranger Virginia Northrop started the group of volunteers off with an admonition to pick up even the smallest bits of plastic as they persist in the environment and can be ingested by wildlife. As the 35 volunteers fanned out along the creek we quickly filled up bags with the usual suspects:

bottles, cans, car debris and fast food containers. We also pulled up couches, deck debris, and even a children's plastic pool.

Alhambra Valley Road is a notorious dumping zone. The illegal dumping affects the health of the creek and is a blight on the beauty of this peaceful road. You are encouraged to report anyone you see dumping by calling 1-800-No-Dumping, or visit <http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/cd/recycle/illegal-dumping.htm>.

The clean-up was a successful event, bringing together many new community members and the agencies that arranged logistics and provided food. The event was featured in East Bay Express and recorded on Pinole TV. Many thanks to all who participated!



Dumped decking and other trash was hauled up from the bank of Pinole Creek along Alhambra Valley Road during the summer clean up.

Closing the Gaps on the SF Bay Trail in Pinole

There has been significant progress in completing the SF Bay Trail in and around Pinole. A segment from Victoria by the Bay to Bayfront Blvd. and the planned Hercules Intermodal Transit Center opened in March 2017, and a segment from Bayfront Blvd. to Santa Fe Avenue in Hercules was finished in January 2018. A long-awaited connector from Pinole's Bayfront Park that includes a bridge over the train tracks to Pinole Shores is under construction and set for completion in June. The East Bay Regional Park District has also announced that a grant has been secured to finish the trail segment from



Hercules to Rodeo. The goal of a completed San Pablo Bay Trail that will span the bay from Point Pinole Regional Shoreline in Richmond to Lone Tree Point in Rodeo, a

distance of 10 miles, is within sight! For more information visit BayTrail.org. ■

— Maura Sullivan

FOPCW News and Events, continued

On January 31, 2018 the final step in the completion of the Pinole Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project was made when the interpretive sign was installed. The interpretive panel gives an overview of the project, explaining the design, and describing why restoring this connection between the upper and lower watersheds was a priority. It describes the presence of steelhead and rainbow trout in the watershed, the barrier that the construction of Interstate 80 created in the 60's, and the importance of reconnecting the upper and lower watersheds by installing the fish passage.

The sign was designed by Elizabeth Harrison, Contra Costa Resource Conservation District, and Acorn Design Inc., and was fabricated and installed by Blue Pond Signs.



Photo: Elissa Robinson

You can view the sign and fish passage yourself. The sign is located downstream of Interstate 80, on the path behind AMF Pinole Valley Lanes.

Spring Meeting April 19—All Welcome!

The next Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed meeting will be held on April 19th at the Pinole Senior Village. Our guest speakers will discuss the use of drones in constructing the new bridge—how the drones were used to survey the area, and other applications for this technology.

The meeting is open to all interested individuals, and is a great opportunity to connect with other community members in the watershed, and to learn about the projects that Friends of Pinole Creek is working on. We hope to see you there!

To receive information and our e-newsletter by email, please send your request to: erobinson@ccrcd.org. Inquiries, please call 925-672-4577, ext. 4150. Or visit our website at: friendsofpinolecreek.org.

2018 Spring Meeting

April 19
7:00–9:00 pm

Pinole Senior Village
2850 Estates Avenue
Pinole