

Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed

A Publication of Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed

Spring 2009



Did you know?

To report spills 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.

To find out more about the Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed, visit www.pinolecreek.org, or contact llacabanne@aol.com.

Ya hoo! The Jumpin' Frogs of Pinole Creek!

The California red-legged frog is currently listed as a threatened species by the federal government and as a Species of Special Concern by the state of California. But the news is not all bad.

In 1865, the California red-legged frog gained its fame in the Mark Twain short story *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*. It's the story of a bet made by two gamblers about whose frog could jump the farthest. The Jumping Frog Jubilee, inspired by the story, continues today as a big draw at the Calaveras County Fair.

Since the days of Mark Twain, however, this species has seen a severe decline in its range in California. While habitat loss and habitat alteration is often

cited as the main reason for its decline, it has also suffered from a number of other factors such as overexploitation, competition from non-native species, and disease.

Even though the California red-legged frog is currently listed as a threatened species, and a species of special concern, the news is not all bad.

The good news is that red-legged frogs still persists in many local watersheds, such as the Pinole Creek watershed. The frogs use Pinole Creek, its tributaries, and local ponds and wetlands for its

habitat. Red-legged frogs require aquatic habitat for breeding, but also use a variety of other habitat types including riparian and upland areas. The open space in the upper watershed of Pinole Creek provides quality habitat, but frogs can potentially be found anywhere along the creek.

Adult California red-legged frogs range from 1.5 to 5 inches in length. The abdomen and hind legs of adults are often red and the skin on the animal's back is characterized by small black flecks and larger irregular dark blotches.

In the Bay Area, red-legged frogs breed in ponds and creek pools between January and March. In one to two weeks, eggs hatch and the tadpoles emerge. Tadpoles feed on algae and develop over the summer into juvenile frogs. Young frogs hunt day and night, eating invertebrates, which they catch with their mouths. This constant activity makes them visible, and, therefore, more vulnerable to predators. Insects are the most common prey item for adult frogs but Pacific Chorus frogs (tree frogs) and mice are also major components of their diet.

The red-legged frogs of Pinole Creek are yet another reason that the Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed strives to protect creek habitat. We hope that residents will join us in trying to reduce pollution in the watershed. Frogs are among the most sensitive species to a number of common pollutants in the environment. Maintaining a healthy watershed is vital to assuring that species like the historic red-legged frog persist so that they can inspire future generations as they inspired Mark Twain so long ago.

Meetings, News & Events

Member Recognition

FOPCW member Doug Taylor was recognized at the January Contra Costa Watershed Forum meeting for his outstanding contributions to the County's Volunteer Creek Monitoring Program. Doug donated a total of 63 hours this past year collecting bioassessment data and assessing conditions on Pinole Creek and other streams in Contra Costa County as part of the GPS monitoring program. Lisa Lacabanne was also acknowledged for her 34 hours of volunteer monitoring in 2008. Great work Doug and Lisa!

3/19/09 — Pinole Creek Demonstration Project Neighborhood Meeting

A neighborhood meeting regarding the Pinole Creek Demonstration Project will be held at 7 pm on Thursday, March 19, at the Christ the Lord Episcopal Church at 592 Tennent (across from Fernandez Park) in Pinole. There will also be a presentation to the Pinole City Council on March 3 at 7 pm at City Hall. Residents and business owners will be able to learn about the project, other restoration projects in the watershed, and the new Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Pinole Creek.

Questions should be directed to Graham Wadsworth, Assistant City Engineer, City of Pinole Public Works Department at 510-724-9846.

Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed Events

3/28/09 — Community Garden Workday

Pinole Library California Native Plant Garden (located behind the Pinole Library) from 9 am to 12 pm for seed collecting, weeding, and mulching. Wear sturdy shoes and clothes that can get dirty. Bring water, a hat, and sunscreen.

4/06/09 — FOPCW Community Meeting

Pinole Library, 2935 Pinole Valley Road, from 7 to 9 pm in the meeting room. Learn about invasive plant species on Pinole Creek. Guest speaker Bob Case, Associate Director for Contra Costa Resource Conservation District. Learn about standard methods of control, removal, and disposal, with long-term goals in mind, as well as identification of Himalayan blackberry, English Ivy, annual grasses, Pampass grass, thistle, Western hemlock, and Rumex. R.S.V.P. to Lisa at llacabanne@aol.com.

4/25/09 — Earth Day Weekend Celebration and FOPCW Community Garden Workday

Spend some time working in the FOPCW Demonstration Garden and then join together for a pot luck luncheon celebrating Earth Day.

Pinole Library California Native Plant Garden (located behind the Pinole Library) from 9 am to 12 pm for installing new plant labels, seed collecting, weeding, and mulching. Wear sturdy shoes and clothes that can get dirty. Bring water, a hat, sunscreen, and your favorite potluck item(s). R.S.V.P. to Lisa at llacabanne@aol.com.

5/09/09 — Spring Hike with EBMUD Naturalist Bob Flasher

Join FOPCW on the newly designated Pinole Watershed Ridge Trail of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. This new trail, dedicated in the fall of 2006, is on a 3,600 acre property owned by the East Bay Municipal Water District and is the result of over 15 years of effort to open it for public use. The trail is hilly, and rewards trail users with spectacular views of the East Bay Hills, Carquinez Strait, and San Pablo Bay. At its northern end it connects to Fernandez Ranch, where the Ridge Trail will open in 2009, and its west end connects to Sobrante Ridge. Visit www.ridgetrail.org/trail/trailofMonth.cfm for more information on the trail.

Meet at the entrance to the Bay Area Ridge Trail gate at Alhambra Valley Road and Pereira Road at 10 am. The length is 7.5 miles with up to 800' elevation gain. Wear sturdy shoes and bring water, lunch, sunscreen, and a hat. Trail direction is one-way. We will shuttle back to the starting point. R.S.V.P. to Lisa at llacabanne@aol.com.

5/30/09 — FOPCW Community Garden Workday

Pinole Library California Native Plant Garden (located behind the Pinole Library) from 9 am to 12 pm for seed collecting, weeding, and mulching. Wear sturdy shoes and clothes that can get dirty. Bring water, a hat, and sunscreen.

5/09 — Bioassessment of Pinole Creek

Bioassessment of Pinole Creek typically occurs this month. Visit our web site at www.pinolecreek.org for updates on the date, time, and location. Also visit cocowaterweb.org/get-involved/monitoring/ for more information on volunteer creek monitoring.
