

Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed



A Publication of Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed

Summer 2007



PHOTO MICHELLE A. LUEBKE

see seldom seen areas of Pinole Creek. We usually sample two stretches of the creek at a time. We plan to be sampling again in late July, as well as in August or September.



FOPCW member Tedman Eng and Doug Taylor examine bugs at a Pinole Creek BMI sample point.

Did you know?

As you are walking the creek trails, if you see any graffiti on the watershed signs or other areas, please call 510-724-9010. The City of Pinole has hired a sub-contractor to remove graffiti and they are eager to have it removed quickly.

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

Testing the Waters

Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed has been an enthusiastic participant in two volunteer based sampling programs over the past five years. These sampling programs are an on-going part of creek monitoring to find out just how healthy our watershed is.

BMI Sampling Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed participated in a Benthic Macro-Invertebrate Rapid Assessment (BMI for short) on Pinole Creek during the month of May, 2007.

The BMI Assessment is a sampling protocol that uses aquatic insects and other organisms (macro-invertebrates) as indicators of water quality. The organisms have a long aquatic phase—some take two years to mature—and tend to remain in the same stream reach throughout their nymphal stage. These characteristics make them excellent indicators of water quality. Because the same protocol is applied to all

streams, it is expected that over several years, we will be able to compare the relative quality of neighboring creeks in the watershed.

Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed has been involved in the BMI sampling for 5 years.

GPS Sampling Our other regular sampling program is the GPS Creek Survey. During these excursions, we measure the locations of various physical and biological characteristics of the creek using Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers to accurately record positions. This allows yet another opportunity to

GPS surveys are split into three teams: vegetation, bank composition and shape, and man-made structures, with each team being comprised of three members. In order to ensure that the data is collected in a consistent manner, a two to three-hour training session is offered a few days prior to the survey.

Thanks to all the volunteers who took the time to attend these training sessions and got their feet wet during the sampling and surveying—we now have some valuable data that can be used to judge the water quality or “health” of Pinole Creek.

Get Involved! Please contact us if you are interested in either one of these fun programs. Once dates have been set, they will be posted at our website: www.PinoleCreek.org.

You can also find out more about these programs by visiting the Contra Costa Watershed Forum at cocowaterweb.org/get-involved. Contact Bill Voigt if you are interested in learning more about data collecting for FOPCW: Bill.Voigt@ci.san-rafael.ca.us.

By William G. Voigt, GIS Analyst for the City of San Rafael.

Meetings, News & Events

FOPCW Meeting, Tuesday, July 17 from 6:30–8:30 pm

Join Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed for an upper watershed experience. We will meet at Alhambra Valley Ranch, off of Alhambra Valley Road. Rancher and owner Tom Powers will give us a walking tour of his 55-acre ranch in the Pinole Creek watershed. Complete with a vineyard, olive orchard, and a large

vegetable garden, Alhambra Valley Ranch is also home to llamas, emus, goats and sheep. The ranch is located at 6140 Alhambra Road, 1/2 mile up the hill from the intersection of Pereira Road and Bear Creek Road, on Alhambra Road. To carpool from the Pinole Library: meet at the library parking lot at 6 pm.

FOPCW's California Native Plant Demonstration Garden

The Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed's California Native Plant Demonstration Garden, located behind the Pinole Library, is now in its third year, with many of the plants having grown to mature flowering size. FOPCW regularly maintains the garden with volunteer work parties, normally held the last Saturday of the month. These work parties are great opportunities to get your group involved—whether it be boy/girl scouts, environmental studies groups, garden enthusiasts, or just people interested in

learning more about California natives, and having a good time. Coming this fall, we plan to re-establish the paths and place plant identification markers in front of most of the plants.

For further information about the work parties, contact Tim McDonough at tmcd945@yahoo.com or call 510-223-4350. Tools and light refreshments are provided, however please bring your own gloves.

A Big Thank You to Our Funders!

Earlier this year, Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed received a \$4,000 grant from the Northern California Grassroots Fund. The Grassroots Fund supports community organizations working within their neighborhoods on habitat preservation, environmental health, and toxic pollution. This grant will provide general support to continue our activities, such as monitoring the creek, holding community and board meetings, performing outreach, and marketing, among other activities. Since we received this grant, the group has purchased canvas bags with the Friends of Pinole Creek

Watershed logo on the front, which are available for a small donation. We continue our work in the community and partnering with groups working within, and in close proximity to, the Pinole Creek Watershed.

This past spring, we also received a grant from the Contra Costa County Fish and Wildlife Fund for \$1,200. This money will go toward the Creek Demonstration Garden Project at the Pinole Public Library for work scheduled this coming fall.

For more information on FOPCW, visit www.PinoleCreek.org.

Bay Area Ridge Trail Winds Through Pinole Creek Watershed

A volunteer trail Work Project on EBMUD's Pinole Creek Watershed property on June 2nd has helped pave the way for a critical section of the Bay Area Ridge Trail to open later this year. Fifty volunteers, including members of FOPCW, divided into groups that planted native trees, moved gravel, groomed trails, and constructed about 300 feet of eucalyptus fencing to keep cattle on the trail at a creek crossing. The event was sponsored and organized by EBMUD, REI and the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council.

Volunteers worked on the Pinole Creek Watershed (PCW) section of the Ridge Trail near the intersection of Pereira and

Alhambra Valley Roads in the Briones Valley. At that junction, EBRPD's Feeder Trail #1 stretches towards Mt. Wanda, the John Muir National Historic Site and the Benicia Bridge. The PCW trail stretches towards Sobrante Ridge Regional Preserve near El Sobrante, and also touches the Fernandez Ranch, which is being readied for public opening in 2009 by the Muir Heritage Land Trust. When Fernandez Ranch is opened, the trail from Castro Valley to the Al Zampa Bridge will be connected.

Look for announcements regarding the date of the PCW trail dedication and official opening to the public.



The Watershed Project
c/o Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed
1327 South 46th Street #155
Richmond, CA, 94804

Do you have any information or an article that you'd like to share with other members of FOPCW? Send your information as a Word attachment for consideration to: info@pinolecreek.org.

Newsletter editor: Melissa Lawton

To learn more about Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed, please visit our website at www.PinoleCreek.org.