Did you know?

In 1965, the Army Corps of Engineers armored the creek channel between Interstate 80 and San Pablo Bay for flood control.

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.

Pinole Fish Passage Improvement Project Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

On October 24, 2016, the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (RCD) held a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the completion of the Pinole Fish Passage Improvement Project. This type of project requires good partners, and the Resource Conservation District worked with the property owners, the California Department of Transportation, and the Contra Costa County Flood Control District, as well as Federal, State and Local funding sources to make this project possible. The Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed also contributed to this project providing letters of support for grants and organizing community meetings for the RCD to present information regarding the planned enhancements to the creek. This project is an environmental milestone that will allow steelhead populations of Pinole Creek to access pristine spawning grounds that they have been restricted from for decades.

Culverts that pass under a busy stretch of Interstate 80 in Pinole were originally put in years ago to help with flood protection and other infrastructure goals. An unintended consequence of these culverts was that they became barriers that restricted steelhead trout from returning to the spawning grounds in the upper watershed of Pinole Creek. That issue has now been resolved with the unveiling of the new Pinole Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project. For the first time in decades, the local steelhead and other native fish species are free to return to their traditional spawning grounds.

The ceremony commenced with over 70 community members, elected officials and project partners in attendance. The ceremony was a chance to celebrate the completion of the fish passage improvement project, which has been in the works for a number of years. The program focused on giving a voice to the partnerships that were formed, and the importance of this type of project, one that creates opportunities among agencies, funding sources, and the community.

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Now that the fish passage is in place—what’s next?

While the construction has been completed, this brings that part of the project to a close, however, there is still work to be done! In the next phase of the Pinole Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District is setting up a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to recognize the monitoring needs for the watershed. The team consists of Tim Jensen, Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District; Mike Love; Bert Mulchaey, EBMUD; and Bill Voigt, Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed.

The TAC will identify monitoring needs throughout the watershed by first recognizing what has been done, and then identifying what monitoring needs exist currently. Once the needs assessment is complete, there will be a list of tasks for Earth Team at Pinole Valley High School, and tasks that are appropriate for volunteers from Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed.

Stay tuned to learn now you can help with this important project! ■
The speakers at the ceremony included: Congressman Mike Thompson, Abel Pineda from Assembly Member Tony Thurmond’s office, Vincent Manuel from Contra Costa County Supervisor Federal Glover’s office, Mayor Roy Swearingen from the City of Pinole, John Yeakel of CalTrans, Mike Carlson from the Contra Costa County Flood Control District, Bert Mulchaey of EBMUD, Ben Wallace from the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District, and Carol Arnold, the former Executive Director of the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District and co-founder of Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed. Speakers discussed the history of the watershed, the many hurdles of completing the project, and its importance to the ecology of watershed, as well as the community.

After closing remarks were made, Carol Arnold had the honor of cutting the ribbon. She was surrounded by the people that helped to bring this project to light. This marked the official grand reopening of the connection between the upper and lower watershed of Pinole Creek. Many attendees participated in a tour, taking the opportunity for a close-up view of the improved culvert.

The ceremony was covered by local news stations and aired on the evening news, further spreading the message that we can improve urban infrastructure to coexist with our environment.

Thank you to everyone who attended, and a special thank you to our partners and funders who made this project possible!

### Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed Display at Pinole Library

For those who would like to know more about Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed, there is currently a display case in the Pinole Library lobby that gives a nice presentation on what FOPCW has been doing and what it means for Pinole Creek.

This informative display provides a nice overview of our activities in the watershed. Please check it out if you visit the library or are just driving by. It is worth the few minutes of your time.

### Recap of Our Fall Membership Meeting:

On August 30, 2016 Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed held their Fall meeting. There were over 30 community members in attendance at the home of Pam Seifert and Steve Harvey in the beautiful Upper Pinole Creek Watershed.

Ben Wallace, Executive Director of the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District, gave an update on the Pinole Creek Fish Passage Improvement Projects, which was under construction (at that time) where the creek goes under Interstate 80. Friends of Pinole Creek has been a partner on this project, with members Bert Mulchaey and Kent Moriarty contributing their time and expertise to wildlife monitoring.

This meeting was also a time for members of Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed to discuss issues that they would like to see addressed on the creek, and where they would like to see the group focus in the future. The list of topics includes:

- Increased community outreach
- More events
- A 15 year anniversary celebration
- New member recruitment
- Increased awareness of keystone species, steelhead
- Increased presence in community publications, city manager’s report, etc.

Thank you to our hosts, board members, and all of you that were able to attend. We look forward to seeing you at the Spring meeting, March 7th, 2017.

### What’s Next for Pinole Creek?

The FOPCW is happy to announce the completion of several items on our “To Do” list:

- Pinole Creek Demonstration Project
- Pavon Creeks Restoration Project
- I-80 Fish Passage

What’s next for Pinole Creek? Come to a membership meeting and become involved in the Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed. Let’s work together to brainstorm ideas and resources for 2017!

### Upcoming Events for 2017:

- Chelsea Wetlands Restoration
- Pavon Creek Restoration Tour in the Spring
- Wood Duck Box maintenance will take place in January. Great for Eagle Scouts and other volunteers. Are you interested? Contact Ann Moriarty at kentnann@hotmail.com.

### Spring FOPCW Visioning Meeting on March 7 at 7 pm

Pinole Valley Community Church, 2885 Pinole Valley Road, Pinole. More details as we approach the date.