



# Friends of Sausal Creek

*Promoting Watershed Protection*

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## Staff

Executive Director  
Kimra McAfee

Restoration and  
Nursery Manager  
Megan Hess

## Activities Report for Watershed Awareness Program July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

### LARGE EVENTS

#### **Creek-to-Bay Day Cleanup**

On September 19, 2009, over 300 volunteers assisted at six locations in the watershed, removing trash from in and around the creek and removing invasive species from along the creek. Over 50 cubic yards of invasive species were removed from Dimond Canyon alone.

#### **Native Plant Sale and Open House at the Joaquin Miller Native Plant Nursery**

This fundraiser on October 17, 2009, raised watershed awareness through workshops on native plant propagation and gardening with native plants, as well as helping to distribute native plants to members of the community. We added many people to our newsletter mailing list and listserv.

#### **Earth Day Creek Cleanup**

On April 17, 2010, over 250 volunteers assisted at nine sites throughout the watershed, removing trash from in and around the creek and removing invasive species from along the creek. Accomplishments of the day included the removal of 20 cubic yards of invasive plants and 45 bags of trash; newly created trails; and many transplanted native seedlings.

### PROJECTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### **Sausal Creek Watershed Enhancement Plan**

This three-year assessment performed by Laurel Marcus and Associates was finalized in March 2010. We are working on a presentation of the plan for our September 15 member meeting so that we can get public comments on the plan and can begin working with the public, the City of Oakland, and the County of Alameda to prioritize recommendations made in the plan and assess future research needed. This plan was funded by the State Water Resources Control Board under Proposition 40 (California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002) and by The San Francisco Foundation's Bay Fund.

#### **Joaquin Miller Native Plant Nursery Renovation**

We have completed the installation of electricity at the nursery and have filled the water tank procured last year, so that we now have a dependable water supply for nursery stock during summer months. We are completing the installation of the Smart Dial controller, which adjusts irrigation based on weather satellite data to improve our water usage efficiency. We are currently expanding our shade structure to provide a shaded space for volunteers to propagate plants and for students on field

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organization*

trips to learn about propagation. Planning for construction of a teaching circle is underway. We have created a Nursery Committee made up of staff, board members, and key nursery volunteers who meet quarterly to ensure smooth running of nursery operations and to make recommendations for improvements to our board of directors.

#### **Dimond Park Demonstration Garden**

Work continues on the renovation of the native plant demonstration garden in Dimond Park with Proposition 84 funding through the Coastal Conservancy. The existing trail has been re-surfaced with decomposed granite to provide better access through the garden to the creek. Design of interpretive signage and plant identification labels is underway.

#### **Beaconsfield Canyon**

A Beaconsfield Canyon Preliminary Creek Restoration Plan was created by Restoration Design Group for Beaconsfield Canyon, funded by the Coastal Conservancy.

#### **Fern Ravine**

Dr. Robert Leidy initiated this new restoration site near the headwaters of Sausal Creek near Sequoia Arena. Several workdays to remove invasive species and to begin planting native plants took place this past year. Funding from the Environmental Protection Agency for FOSC to write a Restoration Plan and propagate plants has been secured. FOSC staff has been leading the Friends of Joaquin Miller Park's Redwood Committee to formulate a circulation plan for the adjacent denuded redwood forest.

#### **Pallid Manzanita Preservation**

We continue to work with Chabot Space and Science Center to advocate for the preservation and enhancement of the endangered pallid manzanitas on their campus. In September 2009 a consultant finalized the Pallid Manzanita Habitat Enhancement and Conservation Plan, drafted in 2006, and we subsequently were able to get a Memorandum of Understanding with the California Department of Fish and Game to be able to legally work to restore and enhance the pallid manzanitas. Although funding was approved by the Oakland Wildfire Assessment District for canopy tree removal in summer 2009, it is uncertain when the approvals for the tree cutting on the Chabot campus will be in place. Meanwhile, we have applied to the City of Oakland to officially adopt the Big Trees Trail pallid manzanita colony on the west side of Skyline Blvd. in Joaquin Miller Park, and are working on monitoring protocol and a tree limbing and removal plan to enhance that site.

### **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS**

#### **Workdays and Education Programs**

Our Restoration and Nursery Manager led workday events throughout the year for school children, local community members and organizations, and corporate groups. Workdays included an environmental education component related to the work being done, including stormwater pollution prevention, stream restoration strategies, and native and non-native plant identification. We hosted 29 student field trips and work days; nearly half of our volunteer visits (940) were made by young people.

Community workdays included:

- Fourteen (14) community work events in Dimond Park and Dimond Canyon
- Thirty-three (33) community work events at Joaquin Miller Native Plant Nursery
- Six (6) seed collecting hikes
- Three (3) volunteer-led and one staff-led work events at Fern Ravine wetland in Joaquin Miller Park
- Twelve (12) neighborhood work events at Beaconsfield Canyon
- Ten (10) neighborhood work events at William D. Wood Park, plus additional workdays to support an Eagle Scout project
- Three (3) neighborhood work events at Barry Place
- One (1) work event at Fruitvale Bridge Park at the mouth of Sausal Creek
- Four (4) quarterly bird monitoring events
- Six (6) aquatic insect monitoring events
- One (1) Shoot the Shed event, an organized photographic effort to capture and celebrate the flora, fauna, and other features that make the Sausal Creek Watershed unique

**Friends of Sausal Creek Member Meetings** were held every other month at the Dimond Library; in November 2009 we experimented with taking the membership meeting outdoors for a bird walk and aquatic insect monitoring. Environmental education presentations for this year included a talk on lessons learned in working with environmental issues by an EPA speaker; a meeting led by our Restoration Committee meant to draw more community members into participating on this committee; a presentation on the geology of the watershed (we had a packed room of 40 attendees!); and a presentation by a FOSC board member on owls and bats, followed by a walk to Dimond Park.

**General public outreach** continues on an ongoing basis. We have been working on updating our database so that our annual donor appeal in November 2010 will reach more volunteers and community members. We have also been working on more widespread outreach for our member meetings; the success of this effort is evidenced by the large attendance at the March 17, 2010, presentation on the geology of the watershed. FOSC activities are publicized through our bi-monthly newsletter, in local publications, on our website, and through the FOSC and other neighborhood listservs. We continue to make progress on the Kids Web pages, which will be linked to the existing FOSC website and will have interactive content that can be used both in classrooms and by students at home; students at Joaquin Miller Elementary School have been helping develop content for the site. The executive director and restoration and nursery manager responded to a variety of public inquiries regarding various watershed issues.

#### **Stormwater Pollution Mass Mailing**

The fish kill flyer that we created after the February 2008 event was mailed to 2,122 watershed residents through Alameda Countywide Clean Water program funding. The mid-September 2009 mailer included information on our organization, as well as details on volunteering for Creek-to-Bay Day.

### **Community Partners**

FOSC continues to maintain relationships with community partners including the City of Oakland, Americorps, Boy Scouts of America, buildOn, Chabot Space and Science Center, EarthTeam, East Bay Conservation Corps, Girl Scouts of the USA, Kids for the Bay, Lawrence Hall of Science TEAMS, Oakland's Student Conservation Association, Piedmont High School Key Club, and Skyline High School's Excel and Eco Clubs. A new relationship was forged with Holy Names University faculty, and Environmental Studies students generated Sausal Creek planning proposals which could become field projects for students next school year. Partnerships with other local community groups include Dimond Improvement Association, Friends of Joaquin Miller Park, Friends of Montclair Railroad Trail, Peralta Creek neighbors, Piedmont Pines Neighborhood Association, and Shepherd Canyon Homeowner's Association.

### **Monitoring**

A new board member has taken over our aquatic insect monitoring program. Another board member continues to lead quarterly bird monitoring. After a presentation to our board of directors by Dr. Robert Leidy of the Environmental Protection Agency in January 2010, a new board member has begun a visual fish monitoring program.

### **Board of Directors**

We were pleased to recruit three new members to our Board of Directors for 2010: an educator specializing in insects, an attorney, and an outdoor equipment designer. We are drawing upon their professional expertise for monitoring, fundraising, and administrative assistance.

## **FUNDING**

Additional funding in 2009-2010 came from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission, Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program, Clif Bar Foundation, The Clorox Company Foundation, Coastal Conservancy, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Environmental Protection Agency, Naches fun Gabyn Fund administered by the East Bay Community Foundation, Patagonia (San Francisco store), Rotary Club of Oakland, San Francisco Foundation, and State Water Resources Control Board. FOSC continues to work to identify other potential funding sources for our programs.

## **SUMMARY**

Total volunteers visits: 2,309  
Total service hours: 6,140  
Native plants propagated and planted: 1,344