



Friends of Sausal Creek

PROMOTING WATERSHED AWARENESS

Annual Program Summary Report for Watershed Awareness Program July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

PUBLIC OUTREACH - EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Friends of Sausal Creek Member Meetings were held in September, January, March, and May at the Dimond Library. For July, we hosted our annual Meet & Greet Potluck, this year at Wood Park. In January we held the fifth annual State of the Creek meeting; this year's meeting launched our 20th anniversary year and featured reflections on FOSC's first 20 years, a photo tour of the creek between I-580 and the creek's mouth, and an introduction to the Sausal Creek Walkable Watershed planning effort in this part of the watershed. Topics for the other indoor bimonthly meetings covered gardening for birds; bats (with a follow up observation walk); local cultural history; and the history of East Bay trees. We averaged 48 attendees per indoor meeting this past fiscal year.

In this our 20th anniversary year we focused renewed energy on the watershed between I-580 and the creek's mouth. Because the creek is mostly on private property or buried as it runs parallel to Fruitvale Avenue, this effort involves community engagement to identify potential projects and FOSC's role in these projects. We sought and received technical assistance from the **National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program**. Supported by RTCA staff we successfully applied to have the Fruitvale neighborhood be the pilot community for the first Bay Area **Walkable Watershed** Concept Plan, receiving consulting help from Skeo Solutions (valued at \$50,000) for visioning and strategy work, technical analysis, community engagement, and the creation of a detailed concept plan. The concept plan is being developed by the local community to increase creek-related awareness and access and to promote neighborhood greening projects and development of recreational opportunities. Throughout the year we worked with a coalition of community leaders and resource partners to generate ideas and shepherd implementation. Project website:

<http://www.walkablewatershed.com/sausalcreek/>

Enthusiastic volunteers continued to represent FOSC by **tabling at community events**. FOSC tabled at the Dimond Park Picnic, Dimond Oktoberfest, Glenview Water-Wise Fair, Piedmont Pines Neighborhood Association annual meeting, Fruitvale Community Career & Resource Fair, *TRAILHEAD* film premier, Oakland's EarthEXPO, and an Ecofaction event at Ashkenaz. FOSC also had informational tables at our three annual Dimond Park events: Creek to Bay Day (70 volunteers), Winter Solstice Planting Day (29 volunteers), and Earth Day 88 (volunteers). Our 10th annual Native Plant Sale and Open House (300 attendees) included a FOSC informational table as well as tablers on raptors, arachnids, pollinators, and gardening; face painting; and live music.

We led tours of our Dimond Park Native Plant Demonstration Garden for 309 people as part of the **Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour**. During the day-long event, we hosted two talks ("Gardening and Birds" and "How to Design a Local Native Plant Garden") and led two group tours of the Sausal Creek Restoration Project in Dimond Park.

We led a **student march against trash and illegal dumping** through the Fruitvale neighborhood, with 48 participants raising awareness by carrying signs and chanting while picking up trash. Students then helped at the monthly workday at Wood Park. To celebrate 20 years of student volunteerism, the FOSC board hosted a picnic lunch following the workday.

We helped California Urban Streams Partnership coordinate a **soil bioengineering workshop** in Shepherd Canyon Park.

A FOSC board member **presented** on the history of Sausal Creek at a Dimond Improvement Association general meeting.

We led a **tour** in the watershed for Court Appointed Special Advocates and a Bentley High School class.

We hosted a **history walk** along the waterfront during the “king tide” in January 2016.

We **spoke** about our organization’s efforts to East Bay Hills Hike participants and at a California Native Plant Society-East Bay field trip/botanical walk.

We updated the *Trails and Tributaries of the Sausal Creek Watershed* **map brochure** and completed a third printing (30,000 copies).

We created and distributed an **educational flyer for dog owners** to help encourage dog owners to pick up after their pets and educate about the sensitivity of rainbow trout habitat.

Stan Dodson produced the documentary *TRAILHEAD: Discovering Oakland’s Gateway to the Redwoods* which highlights FOSC’s volunteer leadership and native plant nursery. The film premiered at the Chabot Space & Science Center on October 7, 2015, and after more than 30 public screenings in 26 Bay Area venues was released online on April 18, 2016 (<http://oaklandtrails.org/watch/>). Links to press on the film can be viewed at: <http://oaklandtrails.org/press/>.

We assisted the Oakland Fire Department with the update of the **Goat Grazing Plan** so that grazing could be best timed with removal of invasive plants prior to seeding and so that native plants could be protected from grazing.

Other forms of public outreach included FOSC's **newsletter, listserv, website** (www.sausalcreek.org), **Facebook** page (www.facebook.com/FriendsOfSausalCreek), **Instagram** account ([friends_of_sausal_creek](https://www.instagram.com/friends_of_sausal_creek)), and **Twitter** account (FOSC_Field). In January 2016 we began issuing the newsletter every month instead of every other month. For the final newsletter of the year, circulation was 2,494 email recipients. Listserv membership increased from 548 to 617 members. Outreach for member meetings and volunteer events was also done through announcements in digital and print publications, posts on neighborhood listservs, and flyers at trailheads and at tabling events.

East Bay Express published an article written by one of FOSC’s 2015 summer interns on the history of Sausal Creek and FOSC’s volunteer efforts in caring for it: <http://www.eastbayexpress.com/oakland/sausal-creek-an-oakland-watershed-reborn/Content?oid=4499745>.

FOSC was featured in the city's *Oakland Tribune* **article** promoting Creek to Bay Day: <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/pwa/documents/marketingmaterial/oak054923.pdf>.

Bay Area News Group published an **article** on the Walkable Watershed effort following our State of the Creek meeting: http://www.eastbaytimes.com/bay-area-news/ci_29502194/east-oakland-friends-sausal-creek-takes-watershed-rehab.

Inspired by the documentary *TRAILHEAD*, an Oakland resident **blogged** about Dimond Canyon Trail, helping FOSC get the word out about the importance of cleaning up after dogs and keeping dogs on leash to protect sensitive rainbow trout habitat: <http://www.oaklandmomma.com/2016/03/04/appreciation-awareness-oaklands-dimond-canyon/>.

FOSC's success at garnering well-timed donations (which yielded an additional \$5,000 in cash prizes) during East Bay Gives 2015 caused East Bay Community Foundation to **highlight** FOSC for East Bay Gives 2016 (<https://eastbaygives.org/about>).

FOSC continues to maintain relationships with **community partners** including 4-H, AmeriCorps, Boy Scouts of America, buildOn, Chabot Space and Science Center, Civicorps, College of Alameda, CSU-East Bay, Diablo Valley College, EarthTeam, East Bay Academy for Young Scientists, Girl Scouts of the USA, Hands on Bay Area, Holy Names University, KIDS for the BAY, Laney College, Merritt College, Piedmont Community Service Crew, Piedmont High School Key Club, Student Conservation Association, and UC Berkeley. Partnerships with other local community groups include Bicycle Trails Council of the East Bay, Diablo Firesafe Council, Dimond Business and Professional Association, Dimond Improvement Association, Friends of Joaquin Miller Park, Friends of Montclair Railroad Trail, Friends of Wood Park, Glenview Neighborhood Association, Jingtowntown Arts & Business Community, Keep Oakland Beautiful, Montclair Village Association, Nomadic Press, Oakland Wildland Stewards, Oakmore Homes Association, Piedmont Pines Neighborhood Association, and Shepherd Canyon Homeowners Association. As part of the Walkable Watershed planning process we established many new relationships this past year, including with Brothers on the Rise, Cohen Bray House, Fruitvale Many Hands, Peralta Hacienda Historical Park, Unity Council, and Walk Oakland Bike Oakland. We also began partnering with Youth Employment Partnership to lead special field programs for Team Oakland students in summer 2016.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT EVENTS

FOSC community volunteer events are held year-round at restoration sites throughout the watershed. Some of the workdays are led by FOSC staff, while others are led by neighborhood volunteers. Volunteer-led worksites receive support from FOSC staff in multiple ways: assistance with workday outreach and volunteer recruitment; tools; consultation on site restoration plans; and contribution of native plants grown at our native plant nursery. In addition to an executive director and restoration and nursery manager, FOSC hired an education specialist to lead our summer education programs, a summer intern, and an intern to assist during the school year. We also received 300 hours of assistance from a water resources intern from CSU-East Bay sponsored by USDA Careers Internship Program for April 2016-April 2017.

- Three (3) workdays at Barry Place
- Eleven (11) workdays at Beaconsfield Canyon plus many hours of invasive plant removal by dedicated park stewards
- One (1) monitoring day at the Big Trees Trail pallid manzanita colony
- Twenty-five (25) public workdays and three (3) private corporate workdays at Bridgeview Trailhead
- One (1) workday at Castle Canyon
- Five (5) public workdays and four (4) student workdays at Chabot Space and Science Center pallid manzanita colony
- One (1) workday at the Cohen Bray historic house
- Six (6) public workdays and one (1) private workday in Dimond Park and Dimond Canyon Park plus many hours of invasive plant removal by dedicated park stewards
- Four (4) public workdays in the Dimond Park Native Plant Demonstration Garden
- Eleven (11) public and two (2) private student trail maintenance workdays in Dimond Canyon Park
- One (1) private corporate workday at Fern Ravine
- Two (2) workdays at Fruitvale Bridge Park
- Two (2) workdays led by Jingletown Arts & Business Community
- Twenty-eight (28) public workdays and one (1) private workday at the FOOSC Native Plant Nursery
- Two (2) public workdays at the Police Activities League (PAL) camp in Joaquin Miller Park, one (1) private workday at Lookout Point in Joaquin Miller Park, plus many hours of invasive plant removal by dedicated park stewards in Joaquin Miller Park
- Sixteen (16) workdays at Marj Saunders Park
- Twelve (12) workdays at Montclair Railroad Trail led by Friends of Montclair Railroad Trail
- One (1) workday at Shepherd Canyon Park
- Twelve (12) workdays at William D. Wood Park
- Thirteen (13) propagule collection hikes
- Four (4) creek cleanups in Sausal Creek working upstream from the El Centro Trailhead
- One (1) family aquatic insect exploration field trip and four (4) field trips on benthic macroinvertebrates for college classes (College of Alameda and Merritt College)
- Four (4) bird monitoring events
- Twelve (12) water quality monitoring days
- Three (3) Eagle Scout projects completed yielding three plant benches, two bulb benches, and two planter beds at the FOOSC nursery

- **Board of Directors:** Our annual board and staff retreat in February 2016 was planned and conducted by our liaison with the National Park Service RTCA Program. Linda Stonier helped our board and staff to understand the strategic framework FOSC already has in place, to update our mission and vision statement, and to identify goals for FOSC's work in the Fruitvale neighborhood, which provided input and direction on the Walkable Watershed planning effort. Our 14-member board of directors and executive director met every other month. Board of directors meetings are open to the public, and the agenda and staff report are posted on the FOSC listserv.

SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN OUTREACH

Our activities with school-age children include leading environmental education field trips for school classes and restoration workdays for student community service groups. Youth activities include a discussion of the Sausal Creek Watershed, stormwater pollution prevention, stream restoration strategies, and native and nonnative plant identification. The programs also include a hands-on restoration component such as removal of invasive, nonnative plants; vegetation monitoring; planting of native plants; or propagating plants in our native plant nursery. We also developed new curriculum on native pollinators at our pollinator garden, and aquatic insect observation and water quality testing along the creek. Many students also enjoyed naturalist-led hikes through the woods and along the creek, and silent reflection activities. FOSC staff led 36 field trips this past school year, and FOSC volunteers led an additional 14 field trips. In addition to these field trips, student service organizations volunteered for weekend workdays year-round.

During summer of 2015, we partnered again with Oakland Parks and Recreation to work with their Touch the Earth and Shake, Rattle & Roll day camp programs in the Joaquin Miller Park redwood area. Fifteen groups of campers learned about the Sausal Creek Watershed, stormwater pollution prevention, "Leave No Trace" ethics, native plants, insects and other wildlife, and California Native Americans and their practices. These groups also went on naturalist-led hikes through the redwoods and participated in restoration activities including removal of invasive, nonnative plants and propagation of native plants in our nursery. This partnership is continuing during the summer of 2016.

Seven students participated in our 2015 summer high school intern program. The 10-day program included a variety of habitat restoration projects throughout the watershed, special projects at our native plant nursery, educational and leadership activities, and explorative hikes.

FUNDING

Additional funding in 2015-16 came from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission, Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program Community Stewardship Grant Program, Bill Graham Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund, California Department of Water Resources Urban Streams Restoration Program (Proposition 84 grant), City of Oakland (for plants for the Sausal Creek Restoration Project in Dimond Park), The Clorox Company Foundation, East Bay Community Foundation (prizes from East Bay Gives), East Bay Municipal Utility District, Hillside Gardeners of Montclair, JiJi Foundation, National Environmental Education Foundation, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Ocean Guardian School Program (procured by Joaquin Miller Elementary), organization donations,

business contributions and employee matches, and individual contributions. In addition, we received the in-kind services described above from the National Park Service RTCA Program and Skeo Solutions to support our Walkable Watershed planning effort. FOSC continues to work to identify other potential funding sources for our programs.

SUMMARY

Volunteer visits: 3,846

Volunteer service hours: 10,307

Students participating in field trips or summer service learning projects: 977

Plants planted by FOSC: 2,485

Plants grown by FOSC planted at the Sausal Creek Restoration Project in Dimond Park: 2,708

Plants donated for school and city projects: 199