

Water Main Break Impacts Sausal Creek's Rainbow Trout

On Tuesday, December 17, Sausal Creek neighbor and ecology professor Dr. Matt Cover observed large amounts of water traveling down Wellington Avenue to Sausal Creek in Dimond Park. Matt spoke with an EBMUD staff person who was on site investigating a possible water line break at Everett and Wellington. Both chlorine and chloramine are used to disinfect drinking water, but they are toxic to fish. Matt later walked the length of the creek from Wellington down to the bottom of Dimond Park, noting the creek was very cloudy with suspended sediment.



Unfortunately he observed two dead trout with another appearing impaired. By late afternoon, EBMUD workers had finished repairing the break. Following the repairs, EBMUD needed to flush sediment from the water pipes that entered during the break. During pipe flushing they installed a device that dechlorinates the water before it spills into the creek.

As we learn more about the true extent of the damage, we will update the Sausal Creek community. This incident highlights the fragility of our urban creek and its native residents. Just last month, volunteers noticed higher than normal water flow in Fern Ravine at the headwaters of Sausal Creek in Joaquin Miller Park. FOSC volunteers collaborated with the city to locate and repair the leaking water lines before the treated water could adversely impact wildlife.



Scientists have found that Sausal Creek's rainbow trout are genetically "wild" (i.e., they do not originate from a fish hatchery). They are a unique and rare resource that persists within the City of Oakland. Over the last decade there have been several fish kills affecting dozens of rainbow trout attributable to solvents and other pollutants, including treated drinking water, entering the creek. Unfortunately, this past spring, over 100 [fish were killed](#) in Berkeley's Codornices Creek due to fire-fighting foam washing into the creek.

Maintaining a healthy watershed requires an engaged community. You can help by [reporting creek issues](#) like water line breaks, illegal dumping, and even illegal fishing. Your donations to FOSC also help by funding our efforts to protect rainbow trout and other wildlife in our watershed. Please consider making a donation if you can. Thank you!

--Jeff Stephens, FOSC Board President

Help us raise funds for rainbow trout protection

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