

Friends of Sausal Creek

www.sausalcreek.org
(510) 501-FOSC (3672)

December'04 - January'05

Monthly Meetings 2005!

December—**No monthly meeting in December!** Instead come out to Sausal Creek on Saturday 12/18 for a Winter Solstice celebration and planting party (see below).

January 19—Annette Thompson, Golden West Women Flyfishers Foundation, Director of Special Project, In-School Aquatics program will present on Pacific Chorus/Tree Frogs, Habitat, and the in-school project.

February 16—Pete Alexander, Fisheries Program Manager at the East Bay Regional Parks District will give a talk on trout and trout restoration projects in East Bay creeks.



Eureka! Over 200 Bird Species in the Sausal Creek Watershed

In October, an intrepid group set out on a beautiful morning to monitor the migrating birds in the Sausal Creek watershed. We had great looks at newly arrived Fox Sparrows, noted the similar appearance of the Hermit Thrushes as they all feasted on elderberries, and saw over

20 Anna's Hummingbirds. On this trip we also spotted the magic 200th bird species of the watershed and added it to our list. The bird that put us over was a dainty Black-throated Gray Warbler, female, that paused in an alder long enough for us to get our binoculars on it. Eureka!! 200!!

Playing the numbers game is something birders do, whether it's a trip list, year list, life list or watershed list. But it's the numbers that we collect on our regular monitoring efforts that are the most meaningful. Monitoring is an important tool for gathering long-term data that reflects trends of bird adoption to our restoration efforts. Four times a year, we visit five sites from hills to coast in the Sausal Creek watershed, especially focusing on the restoration corridor. At each site, we conduct a 10 minute look and listen survey to determine what birds are in the area.

We've been monitoring this 5.5 mile long slice of land from the Oakland Hills to the Alameda ship canal for seven years. Slowly but surely, we've been gathering a picture of the richness and importance our urban watershed.

Our next monitoring will be on January 15th, 2005. Join us!

—Mark Rauzon



The Friends are sponsored by the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and the City of Oakland, with additional support from private citizens . . . like you!

Winter Solstice Celebration

Join us on Saturday, December 18th from 9am -1pm to do winter planting under the oaks and enjoy a cookout lunch. Meet at the El Centro trail head at the entrance to Dimond Canyon. Heavy rain cancels.

Celebrate Winter Solstice with Friends

Winter Solstice is the shortest day and longest night of the year marked by the sun passing through the sky at its lowest arc. The drama of seasons is due to the tilt of the earth as it spins on its axis. The Northern Hemisphere is tilted away from the sun in winter and the opposite in summer. For several days before and after the solstice, the sun's noontime elevation appears to be the same. Hence the origin of the word solstice, which comes from Latin solstitium, from sol, "sun" and -stitium, "a stoppage."

Many of our cultural observations during the winter holiday season began in ancient times. People who lived far enough from the equator to experience the cyclical lengthening and shortening of daylight developed various ways of heralding the return of the light. The Friends of Sausal Creek plan to celebrate this year's return of the light by holding a creek-side planting party and cookout on Saturday, December 18th from 9 am till 1 pm We will meet at the El Centro trail head at the entrance to Dimond Canyon.

—Kristen Hopper

HOW YOU CAN MAKE A 2004 TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO FOSC

Help us accomplish our goals for 2005! Show your support of the Friends of Sausal Creek by making a year-end donation today!

Mail this form with check made payable to:
Friends of Sausal Creek, P.O. Box 2737, Oakland, CA 94602.
FOSC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and your contribution is fully tax-deductible. A receipt will be sent for your records.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Amount of Donation

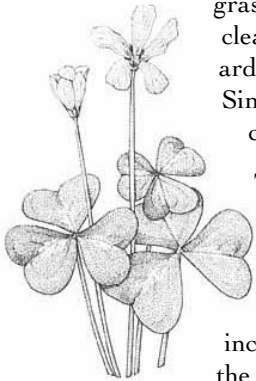
\$100 \$50 \$25 \$12 Other: _____

This is the fourth article in a series about FOSC's Biodiversity Project.

Redwood Site

In a recent Bay Nature magazine article, Steve Edwards of Tilden Botanical Garden called the East Bay's redwood forest understory "depauperate", meaning that it was sadly lacking the diversity of understory found in other redwood forests. One plant he labeled as missing from almost all East Bay sites is redwood sorrel (*Oxalis oregana*). One of the only two East Bay sites in which redwood sorrel occurs is in our own Dimond Canyon, near the Monterey trail head. The relative local rarity of this plant prompted the FOSC restoration committee to include this site in the Biodiversity Project.

When we first started work, the sorrel patch was in sorry shape. Ivy covered the trail, so trail users walked on top of the sorrel patch. The steep slope was invaded by many of the worst nemeses of our native understory: Cape ivy, vinca, spiderwort, Himalayan blackberry, Algerian ivy, and veldt grass (*Ehrharta*). Our first major workday cleared the upper trail, and completed an arduous first pass to remove invasives. Since then, we've visited several times to control the resprouts.



REDWOOD SORREL
(*Oxalis oregana*)

The full project scope encompasses a swath along the switchbacks from the sorrel patch down to the creek. On a big workday in December 2003, FOSC planted dozens of natives including protective spiny shrubs along the top trail, a diverse patch of understory in the middle of the switchbacks, and wild ginger, elk clover, and other water lovers by the creek. In addition, resprouts were shorn off two huge fallen bay trees to increase the amount of light reaching the understory, and the trimmings were used to block a bicycle shortcut and stabilize the trail.

Future efforts will include erosion control, keeping the shortcuts blocked, picking out the last bits of invasives, and adding additional plants throughout the site. Check the Saturday morning Restoration Program schedule on the FOSC website calendar and join us on our next visit to protect and enhance this island of native redwood understory. —Karen Paulsell

FOSC ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, call 501-FOSC or email coordinator@sausalcreek.org to get information about all activities. Also, for details about ongoing projects, check the Volunteer section of the Friends' website at www.sausalcreek.org.

Monthly Meetings

~3rd Wednesday of the month.

No monthly meeting in December.~

- Wednesday 1/19, 2/16. 7pm-9pm; Dimond Library, 3565 Fruitvale Ave.

Board of Directors Meetings

~2nd Wednesday of the month~

- Wednesday 12/8, 1/13, 2/2, etc. 7pm-9pm at the Chabot Space & Science Center. All welcome!

Saturday Workdays

~Most, but not all Saturdays.

Check website or call for details.~

- **9am-noon:** Restoration Activities
- **1:30-4pm:** Nursery Activities
Info: Kristen Hopper, 387-9744 or field@sausalcreek.org or go to www.sausalcreek.org/volunteer/calendar.html.

Bird Monitoring

- Saturday 1/15. Info: Mark Rauzon, 531-3887, birds@sausalcreek.org

Aquatic Insect Sampling

~3rd Sunday of the month~

- Sunday 12/19, 1/6, 2/20 etc. 9:30am-noon; info: Emma Brown, 527-2507.

Water Quality Monitoring

~now, 3rd Sunday of the month;

please call first to confirm e3 for location~

- Sunday 12/19, 1/16, 2/20 etc. 9am-noon; info: Mark Lane, 219-8036.

Outdoor Education

Docents Needed

~Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9am-noon~

- Work with OUSD students doing restoration/propagation in the Sausal Creek watershed. Preschedule with Sue Morgan at jmpnpnenviroed@yahoo.com or 531-6293.

Conversations About Watersheds

A Conference on Volunteer Stewardship

January 13 -16, 2005 • Merritt College in Oakland • Cost \$15-25

An occasion for those who have a stake in the health of our watersheds and our communities to discuss obstacles and opportunities for volunteer stewardship in the East Bay and beyond.

Daily Plenary Sessions • Topical Workshops

Facilitated Roundtable Discussions • Poster Sessions • Field Trips

Keynote Speakers include: William Jordan III, Sharon Farrell, Sharon Fuller, Steven B. Rauh, Robin Mark Freeman

For complete conference schedule, contact the East Bay Watershed Center ecomerritt@sbcglobal.net (510) 434-3840

Joaquin Miller Park Survey

Councilmember Jean Quan's office is coordinating at master planning process for Joaquin Miller Park in cooperation with the Oakland Department of Parks and Recreation. You are encouraged to complete a survey on park usage and areas in need of improvement that will inform this process and serve as a springboard for two workshops to be held in January 2005 at Joaquin Miller Community Center, 3590 Sanborn Drive.

Surveys may be downloaded from www.jeanquan.org or may be obtained by calling Sue Piper at 238-7042. Please call if you plan on attending the workshops listed below.

Saturday, January 8—Review of survey data, add any outstanding issues, categorize data and begin to develop a vision statement for the park.

Saturday, January 29—Confirm the vision statement, set short term and long term goals, and develop a matrix of projects and priorities. —Sue Piper and Alisa Shor

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE DESIGNS

For two and a half years, Jennifer Stanley has made an impression on newsletter readers with the many artfully designed and carefully edited pages of the publication you now read. She has added spunk to its content and wit to its headlines, and with that a great level of professionalism to the canon of FOSC literature. This newsletter marks the transition from Jennifer's hands to those of our new designer, Joan Bittner. Jennifer will continue to volunteer as the webmaster for the FOSC website for which we are eternally grateful. From all of your loyal newsletter readers, thank you, Jennifer! —Alisa Shor

December'04-January'05 newsletter contributors:

Kristen Hopper, Karen Paulsell, Sue Piper, Mark Rauzon, Alisa Shor. Editing, Alisa Shor. Design, Joan Bittner.