



# Friends of Sausal Creek

*Promoting Watershed Protection*

www.sausalcreek.org  
(510) 501-FOSC (3672)  
February-March '04

**Monthly meetings:** The Friends' February and March meetings together constitute a "Forum on Erosion and Land Management Practices." See articles in this issue for more information. Meetings are held from 7-9pm, at the Dimond Library, 3565 Fruitvale. See you there!

## Forum on Erosion and Land Management Practices

In response to the recent passage of the Wildfire Prevention Assessment District (WPAD), FOSC has planned a two-part forum on erosion and land management practices at our next two general meetings on February 18 and March 17. We have invited representatives of the Oakland Fire Department to these meetings.

**FOSC Meeting, February 18:** Jared Lewis, of Living Systems Land Management in Santa Cruz will talk about ecological animal-based vegetation management. He will discuss how Managed Intensive Grazing can be administered ecologically and sustainably by paying appropriate attention to grazing timing, paddock design, plant identification, stocking density, plant responses to herbivory, and other management considerations.

**FOSC Meeting, March 17:** Michael Thilgen, long-time Friend of Sausal Creek and owner of Four Dimensions Landscaping Company, will present a slide show on erosion, its sources, and its effects on our watershed.

Each presentation will be followed by a group discussion. Both meetings will begin at 7:00pm at Dimond Public Library, 3665 Fruitvale Ave. in Oakland. Come help shape the vegetation management policies of the next ten years! For more information about the issues, see the article on the reverse.

## FOSC Hires New Operations Manager

FOSC welcomes Alisa Shor as our new operations manager as of the first of February. Alisa received her BA from Smith College in Northampton, MA, where she majored in Biological Sciences with a focus on Plant Sciences and Ecology. She worked through Americorps at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, where she got valuable experience coordinating and leading volunteers in restoration activities at Crissy Field, assisting with volunteer outreach, and helping prepare materials used to introduce volunteers to the GGNRA projects. She also worked with kids' groups in gardening and exploration programs at the Strybing Arboretum in San Francisco, and has other nonprofit fundraising experience. Some of you may have met Alisa at our Native Plant Nursery where she has come to help with our plant propagation and collection activities. We are very excited to have her on board, and have already passed her the official baton (that would be the phone, 501-FOSC). We will miss Pete Veilleux, who had to resign due to the demands of his garden design and installation business. Thanks Pete for all your hard work! —Sally Kilburg

## Friends of the Month: The Dynamic Doyles

Weed bashers extraordinaire: Mike and Laura Doyle. Nothing will stop 'em. Not Acacia, nor eucalyptus, nor broom of any kind—these two are a dynamic duo and are truly heroes for tirelessly chopping back Acacia re-sprouts on the slope above the nursery. If not for their dedication, the good clearing work done by the East Bay Conservation Corps last spring would have been for naught. The Doyles are so dedicated to the eradication of these nasties in their neighborhood park that they come with their own tools and gloves and won't stop for a break! Mike even took his invasive eradication drive on vacation to Hawaii where, while the rest of Kauai's visitors lolled around on the beach, he joined an invasive plant patrol team eradicating a mono-culture of non-native ginger. Here's to the Doyles!  
—Kristen Hopper

## Generous FOSCers Respond to Call For Help

Thanks to all you generous Friends of Sausal Creek who donated to our year-end donation campaign. The last few weeks of December and beginning of January brought over \$4,500 to our needy coffers! This money will be well spent developing and executing new restoration projects, and supporting the Native Plant nursery, which is growing by leaps and bounds. Come visit the Nursery if you haven't been there for a while, and see the improvements that are underway. In all, we received \$8,132 in private donations last year. This is about 15% of our total budget, and goes a long way to keeping our mission alive. Thanks a million to all you creek-lovin', check-writing supporters. Remember that all donations are tax deductible.  
—Sally Kilburg

## What's that in the sky?

Late winter is the time to begin scanning the Sausal Creek watershed for birds. FOSC's next bird watching outing is on Sunday, April 25. At FOSC's April 21 meeting, Mark Rauzon, FOSC's bird outing leader, will talk about the Friends' birding efforts and how to use the checklist in our new brochure, *Birds of the Sausal Creek Watershed*. Try it out before the meeting! It's available at a trailhead in the 'shed near you, and also online at [www.sausalcreek.org/sausal/nature\\_pdf/Birding\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.sausalcreek.org/sausal/nature_pdf/Birding_Brochure.pdf).



## That Bird Had Flown

The old Slav never left his name, just words of encouragement in broken English. He and his ridgeback were daily users of the Sausal Creek trail. He stopped to chat during canyon workdays. He would talk to anyone that listened, offering advice and complaining about the rascals who destroyed our fences. I expected him at any time, and slowly it dawned on me I had not seen him in a while. He had faded away. I then remembered his gait, gauntness, and complaint of ill health. Anyone working in the canyon soon knows the regulars; these are our neighbors and village elders, and those that have time to exchange pleasantries are rare birds indeed. —Mark J. Rauzon



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Don't miss our next monthly meetings on February 18 and March 17, 2004, 7-9pm at the Dimond Library. Newsletter printed on recycled paper. Thanks for recycling!

### Opportunities for Sensible Vegetation Management

The proposed Wildfire Prevention Assessment District (WPAD) was passed by voters on January 6, 2004. This means that the City of Oakland has funding for the next ten years to manage the vegetation in the Oakland Hills for fire abatement. As stated in the last newsletter, FOSC supports the WPAD, as long as the commitment to protect the ecosystem is an integrated part of the fire abatement strategy.

Even after the 1991 fire storm that claimed 25 lives and nearly 3,000 residences, the fire abatement vegetation management programs in the Oakland hills, parks, and open spaces were underfunded. Now that the stress of finding funding has been alleviated, WPAD's Advisory Committee and stakeholders have a chance to develop a program that addresses fuel load reduction as well as ecological concerns such as the removal of endangered plants, erosion, and overall habitat degradation.

Concerns have been raised by the Friends and others that while fuel load reduction is extremely important, the current methods used in wildfire abatement are often haphazard and damaging to the environment. The encouragement of native plant colonies, for example, reduces fuel loads. This past fall, brush-cutting crews inadvertently clear cut an individual pallid manzanita, a plant listed as endangered by both the state and the federal government. This manzanita grows here and near Mount Diablo and nowhere else in the world. Besides the accidental clear-cut, two other rare manzanitas were left unprotected in a goat enclosure. These manzanitas were badly damaged and are among the few survivors in an area near Chabot Space and Science Center that may have once been a solid stand of this majestic plant.

Goats and brush cutters are often applied to the slopes of the Oakland hills randomly and for too long, laying slopes bare just prior to the rainy season. This practice not only destroys important plants but also creates erosion resulting in ever more siltation in our already overly muddy creeks. Continually degrading terrestrial and aquatic habitat leaves our watershed and ecosystem unnecessarily impoverished. We can do better.

To learn about and discuss strategies for fire abatement that works without trashing our environment, attend our February and March meetings (details, first article on the reverse).  
—Kristen Hopper

### FOSC ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, call 501-FOSC or email [coordinator@sausalcreek.org](mailto: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](http://www.sausalcreek.org).

#### Monthly Meetings

~3rd Wednesday of the month~

- Wednesday 2/18, 3/17, 4/21, etc.  
7pm-9pm; Dimond Library,  
3565 Fruitvale Ave.

#### Board of Directors Meetings

~2nd Wednesday of the month~

- Wednesday 2/11, 3/10, 4/14, etc.  
7pm-9pm at the Chabot Space &  
Science Center. All welcome!

#### Saturday Workdays

~many, but not all, Saturdays~

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

#### Seed Gathering~times and locations vary~

Help gather native seeds for propagation efforts. Call Kristen Hopper, 387-9744, for schedule or go to [www.sausalcreek.org/volunteer/nursery.html#seed](http://www.sausalcreek.org/volunteer/nursery.html#seed).

#### Aquatic Insect Sampling

~3rd Sunday of the month~

- Sunday 2/15, 3/21, 4/18, etc.  
9:30am-noon; info: Emma Brown,  
527-2507.

#### Water Quality Monitoring

~1st Saturday of the month; please  
call first to confirm & for location~

- Saturday 2/1, 3/7, 4/3, etc.  
9am-noon; info: Mark Lane,  
219-8036.

#### Bird Monitoring "Spring Count"

- Sunday 4/25, 8am, meet at the Sequoia Arena parking lot. Info: Mark Rauzon, 531-3887, [birds@sausalcreek.org](mailto:birds@sausalcreek.org).

#### Outdoor Education Docents Needed

~Wednesday mornings, 9am-noon~  
Share your love of the natural world, native plants, riparian habitat. Work with elementary students in Dimond or Joaquin Miller Parks. Preschedule with Sue Morgan at [jmpnpnenviroed@yahoo.com](mailto:jmpnpnenviroed@yahoo.com).

The Friends are sponsored by the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and the City of Oakland, with additional support from CH2M Hill and private citizens.

#### February-March 04 newsletter contributors:

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