



Friends of Sausal Creek

Promoting Watershed Protection

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

April - May '04

MONTHLY MEETINGS | April 21: Janet Klein, Marin Municipal Water District Vegetation Ecologist, will discuss managing both rare and invasive plant species while mitigating fire risk. FOSC's Mark Rauzon will show how to use the checklist in our new brochure, "Birds of the Sausal Creek Watershed." | **May 19:** Dr. Richard Bailey, Executive Director of the Lake Merritt Institute will speak about "Creeks—The Big Picture." Meetings are held from 7-9pm, at the Dimond Library, 3565 Fruitvale. See you there!

Earth Stewards

Earth Day is a time to celebrate our complex relationship with the land and the life it provides for us. As early conservationist Aldo Leopold wrote (way back in the first part of the last century), "civilization is not the enslavement of a stable and constant earth. It is a state of mutual and interdependent cooperation between human animals, other animals, plants and soils which may be disrupted at any time by the failure of any of them." Leopold thought that if people understood their place in the scheme of things then all would do their part to care for the earth the other types of life it supports. A rare bird or flower need remain no rarer than the people willing to venture their skill in building it a habitat.

To this inspiring end, the Friends invite you to join us in cleaning up and weeding our Native Plant/Wildlife Habitat Demonstration Garden,

pulling down invasive ivy and removing Scotch broom and other invaders from the Dimond Canyon restoration area as well as removing trash and debris from the creek from **9am-noon on Saturday, April 24**. This year, meet at the Scout Hut in Dimond Park. (Team leaders, please arrive at 8:15am.) As usual, the City of Oakland is giving T-shirts to all participants and the Friends will provide a yummy lunch for all who come out and help. Extra credit for bringing your own water bottle and/or drinking cup!

—Kristen Hopper

Now We Have Havel

We are pleased to welcome Eric Havel to the FOSC board of directors. Eric leads the Environmental Education program at the Chabot Space and Science Center, located in our watershed. He has great experience teaching and developing programs for school kids about science and the environment. Eric has a long familiarity with Sausal Creek, having grown up in Oakland's Glenview and Dimond districts. He now lives in the watershed. In addition to serving on the board, Eric will be joining the Education Committee to support our current and future education programs. Welcome Eric!

—Linda Morse

Fire, A California Native

At the Regional Parks Association Annual Meeting on March 28, 2004, Dr. Jon Keeley, USGS wildfire ecologist, articulated some of the major concerns of our East Bay region through an exploration of California fire history. His talk, entitled *Fire and the Wildland-Urban Interface: Lessons learned from the 2003 Fire Season*, focused on the 2003 Southern California fires.

It is not unreasonable or strange that Californians are preoccupied with wildfire. California has some of the worst fire weather conditions in the nation. Autumn high velocity winds, known as Diablo winds (or Santa Ana winds in southern California), often follow extended summer drought. These are conditions that have led to massive fires throughout time.

Every decade since 1950, California has spent more on fire suppression, yet has lost more property and lives. This is not because fires have changed, but rather that development has changed. Suburban sprawl, human ignition, and population growth are the major contributing factors to our current fire dilemma. In fact, data shows that in Alameda County, between 1950 and 1985 the rise of fires directly paralleled the rise in population.

Many of us know that devastation to humans as a result of fire does not mean devastation to local ecosystems. From a biological perspective, a landscape recovering from a large fire is a rejuvenated landscape. It is important that we differentiate between human hazards and natural resource hazards. Our confusion of the two has resulted in current fire management policies that some argue are ineffectual.

Keeley urges us to begin to think about and manage fires as we do other natural disasters such as earthquakes. Our focus should be on engineering human infrastructure to minimize the impacts of large fires. While attempting to reduce fire fuel is common practice, it is not effective at preventing massive wildfires in California since most have occurred as a result of severe weather. We must come to terms with the fact that wildfires are part of the California landscape. Keeley suggests our thinking and resources would best be channeled toward more sensible residential development, better home construction, and strategic planning for defensible space.

—Alisa Shor & Mark Lane



HOW YOU CAN MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO THE FRIENDS OF SAUSAL CREEK

Please help the Friends maintain and expand our efforts on behalf of the Sausal Creek watershed by making a donation today. To accomplish our mission, we need your support.

Mail this form with check made payable to "Friends of Sausal Creek" 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 tax-deductible. A receipt will be sent for your records.

Name _____
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Matching Gifts: Can your workplace match your donation? If your workplace has a matching gift program, please let us know.

In Kind: We can always use in-kind donations. Contact us to donate tools, equipment, office supplies, or anything else.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Don't miss our next monthly meetings on April 21 and May 19, 2004, 7-9pm at the Dimond Library. Newsletter printed on recycled paper. Thanks for recycling!

Getting Our Goats

With the growing popularity of grazing goats to manage open space, firms that specialize in ecological vegetation management have emerged with a new perspective on common goat grazing practices. Following is a summary of the talk given by Jared Lewis of Living Systems Management, a small Santa Cruz-based firm, at FOSC's February meeting.

Sustainable vegetation management is designed to meet the needs of a given project, such as fuel reduction, noxious weed control, grassland maintenance or restoration, through a three-step process. First, goals for a project are determined for a time frame of three, five, or even 10 years. The second step is the creation of a grazing plan. The third step is annual evaluation of site conditions.

Planning includes strategies and goals for fuel reduction, weed control, and management of animals, plants, and erosion. It also requires creating a plant inventory and inspecting for issues such as erosion in progress, steep slopes, and areas with sparse cover. The logistics of moving animals in and out, and from place to place need to be planned. In a management plan, attention is paid to:

- **Paddock design and stocking density**—crucial to avoid overgrazing; confined goats compete for grasses, leaving shrubs & trees alone, and then can be quickly relocated.
- **Timing**—can be difficult, e.g., the best time for fuel reduction may not also be the best time for weed control.
- **Plant protection**—deer repellent applied with a backpack sprayer keeps goats from stripping bark from trees or grazing on shrubs (quick and lasts up to 30 days).
- **Controlling the spread of noxious weeds**—inspecting the hair and hooves of animals; grazing before weed seeds ripen; and “clean feeding” the animals so that seeds can move through their digestive systems before they are brought to a new grazing site.

Both Fire and Parks Department city employees attended Lewis' talk. We hope that some of these methods can be used to improve grazing practices in our watershed and other local native plant areas.

—Karen Paulsell & Alisa Shor

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.



Annual Oakland Earth Day Cleanup

Saturday, April 24, 9am-noon. Meet at the Scout Hut in Dimond Park. See article on reverse or call us for more details.

Monthly Meetings

~3rd Wednesday of the month~

- Wednesday 4/21, 5/19, 6/15, etc.
7pm-9pm; Dimond Library,
3565 Fruitvale Ave. All welcome!

Board of Directors Meetings

~2nd Wednesday of the month~

- Wednesday 4/14, 5/12, 6/8, 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 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 4/18, 5/16, 6/20 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 5/1, 6/5, 7/3, 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.

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 jmpnenviroed@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.

April-May '04 newsletter contributors: Kristen Hopper, Mark Lane, Linda Morse, Karen Paulsell, Alisa Shor. Editing and design, Jennifer Stanley.