

Creekside News  
Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition  
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### *From the Editor*

Each year at our annual Creeks and Watershed Conference the Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition will present an award to the **Creek Advocate of the Year**. If you know an exceptional person who should be considered for this honor, please contact us at info@sccreeks.org with their name, address, phone number, and email address. Also tell us in 300 words or less why you think they should be selected. Nominations are due by August 31st of each year, and the Board of the Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition reserves the right to make the final selection.

If you want to help us with our work, please contact our project manager Richard McMurtry at (831) 336-3262 or email him at rmcmurtry@baymoon.com.

The Creekside News, published annually, reports on restoration, education, threats to clean water and riparian ecosystems, and generally on activities along creeks in Santa Clara County. As one would expect, it serves a broad and diverse set of constituencies who want our last remaining corridors of open space in the county to remain viable for transportation, science education, and nature. All of us hope you enjoy this year's issue and, more importantly, the wonderful gifts that our creeks give us.

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To support our work to protect and restore your local creeks please consider a membership with the Friends of the Creeks Coalition. We are a fiscal project of the Rose Foundation a 501(c)(3) organization Tax ID 94-3179772

Members receive our Creekside News Magazine and special promotions such as free admission to our events.

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Your gift of any amount is tax-deductible and appreciated, and please ask your company for a matching donation. Checks should be made to Rose Foundation c/o Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition.

Check here if you don't want your name and address shared with our member organizations

# Creekside News

Winter 2007



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Stewardship and more

Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition

*Advocates for living streams*

This publication is dedicated to our local creeks and the people who care about them.



Advocates for living streams

*Creekside News* is published for citizens, local officials, and creek activists with the hope of raising awareness, encouraging stewardship, collaboration, and realizing our ultimate goal of transforming our county streams into "living streams."

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# Updates

## SJWC Los Gatos NTMP

by Jodi Frediani

On September 25, 2007 CalFire denied the San Jose Water Company's (SJWC) Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan for 1002 acres along Los Gatos Creek.

Rich Sampson, CalFire RPF, along with several other CalFire personnel made a determination (using helicopter flyovers, ground truthing, GIS maps and aerial photos-both recent and historic) that SJWC owns 2825 acres of timberland, and according to the Forest Practice Act and Rules only landowners with less than 2500 acres of timberland can apply for an NTMP. (Note: some believe that the rule language can be interpreted to mean 2500 acres, timberland or not. However, a court would have to hand down a judgment to get CalFire to change their interpretation.)

As far back as February 2007, Neighbors Against Irresponsible Logging (NAIL) submitted documentation to CalFire showing that SJWC owned more than 2500 acres. (<http://bio.research.ucsc.edu/people/doaklab/timberland/timberland/>)

In the intervening months, Big Creek lumber slowly produced their own data showing that SJWC only owned 1971 acres or 2387 acres, depending on which definition they used. They missed one parcel with 15 acres of timber. In addition to the overlooked 15 acres, Cal Fire determined that the "main difference between the estimates provided by SJWC and Cal Fire's estimate was that the two SJWC estimates did not include acreage that historically supported stands of commercial species." CalFire identified snags (from previous fires) in those additional areas, and confirmed historic conifer stands from historical aerial photos.

SJWC has hired San Francisco attorney, Chris Carr (who represents Pacific Lumber). Carr has filed an appeal on behalf of SJWC to the Board of Forestry.

We estimate that the appeal won't come before the Board until January or February 2008. Grounds for the appeal are not required to be identified in the appeal letter but we are guessing that the appeal will probably be based on the 'definition of timberland'.

Jodi Frediani is the Chair  
Forestry Task Force  
Ventana Chapter, Sierra Club  
JodiFred@aol.com

## Hanson, Risks Opportunities

by Brian Schmidt, Committee for Green Foothills

Above the hills of Cupertino, the thousands of acres owned by Hanson Permanente (formerly Kaiser Permanente Quarry) demonstrate the complicated risks and opportunities involved in advocating for our local watersheds – in this case, the headwaters of Permanente Creek.

The land includes a little-used rail line, a large cement kiln with unavoidable air emission issues, a rock-crushing operation, and a large and growing quarry. Beyond all that, Hanson includes far more currently-undisturbed lands with an uncertain future than land that has already been industrialized.

The Committee for Green Foothills and other advocates have a number of concerns about Hanson, some of them similar to issues at other quarries while others are unique.

The quarry plans to update and expand their reclamation plan that directs what will be done with the land when quarry operations finish in any particular area. The details of how this will be done are significant – it may have environmental impacts. The relationship of the plan to the quarry's likely violation of environmental easement owned by Santa Clara County is also unresolved.

Particularly concerning though are proposals to start a new quarry pit. Quarries do not last forever - dozens of closed quarries dot Santa Clara County - and neighbors who move in next to a quarry have legitimate reason to think that in the long term, the quarry will eventually close. A new pit means added decades to the life of this quarry.



Water quality impacts from past landslides into Permanente Creek and from possible mercury contamination remain a concern. No definitive connection between the quarry, its mercury-contaminated coal operations, and the creek has been established, but the concern is there.

The future of this industrial facility in an otherwise-pristine area remains an important priority. Committee for Green Foothills and the Creeks Coalition will continue to monitor the situation, along with the neighborhood groups.

## Watershed Science

### Benthic macroinvertebrates

Continued from page 13

Macroinvertebrate sorting and identification as well as sediment laboratory work which began in January of 2007 is now complete. Our USGS partners have now analyzed and interpreted our first year's data and early results indicate that fine sediments in the bed of the stream are higher than in reaches not influenced by dams and there is a pattern of decreasing fine sediment and a corresponding change in the macroinvertebrate assemblages as we move away from Stevens Creek Dam.



We have collected samples for a second round of analysis and the sorting and identification work has begun. We hope to report on our findings by the end of the year.

We also plan to sample again in the spring to see if the time of year is a factor.

We hope this study aids in the management and restoration of streams in the Bay Area. As an additional benefit, we also hope that the data we have collected over the last two years, along with additional data collected over the course of the restoration of Stevens Creek, can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the restoration project planned to begin next year by the City of Cupertino. For more information contact:

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## Education

### STEP

Continued from page 15

#### Incubation:

Contains instructions for incubating eggs in the classroom, leading to the release of the hatched fry. Following these six modules are "Additional Resources", a collection of materials that teachers can use to enhance their students learning experience.

A Bibliography and a Glossary appear at the end of "Additional Resources."



Our 2008 STEP Workshop will be held at the NOAA Southwest Fisheries Science Center in Santa Cruz.

It will be held on the weekend of January 12th and 13th 2008. To download a registration form or to get more information about STEP visit

[www.steponline.info](http://www.steponline.info)

contact Hugh Miller [hmiller334@aol.com](mailto:hmiller334@aol.com)  
or Sandy Derby [sderby@cdm.org](mailto:sderby@cdm.org)



Copyright © Salmon and Trout Education Program

## Introduction

### On the Cover

by SCCCC Staff writer

On January 10th of this year our organization was selected to receive the CEO Environmental Stewardship Award. This award is given to organizations and individuals for their dedication to ensuring that the environment is safe and healthy for residents and visitors and that there is an enhanced quality of life in Santa Clara County.

Award recipients were chosen also because of their contributions to the water district CEO Stan Williams' vision of operating in a more environmentally and fiscally responsible manner. This vision strives to provide quality drinking water and environmental protection, to maintain an open and transparent organization, to produce a net positive impact on the environment, and to accomplish "more with less" through improved processes.



Our Rock  
photo by Mondy Lariz

First instituted in 2001, when environmental stewardship was officially incorporated into the mission of the district, the CEO Environmental Stewardship Awards are only bestowed every five years.

The members of the Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition are proud of this award and will continue to be a resource to the CEO, the Santa Clara Valley Water District, and the residents of Santa Clara County as we further our mission of transforming our county streams into "living streams".

### A Natural Partnership

by Bob Power

In 1997 the Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition went into a hiatus. Craig Breon, then Environmental Advocate and later Executive Director for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS), wanted to find a mechanism for continuing coordination between creek activists and communicating their issues and accomplishments to a broader audience.



Bob Power, Executive Director  
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

His idea manifested itself as creeks group meetings held every year or two and the creation of a publication called the Creekside News. Craig enlisted a dedicated group of authors who signed up to write appropriate articles, and the newsletter was published and distributed by SCVAS.

In 2005 the SCCCC came out of hibernation and has new partner organizations and new vitality. Evidence of that new vitality is the willingness of the SCCCC to take on the Creekside News as a flagship project for the organization.

As a current member of SCCCC the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society is proud to see that the SCCCC is not only publishing the 2007 edition of the Creekside News, but is also convening a Creeks and Watershed Conference this year ..... which only makes sense.

# Commentary

## Beyond Stream Stewardship: Toward Living Streams

by Richard McMurtry, Program Director

**T**he Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition has a dream. Maybe it's part of your dream too.

Our dream is that our healthy streams are protected and that our challenged and degraded streams are restored to be living streams!

Our dream is that every neighborhood in the county has the opportunity to have a vital relationship with the stream that runs through it, that we as a community go beyond stream stewardship to stream restoration where there are thriving populations of fish and birds and trees and other wildlife indicative of watershed health, where there are recreational opportunities in riparian corridors, sports fields and picnic areas separate from wild and natural areas, with trails and nature experiences in harmony with nature, where flood protection is accomplished through stream restoration, not traditional flood control projects.

There are three conditions that need to be satisfied in order for this dream to begin to be realized in the next decade and to be fully realized in the next 50 years.

First the community must want stream restoration as much as they want flood control.

Then various special interests – trails advocates, fish advocates, urban parks advocates - need to find a common cause with each other



Santa Clara Valley Water District Photo Guadalupe Creek August 2003

to influence the decision makers so that together they accomplish what they could not do alone.

And finally major political entities, such as the Santa Clara Valley Water District, the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority, or a joint agency made up of several such entities must become convinced that their voting community wants stream restoration as much as it wants flood control or other municipal services.

This entity must also become convinced that their mission needs to evolve to place a higher priority on stream restoration.

**Condition 1  
Community Support**  
We believe this condition has been satisfied! Public opinion surveys have been done over the last 12 years which clearly indicate that voting age populations think

stream restoration is at least as, if not more, important than flood control.

**Condition 2  
Community Organization**  
This is a bit dicier. There is a tendency for trails advocates to disagree with the ecology advocates and the ecology advocates to disagree with the parks advocates, generally over very fine points.

As Craig Breon, former Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society Executive director, wrote in the 2003 edition of the *Creekside News*: "The first time I set foot on the Coyote Creek Trail I realized what an urban gem we have...(but) Nature can be "loved to death" when our access to it becomes of greater importance than its innate value. ...Creek trails should come in the context of a plan for creek restoration." In short, we need to start forging a synthesis of our different visions

continued on page 5

## Stewardship

### Doing it all for the fish

Continued from page 16

Many of these dedicated volunteers became ill from the toxic water they came in contact with.



all photos courtesy of CHEER

Many fish like these steelhead lost their lives due to two releases of toxic water into Uvas Creek.



CHEER members continue to watch the creek and are working closely with neighbors to insure the health of this watershed.

CHEER recently concluded its first year of recovery and relocation of steelhead trapped in disconnected pools which were in eminent danger of death.

Under the guidelines of our federal permit

We also express our gratitude to NOAA Fisheries Biologist Jonathan Ambrose and California Department of Fish & Game Biologist Michelle Leicester, under whose supervision and leadership these efforts were made possible.

CHEER is an organization dedicated to the preservation of our natural resources including wildlife.



issued by the Nation Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), volunteers have rescued 1,602 steelhead.

Of those, there were 9 adults, the largest being 18 pounds, 475 smolts, and 1,118 juvenile (young of the year), all were recovered and relocated to habitat designated by NMFS.

We wish to salute the volunteers who participated in this effort and our collaborative partners who provided support and resources.

CHEER is a non-profit organization and operates solely on donations and grants.

To learn more about CHEER contact:

CHEER  
P.O. Box 1735  
Gilroy, CA 95020  
(409) 220-5658  
www.cheercentral.org  
cheercentral@verizon.net

# Stewardship

## Doing it all for the fish

by Herman Garcia & Bob Brem

When Bob and I were growing up near Uvas Creek we fished for trout, hunted and enjoyed the land. Many of our friends and neighbors did the same, but something went wrong and after years of declining steelhead populations some of us decided to do something about it.

In the fall of 1991, we created the Tri-County Environmental Protection Committee. This group, made up of concerned sportsmen, environmentalists, community members and activists had noticed a severe decline in the steelhead population of the Pajaro River watershed. The committee decided to take a "hands-on" approach to evaluating and inventorying the premier steelhead spawning habitat of South Santa Clara County.

Through the financial support of a generous donor, Aquatic Systems Research was hired to research and evaluate the degradation in steelhead populations.

In March of 1992 the committee, with research in hand brought attention to the serious environmental problems within the watershed. It was determined that despite the negative impacts on the entire ecosystem, that the habitat could still support steelhead.

In April of 1992, a restoration project began in South County, which consisted of restocking 7,500 steelhead into the watersheds many streams.

In February of 1993, a proposed timber harvest plan on the banks of Pescadero Creek would have destroyed spawning grounds; again, the committee with legal representation, opposed the plan at the public hearing and after an onsite inspection, was able to secure protections for this pristine and sensitive ecosystem.

The original members now make up the Board of Directors of Coastal Habitat Education & Environmental Restoration (CHEER), a non-profit organization with the same vision we shared back in 1991.

The current focus of our attention is the Pajaro River watershed with an emphasis on the central coast Steelhead Trout which migrate into the watershed to spawn in its many tributaries.



Arundo Donax, Giant Reed  
Native Plant Society Photo

Members of CHEER have also been concerned about invasive plants such as Arundo Donax or Giant Reed, a fast growing plant which clogs up streams and uses up precious water resources.



Creek cleanup volunteers  
photo courtesy of CHEER

CHEER has also conducted dozens of creek cleanup events and is working on educational outreach with Hooked on Nature, a local program to raise awareness of nature in children.

It was members of CHEER who first alerted the authorities to the terrible fish kills caused by polluted water released into Uvas Creek by Christopher Ranch.

Our volunteers collected and categorized the dead fish working with NOAA Fisheries personnel.

Continued from page 17

## Commentary

### Beyond Stream Stewardship: Toward Living Streams

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that is stronger than the sum of the parts, and each group needs to



Santa Clara Valley Water District Photo

commit to support the interests of their allies.

This is a daunting task, but not impossible. The Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition is committed to solving this dilemma by continuing this dialogue until we reach a strong consensus.

Condition 3:  
Political Leadership  
Finding the political leaders to



Pedestrian Bridge over Stevens Creek  
Photo courtesy of Davis Fields

champion the cause of stream restoration will not be easy either, but we remain hopeful.



Willow Flycatcher  
Photo by Steve Zack

With the 1990s video: "Bay Area Creeks: Cement Banks or Green Banks", "Once a River" as a base, we will be delivering our stream restoration message to community organizations throughout the county.

Our goal is to find at least one sympathetic individual in every neighborhood and civic organization by the end of 2008.

Working together we will show that stream restoration has widespread support, not just from environmental advocates, but also from the community at large.

We are hoping that the Santa Clara Valley Water District will see the wisdom in building on the strong foundation already laid by making stream restoration part of their Core Mission and will allocate funding equivalent to the need of stream restoration.

If you share our dream, or if you want to learn more about us, please contact us at the following address:

*Santa Clara County  
Creeks Coalition  
2353 Venndale Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95124  
(408) 358-6963  
Info@sccreeks.org  
www.sccreeks.org*

# Restoration

## Workdays

by Ryan Navratil

The San Francisquito Watershed Council sponsors and coordinates workdays that improve the creekside habitat in our watershed.

We coordinate monthly workdays from September through May and also hold special events for school or corporate groups.

Volunteers come to our workdays for hands-on education, community service, and to support the health of their shared natural resources. They also enjoy spending time in a beautiful natural setting.

Workdays are divided into three functions:

1. Creek cleanups
2. Invasive plant removal
3. Native plant revegetation

Creek cleanups protect native species from harmful trash and debris and enhance the natural beauty of the watershed for all. Cleanup workdays help foster community stewardship and pride in our common resources.



San Francisquito Watershed Council invasive removal workday



San Francisquito Watershed Council revegetation workday

Removing non-native, invasive plants is critically important if we are to preserve the biodiversity essential to a natural creek ecosystem. Invasives crowd out native plants and can disrupt the native food web.

Our native planting helps build continuity into the riparian corridor and provides much-needed habitat for the native species that use it.

All of our plants are grown from seeds or cuttings collected from within the watershed, which helps preserve the local adaptations that have developed throughout the history of the creek system. These plants are more likely to survive and will not carry disease vectors from outside the watershed.

For more information about workdays and the San Francisquito Watershed Council contact:

Ryan Navratil, Field Coordinator  
San Francisquito Watershed Council  
3921 E. Bayshore Rd.  
Palo Alto, CA 94303  
(650) 961-1035 Ext. 310

# Education

## Kids in Creeks

by Anouk Mackenzie

Today, more than ever, there is an urgent need to immerse children in outdoor activities and to protect our urban watersheds. Kids in Creeks, one of the many exciting workshops offered by the Watershed Project, does both by giving K-12 educators the tools they need to make environmental education fun, engaging, and easy to teach.



Creeks are home to many fascinating creatures, and, like veins to the bay, they play a critical function in the ecology of the San Francisco Estuary. But their health is often compromised by everyday habits, such as spraying chemicals in our yards or dumping oil down the drain.

Kids in Creeks helps teachers understand how creeks fit into the

big picture; they learn how to identify and map their local watershed, sample water quality, and identify creek plants and insects. The activities are correlated to the California state standards and can be easily modified for all grade levels.

Educators who take the course receive a binder with basic principles on aquatic ecology and tips on how to incorporate watershed education into their curriculum. The binder comes with resources, a guide to identifying aquatic insects, as well as information on how to make low-cost sampling equipment.

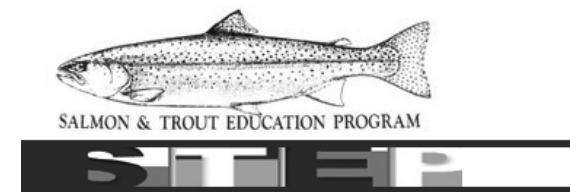
Go ahead. Treat your students to a creek adventure this spring. To learn more about the Watershed Project's workshops, visit [www.thewatershedproject.org](http://www.thewatershedproject.org).

The Watershed Project  
1327 South 46th Street  
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## STEP

by Hugh Miller

STEP or Salmon and Trout Education Program is a comprehensive, thematic, brain compatible approach for the preservation of anadromous fish (salmon and steelhead) and the watershed where they live for a large part of their lives. The intent of this curriculum is to increase the student's knowledge and awareness of this resource, the dangers that face it and how they can become stewards of this valuable ecosystem. To achieve these goals the curriculum is divided into six modules:



### Form Follows Function:

Covers biological aspects, highlighting the concepts of classification and adaptation.

### Habitat:

Describes the different habitats where anadromous fish live during their life cycle; fresh-water streams, estuaries, and the ocean.

### Life Cycle:

Presents the life cycle of anadromous fish, from egg to spawning adult.

### Stepping Out:

Introduces environmental issues facing salmonids and provides activities that help students become stewards of the environment.

### Being There:

Provides more information about the stream habit, preparing students for a field trip to a stream. It also describes activities students can engage in on a stream field trip.

Continued on page 18

# Education

## BioSite 15 Years Later

by Sandy Derby

Children's Discovery Museum's BioSITE (Students Investigating Their Environment) program continues to expand its hands-on, environmental science field research program. More than 1,000 students, both elementary and high school age, collect water quality monitoring data during their full year of study focused on the Guadalupe River Watershed.

Designed to build knowledge and process skills in science, the BioSITE program offers students the opportunity to engage in real world "action-science" research. It vividly demonstrates the relevance of science in our everyday lives. The BioSITE program is based on the belief that, through the process of scientific inquiry, all children can successfully grow and learn to make sense of the world in which they live.



Elementary student measuring pH along Guadalupe Creek behind Pioneer High School

BioSITE students from more than five high schools receive academic credit and service learning credit while participating in this full year program. Over the course of the year the students enrolled in this environmental science class learn the basic ecological concepts of riparian communities and water quality monitoring skills needed to teach small groups of elementary students during their field visits to the river. At three sites along the Guadalupe River students collect data on dissolved oxygen levels, pH, temperature, conductivity, turbidity, rate of flow, and river height.

By surveying the macro-invertebrates in the water, students also determine a pollution tolerance index and use this data to monitor and evaluate the health of the watershed.

Comparing their research to other watersheds, students present their findings to community members to encourage the public to guard the health of their watershed.

What started as a creek cleanup effort fifteen years ago has flourished into an award-winning learning experience and mentoring program. Through this program, younger students become aware of their environment and are given positive role models, while high school students learn how to mentor and give back to their community. Our watershed guardians are watching out for each other, and their environment!



"Even if I didn't become a scientist, I know I could use my science skills to solve everyday problems. I know a lot more about how science affects so many other things in the world." a BioSITE High School Mentor

To find out more, visit Children's Discovery Museum's website @ [www.cdm.org](http://www.cdm.org) and visit BioSITE online.

View data from past years, pictures of students in action, and information for teachers on how to get involved with the program.

For more information on our program, contact:

Sandy Derby, Environmental Science Educator  
Children's Discovery Museum  
(408) 298-5437 x261 or email [sderby@cdm.org](mailto:sderby@cdm.org)

# Watershed Science

## Benthic macroinvertebrates and fine sediments

by Claire Elliott and Mini Damodaran

Benthic (bottom-dwelling) macroinvertebrates (small animals without backbones) are used to indicate the health of aquatic ecosystems more than any other group of organisms. Macroinvertebrates commonly found in streams include insect larvae such as mayflies, stoneflies, caddisflies, and true flies as well as mussels, snails, and worms. Macroinvertebrates represent important components of the food webs of lakes and streams and in so, are important in the diet of fishes.



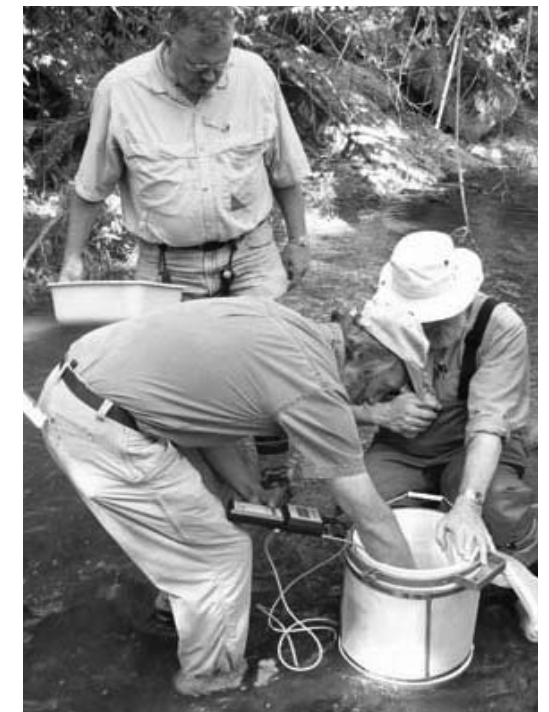
Cloudy water below the reservoir

Biomonitoring of Bay Area streams using macroinvertebrates began in earnest during this past decade. Ecological data are now available that can aid us in identifying whether streams in the area are biologically impaired; however, identifying the cause(s) of impairment remains problematic for a number of reasons. First, streams are often impaired by multiple stressors, particularly in a highly urbanized environmental setting such as ours. Second, even when a dominant stressor is suspected to be influencing the health of a stream, its effect on benthic macroinvertebrates has rarely been adequately studied. An ongoing challenge for aquatic ecologists (professional and volunteer) is identifying the effects of dominant stressors on macroinvertebrate populations.

Streams throughout the San Francisco Bay Area have been altered from their original condition by changes in land use. Water capture, dam management, in-stream water withdraws, and storm-water discharges have contributed to water-flow regimes that differ substantially from their natural state. Altered flow

regimes influence temperature, dissolved oxygen, sediment transport and storage, nutrients, and the transport of toxic chemicals. These factors in turn, influence the potential lotic flora and fauna present in Bay Area streams.

One of the most frequently observed impacts to streams in the USA as reported by the USEPA is the presence of excess fine sediment. Although dams retain coarser sediments such as gravels and cobbles, little is known of the retention and passage of fine sediments. Excess fine sediments have the potential to negatively influence the structure and function of stream communities by impacting macroinvertebrate assemblages,



Modified Hess Sampler

and in turn, the fishes that depend on them as food.

Fine sediments can accumulate in fish spawning beds below dams because flow releases are often regulated to be much less than naturally occurring flood flows. This reduces the high discharge, flushing flows which are needed to clean fine sediments from the larger

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# Citizen Participation

## National River Day

More than 500 volunteers participated in this year's National River Cleanup Day on Saturday, May 19. This year volunteers removed nearly 30,000 pounds of trash from Santa Clara County creeks. The event coordinator, Creek Connections Action Group, attributed the record turnout to an increase in the number of cleanup sites – from 17 in 2002 to 22 this year.

CCAG was formed in 1995 by several local agency coordinators to collaborate their creek cleanup efforts in the county. Event sponsors now include the City of San Jose, the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department and the Santa Clara Valley Water District.



Volunteers helped to remove thousands of pounds of trash from Santa Clara County creeks. photo courtesy of the Santa Clara Valley Water District

Not all the trash removed from creeks goes into landfills. This year more than 9,000 pounds of materials were recycled.

Each year National River Cleanup Day is held on the third Saturday in May. If you miss out on the cleanup effort next May, keep your calendar open for Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 20th 2008.

For more information,  
visit the CCAG website at:  
[www.cleanacreek.org](http://www.cleanacreek.org)

## Adopt-A-Creek Program

Although cleaning creeks at annual events makes a strong contribution to obtaining healthy waterways, there is another county-wide program – Adopt-A-Creek – that provides year-round stewardship.

We spoke with Ed Morales of the Santa Clara Valley Water District who said, "The Adopt-A-Creek program takes it a step further by encouraging everyone to take an active role by helping preserve the health and beauty of our local creeks."

Morales also said participants are able to obtain a two-year permit that gives groups the ability to clean creeks as often as they wish. Participation in the program, he said, gives members of Adopt-A-Creek groups a sense of ownership.

AAC benefits include the use of creek supplies for the cleanup, collection of trash hauled from the creeks by the water district, and an AAC sign along the adopted section of creek at no cost to the volunteer group. The program only requires a minimum of two cleanups a year.

To report someone throwing trash into a county stream, call the 24-hour Illegal Dumping Hotline at 1-888-510-5151.

Anyone interested in the AAC program can contact Ed Morales at the water district, (408) 265-2607, ext. 2880, or send an e-mail message to [emorales@valleywater.org](mailto:emorales@valleywater.org).

The water district owns about a third of the county's 700 miles of creeks and can issue permits on land it owns. Watersheds in under-represented areas still needing adoption include the Coyote Watershed in East San Jose and Milpitas and the Uvas/Llagas Watersheds in Morgan Hill and Gilroy.



## Watershed Science

### Benthic macroinvertebrates and fine sediments

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gravels and cobbles (Kondolf, 1997). Excess fine sediments are known to have detrimental effects on some species of benthic organisms and fish. Fine sediments can clog gills and obscure food resources as well as smother eggs.

To better understand the distribution and effects of fine sediments in the Stevens Creek basin, the Stevens & Permanente Creeks Watershed Council (SPCWC) is working with the U.S. Geological Survey on a study that is investigating the longitudinal distribution of fine sediments in the 4-mile "cold-water management zone" located between the Stevens Creek dam and Highway 280. The study is also examining whether a relationship exists between the distribution of fine sediments and the distribution of benthic macroinvertebrates.

Twenty-two volunteers participated in our training events, and most have worked on sampling fine sediments and bugs in the field and/or sample processing in the lab, which includes bug sorting and identification.



Our study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Does deposited fine sediment in Stevens Creek

vary longitudinally with distance from the dam?

2. Does the composition of the macroinvertebrate assemblages vary with the amount of fine sediments?

Our sediment and macroinvertebrate sampling was done using a modified Hess sampler provided by USGS. After ensuring the sampler was well sealed to the stream bottom, we then performed the following procedure:

- To estimate mean water volume in the sampler, water depth was measured three times.

- To measure the fine sediments on the surface of the creek bottom, the operator brushed the substrate with a 6 cm wide soft paint brush for 30 seconds. A 250 ml aliquot of the turbid water in the sampler was collected.



Hess Sampler showing the collection container

- To measure the fine sediment that embedded the larger substrate, the operator stirred the substrate vigorously for an additional 30 seconds. A second aliquot of turbid water was collected.

- Approximately 6 of the largest dislodged rocks within the sampler were removed, cleaned of attached macroinvertebrates, and measured.

- The sediment samples were placed in a cooler and taken to the lab and refrigerated for later analysis.

- After fine sediment sampling, the bucket was removed from the Hess sampler and macroinvertebrates were collected.



Volunteer sorting a bug sample

Sorting and identifying the insects in the subsamples was done with the assistance of Jim Carter or Steve Fend of the USGS. Invertebrates were identified to the family level. Family keys from Aquatic Entomology: The Fisherman's and Ecologists' Illustrated Guide to Insects and Their Relatives, by Patrick McCafferty were the primary tools used for identification. Keys and figures from Aquatic Insects of North America, by Richard Merritt and Ken Cummins as well as other references provided by the USGS were used when necessary.

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# Advocacy

## A Tradition of Creek Advocacy

by Mondy Lariz

The Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition (SCCCC) was originally formed by Committee for Green Foothills advocate Linda Elkind in 1990. Together with Linda Shield-jones, Mike Rigney, Kendal Blau and others they formulated goals such as promoting legislation to protect fragile riparian environments, increasing public awareness and appreciation of our rivers, streams, and creeks, promoting research on riparian systems and more.

The coalition focused its early work on the development and adoption of a riparian corridor policy to protect creeks and riparian areas with buffer zones.

William Thielen of Advocate Films produced a film called Once a River which won the Joey Award of Excellence for short subject in 1991. The Joey awards are given by the San Jose Convention and Visitors Bureau/The San Jose Film and Video Commission.

This film was adapted into the film "Bay Area Creeks: Cement Banks or Green Banks" which was co-produced by Linda Elkind and John Crump. The Executive Producer was Danny L. McGuire, and the Videographer was Kevin Bonilla.

The film aired on KTEH Monday Nov 9, 1992.

Advocacy work continued in 1994 with help from Larry Ames, Craig Breon, Libby Lucas, and others.

Almost two years after the film aired, San Jose did produce an initial riparian corridor study which became part of its General Plan and was later amended in 1999. The Creeks Coalition disbanded in 1997 having accomplished its main goal.

Then the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society (SCVAS) took up the responsibility of creek advocacy. In 2005 leaders of SCVAS, the Committee for Green Foothills, Federation of Fly Fishers, and the Guadalupe/Coyote Resource Conservation District decided to bring back the SCCC to work on the new Municipal Regional Urban Runoff Permit (MRP) proposed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

We began by designing a workshop with help from members of the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative (SCBWM) to gain a shared understanding of runoff and erosive forces issues. This workshop was a great success and led to the coalition receiving an award from the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD). (see Cover Story page 2)

This year the coalition decided to expand on the responsibilities for

creek advocacy already borne by the SCVAS by both hosting a Creek and Watershed Conference and publishing the *Creekside News*.

Today the coalition is continuing the work we started with our participation in the MRP process by working with the SCWD, the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative, and many other groups to find a way to realize our goal of returning our Santa Clara County Creeks to "living streams".

Recently several of our members worked on policy recommendations to help guide the SCVWD toward higher environmental goals by balancing the environment with their other core missions of water supply and flood protection. We worked with our staff water specialist Richard McMurtry and members of the the Sierra Club, Loma Prieta water committee to improve a state assembly bill titled ab739, Laird.

This bill is enabling legislation which allocates funds for stormwater projects from Propositions 84 and 1E. Our amendments were accepted by Assemblyman Laird and thanks to the lobbying efforts of the SCVWD, Sierra Club California and others, it passed and was signed as amended by the Governor on October 13th 2007.

# Creeks and Watershed Resource Guide

The organizations listed here are resources for creek and watershed issues. While we made an attempt to capture all of the organizations serving Santa Clara County we are sure that there are many more. This guide will be continually updated so please let us here from you if you feel that your organization should be listed. should be listed or if you wish to offer a correction.

Acterra, Inc.  
Michael Closson, Executive Director  
(650) 962-9876 ext. 303  
michaelc@acterra.org  
www.acterra.org

Alviso Water Task Force  
George Trevino  
(408) 263-1433  
alvisowater@gmail.com  
www.alvisowater.org

Barron Park Association  
Douglas B. Moran  
(650) 856-3302  
dmoran@DougMoran.com  
http://www2.bpaonline.org/Creeks

The Bay institute  
Grant Davis  
(415) 506-0150 ext. 26  
davis@bay.org  
www.bay.org

Beyond Searsville Dam  
Matt Stoecker  
(650) 380-2965  
matt@stoeckerecological.com  
www.stoeckerecological.com/pr\_beyond\_searsville\_dam.html

California Department of Fish & Game  
Michelle Leicester  
Associate Fisheries Biologist  
(510) 853-1054  
mleicester@dfg.ca.gov  
www.dfg.ca.gov/regions/3/

California Department of Fish & Game  
Fishing in the City  
Ethan Rotman  
(415) 892-0460  
erotman@dfg.ca.gov  
www.dfg.ca.gov/regions/3/

California Fisheries Restoration

Foundation  
Marty Seldon  
(408) 736-5631  
mmseldon@sbcglobal.net

California State Coastal Conservancy  
Amy Hutzell  
(510) 286-4180  
ahutzell@scc.ca.gov  
www.coastalconservancy.ca.gov

California Watershed Network  
Mary Lee Knecht  
(916) 549-4017  
marylee@watershednetwork.org  
http://www.watershednetwork.org/

Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration (CEMAR)  
Andrew J. Gunther  
(510) 420-4565  
gunther@cemar.org  
www.cemar.org

Children's Discovery Museum BioSITE  
Sandy Derby, Program Director  
(408) 298-5437  
sderby@cdm.org  
www.cdm.org/biosite

Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge  
Florence M. La Riviere  
(650) 493-5540  
florence@refuge.org  
www.refuge.org

Citizens for a Livable San Jose  
Larry Ames  
(408) 742-1798  
LAmes@aol.com  
www.calsj.org

City of Cupertino Parks & Recreation  
Barbara Banfield, Naturalist  
(408) 777-3149  
barbarab@cupertino.org

www.cupertino.org  
City of Palo Alto Open Space  
(650) 329-2302  
www.cityofpaloalto.org/community-services/nat-index.html

City of San Jose, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services  
Adopt-A-Park / Adopt-A-Trail  
(408) 793-4190  
adoptapark@sanjoseca.gov  
www.sjadoptapark.org

CLEAN South Bay  
Trish Mulvey  
(650) 326-0252  
mulvey@ix.netcom.com

Clean Water Action  
Andria Ventura  
(415) 369-9160, ex 306  
aventura@cleanwater.org  
www.cleanwater.org

Coastal Habitat Education and Environmental Restoration  
Herman Garcia  
(408) 842-1968  
cheercentral@verizon.net  
www.cheercentral.org

Committee for Green Foothills  
Brian Schmidt  
(650) 968-7243 x313  
brian@greenfoothills.org  
www.greenfoothills.org

Creek Connections Action Group  
Visit website for a contact  
(408) 265-2607 ext. 2238  
info@cleanacreek.org  
www.cleanacreek.org

Environmental Protection Agency  
Luisa Valiela  
(415) 972-3400  
Valiela.Luisa@epamail.epa.gov  
www.epa.gov

### Learn more about the Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition

The Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition has a new website at [www.sccreeks.org](http://www.sccreeks.org) and plans to expand it greatly in the coming months. We recently received non-profit status by becoming a sponsored project of the Rose Foundation a 501 (C)(3). We have also been awarded a grant to begin a major outreach program, and we would love to attend a meeting of your group or organization to present some of our ideas for "living streams".

# Creeks and Watershed

Environmental Volunteers  
Dana Wright, Education Coordinator  
(650) 961-0545  
info@evols.org  
www.evols.org

Flycasters, Inc.  
Michael Brinkley  
(408) 377-3305  
mbrinkle@comcast.net  
www.flycasters.org

Friends of Calabazas Creek  
Tom Schaefer  
(408) 257-7734  
tom.schaefer@acm.org

Friends of Coyote Creek  
Marley Spilman  
(408) 292-8171  
spilogs@rawbw.com  
www.naglepark.org/foccc

Friends of the Guadalupe River Park  
and Gardens  
Kathleen Muller, Exec. Director  
(408) 298-7657  
kathy@grp.org  
www.grp.org

Friends of Los Alamitos Creek  
Lila Freitas  
(408) 997-6383

Friends of Stevens Creek Trail  
Aaron Grossman  
(408) 255-5780  
exec-dir@stevenscreektrail.org  
www.stevenscreektrail.org

Friends of the San Francisco Estuary  
Marcia Brockbank  
(510) 622-2337  
mbrockbank@waterboards.ca.gov  
www.abag.ca.gov/bayarea/sfep/about/  
friends.html

Greenbelt Alliance  
Michele Beasley  
(408) 983-0856  
mbeasley@greenbelt.org  
www.greenbelt.org

Guadalupe Coyote Resource  
Conservation District  
Nancy Bernardi  
(408) 288-5888  
gcrd@pacbell.net  
www.gcrd.org

Hidden Villa Ranch  
Susan Love, Executive Assistant

(650) 949-9700  
volunteer@hiddenvilla.org  
www.hiddenvilla.org

Hooked On Nature  
Avery Cleary, Executive Director  
(866) 340-4623  
avery@hookedonnature.org  
www.hookedonnature.org

League of Women Voters  
Nancy Hobbs  
(408) 395 4045  
hobbsnmf@earthlink.net  
www.ca.lww.org

Los Altos Hills Open Space  
Committee  
Nancy Couperus  
(650) 941-4808  
couperus@mindspring.com  
www.lahopenspace.com

Marine Science Institute  
Marilou Seiff, Program Manager  
(650) 364-2760  
info@sfbaymsi.org  
www.sfbaymsi.org

Master Gardener Program  
U.C. Cooperative Extension  
(408) 282-3105  
info@mastergardeners.org  
www.mastergardeners.org/scc.html

Mid Peninsula Open Space District  
Cynthia Roessler  
(650) 691-1200  
croessler@openspace.org  
www.openspace.org

NOAA Fisheries  
Gary Stern  
(707) 575-6060  
Gary.Stern@noaa.gov  
www.nwr.noaa.gov

Northern California Council Federa-  
tion of Fly Fishers  
Dougald Scott  
(831) 427-1394  
dougald@comcast.net  
www.nccff.org

Oakland Museum of California  
Christopher Richard  
(510) 238-3297  
crichard@museumca.org  
www.museumca.org/creeks

Our City Forest  
Vanessa Glaser

(408) 998-7337  
vglaser1685@gmail.com  
www.ourcityforest.org

Pajaro River Watershed Committee,  
Sierra Club  
Lois Robin  
(831) 464-1184  
lolotusi@cruzio.com  
www.ventana.sierraclub.org/conserva-  
tion/pajaro\_river/index.shtml

Pajaro River Watershed Council  
Carol Presley  
(408) 265-2607 ext. 2691  
CPresley@valleywater.org  
www.centralcoastrcandd.org/pajaro.  
htm

Peninsula Open Space Trust  
Audrey C. Rust, President  
(650) 854-7696  
post@openspacetrust.org  
www.openspacetrust.org

Roosevelt Neighborhood Association  
Ted Cunningham  
408-924-1924  
rooseveltneighbor@yahoo.com www.  
enative.com/ca/scl/tpna

Ross Creek Neighbors  
David Crites  
(408) 358-0893  
david.crites@att.net

Salmon and Trout Education Program  
Hugh Miller  
(408) 268-3945  
hmiller334@aol.com  
www.steponline.info

Salmonid Restoration Federation  
Dana Slotzman  
(707) 923-7501  
srf@calsalmon.org  
www.calsalmon.org

San Francisco Bay Joint Venture  
Beth Huning  
(415) 883-3854  
bhuning@sfbayjv.org  
www.sfbayjv.org

San Francisco Bay Regional Water  
Quality Control Board  
Dale Hopkins  
(510) 622-2362  
dhopkins@waterboards.ca.gov  
www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfrancis-  
cobay

San Francisco Estuary Institute  
Robin Grossinger  
(510) 746-7380  
robin@sfei.org  
www.sfei.org

San Francisco Estuary Project  
Marcia Brockbank  
(510) 622-2398  
marciab@abag.ca.gov  
http://sfep.abag.ca.gov

San Francisquito Watershed Council  
Ryan Navratil  
(650) 961-1035 ext. 310  
ryan@sanfrancisquito.org  
www.sanfrancisquito.org

Santa Clara Basin Watershed  
Management Initiative  
Sandra Freitas, Coordinator  
freitas@sanjoseca.gov  
www.scbwmi.org

Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition  
Mondy Lariz, Director  
(408) 358-6963  
info@sccreeks.org  
www.sccreeks.org

Santa Clara County  
Parks & Recreation  
Lisa Killough  
(408) 355-2244  
Lisa.Killough@prk.sccgov.org  
www.parkhere.org

Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society  
Bob Power , Exec. Director  
(408) 252-3748  
bob@scvas.org  
www.scvas.org

Santa Clara Valley Water District  
Bev Deveaux, Adopt-A-Creek Pro-  
gram (408) 265-2607, ext. 2945  
bdeveaux@valleywater.org  
www.valleywater.org

Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff  
Pollution Prevention Program  
Jill Bicknell  
(408) 720-8811  
jcbicknell@eoainc.com  
www.scvurppp.org

Save the Bay  
David Lewis, Executive Director  
(510) 452-9261 ext. 102  
dlewis@savesfbay.org  
www.savesfbay.org

# Resource Guide

South Bay Salt Pond Restoration  
Project  
Anna Schneider, Coastal Conservancy  
(510) 286-0325  
aschneider@scc.ca.g  
www.southbayrestoration.org

State Water Resources Control Board  
Erick Burre, Clean Water Team  
(213) 576-6788  
eburres@waterboards.ca.gov  
www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/availdoc.html

State Water Resources Control Board  
Vera L. Williams, SWAMP  
Coordinator & Clean Water Team  
(916) 341-5868  
VLWilliams@waterboards.ca.gov  
www.waterboards.ca.gov/swamp

Stevens & Permanente Creeks  
Watershed Council  
Mondy Lariz, Exec. Director  
ed@spcwc.org  
(408) 356-8258  
www.spcwc.org

U.S. Geological Survey  
Jim Carter  
(650) 329 4439  
jlcarter@usgs.gov  
www.earthquake.usgs.gov/regional/  
nca

United Anglers of California, Inc.  
Bob Strickland, President  
(408) 371-0331  
bobstrickland@unitedanglers.org  
www.unitedanglers.org

Urban Creeks Council  
Phil Stevens  
(510) 540-6669  
phil@urbancreeks.org  
www.urbancreeks.org

US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Jonathan Thompson  
(209) 946-6400 ext 345  
jonathan\_thompson@fws.gov  
www.fws.gov

Volunteer Monitor Newsletter  
Eleanor Ely  
(415) 334-2284  
ellieely@earthlink.net  
www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/  
volunteer/info.html

UC Davis  
Center for Watershed Sciences  
Jeffrey F. Mount, Director

(530) 754-9133  
emmac@ucdavis.edu  
http://watershed.ucdavis.edu/

UC Davis  
Watershed Support Program  
Fraser Shilling  
(530) 752-7859  
fmshilling@ucdavis.edu  
www.cwam.ucdavis.edu

The Watershed Project  
Michelle LeBeau, Program Director  
(510) 665-3597  
michelle@thewatershedproject.org  
www.thewatershedproject.org

Watershed Watch  
Vishakha Atre  
(408) 720-8811  
vatre@eoainc.com  
www.mywatershedwatch.org

Western Waters Canoe Club  
Jill Dodsworth  
(408) 243-6115  
info@westernwaterscanoecub.org  
www.westernwaterscanoecub.org

Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley  
Patricia Abreu, President  
(408) 929-9453  
info@wcsv.org  
www.wcsv.org

Willow Glen Homeowners  
Association  
Larry Ames  
(408) 742-1798  
LAmes@aol.com  
www.wgna.net

Youth Community Service  
Judy Dauberman, Director  
(650) 617.8963  
judy@youthcommunityservice.org  
www.youthcommunityservice.org

Youth Science Institute  
Bonnie LeMat  
(408)356-4945  
lemat@ysi-ca.org  
www.ysi-ca.org