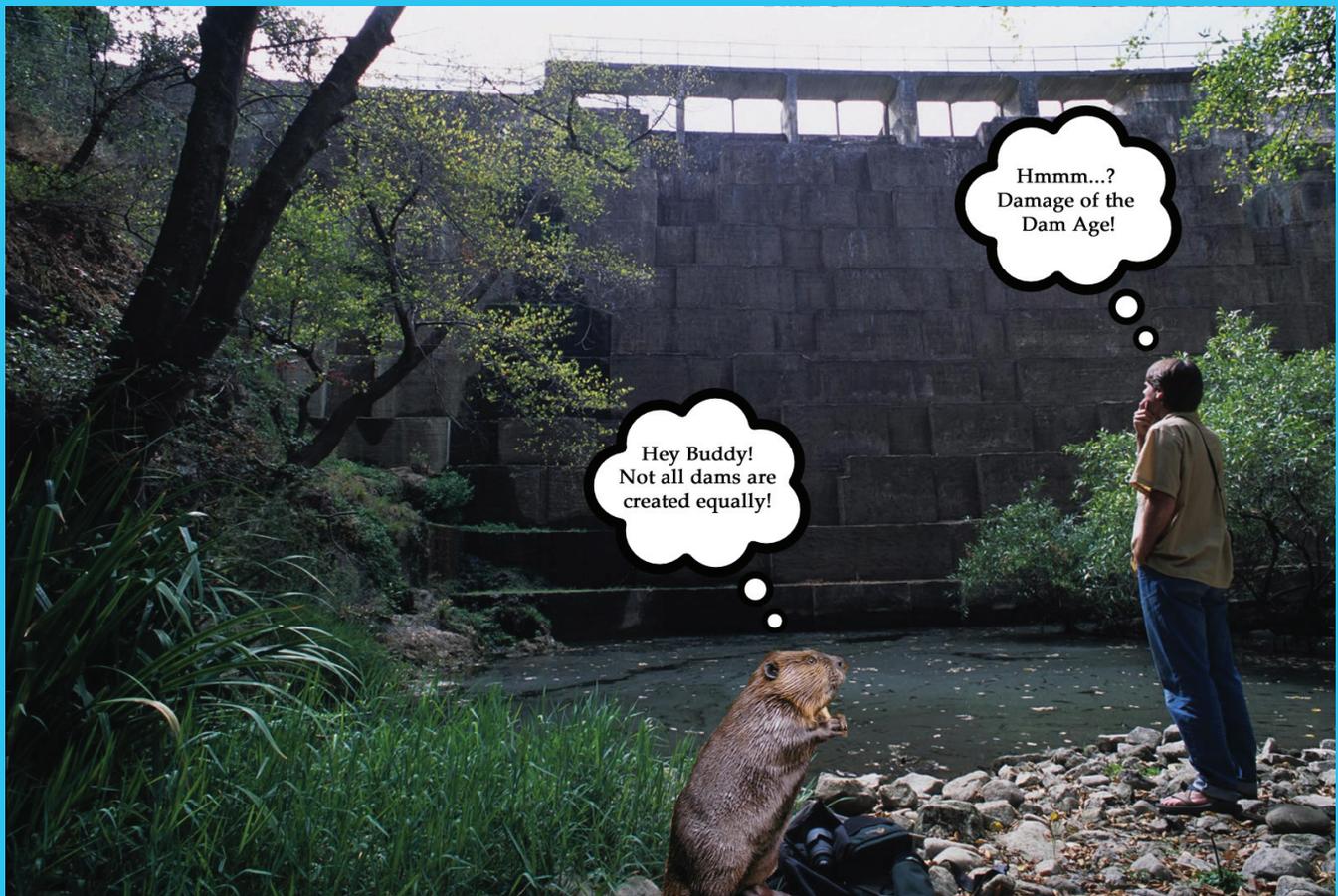


# Creekside News

November 2010



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New Award  
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Initatives 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, and collaboration in realizing our ultimate goal of transforming our county streams into living streams.

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### Special Thanks To our Funders

City of Cupertino

City of Palo Alto

City of San Jose

City of Sunnyvale

Federation of Flyfishers

Guadalupe Coyote RCD

Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff

Pollution Prevention Program

Santa Clara Valley Water District

and our many members

### Printed by

1-800 ProColor, Inc.

November 2010

Volume 10

# Introduction

## On the Cover

By Mondy Lariz, editor and Director  
Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition

This year the Creekside News and our annual Creeks and Watershed Conference is titled Dams: Beaver Fever and Concrete Regrets.

The cover photo was taken below Searsville Dam at Sanfords Jasper Ridge. Because a run of threatened steelhead are unable to get pass this dam to access prime spawning grounds above here it has been the subject of much discussion over the past 30 years at least. The controversy goes on as plans for a flood protection project and Stanford works on an HCP, both of which could address some of these concerns.

Meanwhile there has been a lot of excitement about beaver in recent years with even an IMAX movie being made to praise this remarkable creature.

We decided to dedicate the majority of this year's conference to address some of these issues.

In addition to Searsville Dam nearly all of the dams in Santa Clara County are being reassessed for safety and fish passage. While it is not likely any of these will come down soon it is interesting to speculate what it might be like if we could remove one or more of these dams and set the beavers loose to improve fish passage, water quality, and habitat in these watersheds.

Interesting facts and stories will be told by speakers who know about dams and beaver. Maybe we will even have a guest beaver in the house?

Did you know that we have beaver living and working amongst us here in Santa Clara County? We do and you will see some special pictures of them in this issue of the Creekside News thanks to Rea and Mercury Freedom who love the creek and all of the wonderful wildlife that makes it so special.

We are honored to have Ken Yeager, president of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to speak to us this year.. He is a great speaker and a supporter of clean and healthy creeks.

## Creek Advocate of the Year

By Cynthia D'Agosta, Executive Director  
Committee for Green Foot Hills

I've known Pat Showalter for about ten years now as both a collaborator and friend, and I can say she is the kind of person that's easy to warm up to, always offering a smile and positive attitude; never afraid to roll up her sleeves and get down to work when it's needed. And indeed she has done that throughout her career, serving as a Professional Engineer, Watershed Coordinator, Hydrologist, Senior Project Manager, and Planning Commissioner, and now Santa Clara County Creek Coalition Advocate of the Year!



Creek Advocate of the Year  
Patricia Showalter

As a colleague of Pat's I congratulate her and couldn't agree more that the award is well deserved.

When asked where the passion for her work started, Pat Showalter quickly recalls a sandbox in which she would endlessly build water works every summer as a child.

Continued on page 16

# Commentary

## Can We Improve Land Use Planning

by Mondy Lariz, Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition

Last year I wrote about how the Streams of Santa Clara County have suffered from years of abuse as run-away development and flood protection projects designed to protect these developments have significantly reduced the sensitive ecosystems which once characterized the valley of hearts delight

I am sorry to report that we are still losing valuable riparian areas to developemnts, planned and approved against the best advise of experts who approved policies, guidelines, and standards to protect these vannishing resources. I am dismayed by what I have seen happening and I am hoping that the Counties Watershed Resource Protection Colaborative will have a lessons learned meeting soon to figure out what is going wrong.

It appears that in most cases, the agency staff makes the proper recommendation yet City Councils continue to make exceptions for these projects.



Creek modified to accomidate urban encroachment

Perhaps this is modivated by the need for tax revenue but whatever the reason it must stop. Don't you agree?

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www.sccreeks.org

# Recognition

## New Award

by Phil Bobel,

Not everyone can be the Creek Advocate of the year. Some of us advocate to make change while others simply do the hard on-the-ground work necessary to protect our oceans, bays, wetlands and streams.

The Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition decided to call such heroes Watershed Keepers and they will now have an award they will be making each year to honor these special

people. It was my pleasure to nominate the first recipient of this award, James McCarthy.

Jim has become an invaluable advocate for Adobe Creek, where he focuses much of his creek advocacy energy. He tirelessly organizes volunteers to monitor and clean Adobe and Barron Creek, a key tributary. The City of Palo Alto now relies on Jim to be its eyes and ears on Adobe.

Continued on page 5

# Recognition

## New Award

by Phil Bobel,

He collects water quality data, visual observations and suggests actions to both the City and the Santa Clara Valley Water District.



Jim gives his volunteers important training and safety tips

He utilizes all the program elements offered by local organizations including “Adopt-a-Creek” and “Streamkeeper.” Jim’s energy and enthusiasm has been passed on to numerous volunteers, young and old as he brings them into the world of creek clean-ups and volunteer action. Jim ensures that new volunteers understand how to work through the systems of nonprofit and local government organizations to enhance local creeks. He carefully researches how best to tackle a problem and who can help. Jim marshals resources from far and wide to help “his” creek. His passion is catching and his persistence is inspiring.

Jim has improved the lower reaches of Adobe Creek tremendously. He has managed the removal of trash which had built up over the years. He has brought canoes and kayaks into areas where they had not been used before. He has developed trash clean-up sites where none existed and recruited volunteers from the community, Stanford University, and local canoe/kayak organizations. He successfully advocated that Adobe be declared a “Trash Hot Spot” by Palo Alto so that the area so that the area would continue to receive attention for years to come.

# Citizen Participation

## Immigrants Clean Up Coyote Creek

by Elizabeth Sarmiento, Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN)

Without much fanfare and little to no recognition a group made up of mostly immigrants, braved the 92 degree plus temperatures on September 26th cleaning a portion of the Coyote Creek Trail behind Andrew Hill High School.

The event was organized by Elizabeth Sarmiento, Services, Immigrant Rights, and Education Network (SIREN) in partnership with the City of San José, the Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition, Friends of Coyote Creek, San Jose State University Environmental Studies Department, and Student Advocates for Higher Education at San Jose State University (SAHE). More than 85 enthusiastic



volunteers went to work removing as much trash, debris and recyclables from the surrounding areas as they could find.. Some even removed trash from the creek.as well.

By the end of the day thousands of pounds of trash had been removed. Items such as old mattresses, shopping carts, clothing, plastic bags and electronic waste. Once collected the trash was picked up by the City of San José. Immigrants have always been a part of American. society. They are our neighbors,

our co-workers, our friends and our family members. They are also an important part of our state's economic engine.

SIREN wants us to know that immigrants care about our creeks and promote clean and healthy watersheds for all. Elizabeth is currently the Green@Home Outreach Coordinator with Acterra, Inc.



Your group can sponsor a cleanup too; according to Susan Siravo, Communications Manager at the Santa Clara Valley Water District, "Each year the Water District joins the Creek Connections Action Group, which includes Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation and the city of San Jose, to host a Santa Clara County Coastal Cleanup Day." in September and National River Cleanup Day in May.

Santa Clara County cleanups include more than thirty-five locations each year. The county has five watersheds, including ten reservoirs and hundreds of miles of streams and groundwater basins.

If you missed out on joining a cleanup effort this year visit the CCAG website for next years schedule [WWW.cleanacreek.org](http://WWW.cleanacreek.org)

# Advocacy

## Protecting Upper Los Gatos Creek

by Mercury & Rea Freedom, members of NAIL

As some of you know, NAIL (Neighbors Against Irresponsible Logging) has expanded our mission to include protection of the Upper Los Gatos Creek Watershed. Here is a story to demonstrate our commitment to this watershed and my families personal connection to it.

The portion of Los Gatos Creek between Lexington Reservoir and Alma Bridge is part of Santa Clara County Parks. It is under water when the reservoir is full, but when the water goes down you can see where the creek flows.



This is a rich habitat with osprey, golden eagles, bats, owls, butterflies, deer, frogs, flowers, graceful grasses and tiny fish. In the early summer there is abundance of new life, ducklings, tadpoles and kits in the beaver pond.

In July and August of 2008 the creek bed was going dry. First a few yards above the reservoir, then a few hundred yards; finally, near the end of August it was drying up by several yards a day.

The San Jose Water Company (SJWC) told NAIL they were meeting their legal obligation for flows no less than 2.1 cubic feet per

second to maintain the creek below their diversions. They said the neighborhoods downstream must be taking too much water.

NAIL made calls, sent emails and did research, trying to understand the problem and to discover a possible solution. After some time had passes SJWC finally disclosed that they had mistakenly been releasing too little water, and they corrected the problem. The creek has been flowing ever since.

There are no trails, but the creek is only a few inches deep in most places, so when the lake is low I walk up the creek quite often, especially in the spring and summer.

We are fortunate to have a family of beaver living in this part of the stream, and they are a joy to watch.



Early that summer there were hundreds of tadpoles and fish so small you could barely see them. Flowers, dragonflies, grasses, birds and insects thrived. A family of Merganser ducks were living in the beaver pond. The pond provides shelter for a variety of creatures that otherwise couldn't survive in the shallow creek.

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# Advocacy

## Protecting Upper Los Gatos Creek

by Mercury & Rea Freedom, members of NAIL



*Beaver Dam threatened by the flood*

On June 11th without warning the first flood came. It took out the beaver dam, and washed away flowers, tadpoles, tiny fish and everything in its path. It stopped abruptly in about 24 hours, stranding many critters on high ground. There were dead fish more than 12 inches long and small dead mammals. I found only a handful of tadpoles, some stranded in tiny pools that were drying up.

The third night after the flood, my husband and I took a bucket and a scoop to relocate the tadpoles into deeper pools. Unbelievably

we found a Merganser duckling peeping and trying to hide from us in the shallow water. He was scared and alone, and so wild and alive it broke my heart. My husband took him back to the house and called Silicon Valley Wildlife Rehabilitation, they told us where to take him the next day and how to care for him overnight. I walked the creek and listened until dark hoping to hear the mother duck or the other ducklings.



*Ducks enjoy the creek too*

Without the deep water in the beaver pond, the duck family had no cover from predators like the coyotes, bobcats, raccoons and even mountain lions that prowl this area. I saw that the beavers were repairing the dam; with kits in the lodge who were also at risk.

My husband, called Andy Gere of San Jose Water company. Mr. Gere told him the water company had released water into the creek as part of routine maintenance. He said this was no different than the winter floods. He went on to say that the San Jose Water Company is a good steward of the watershed.

Continued on page 9

# Advocacy

## Protecting Upper Los Gatos Creek

by Mercury & Rea Freedom, members of NAIL

Of course, in the winter the water does not start and stop suddenly, stranding fish. In the winter there are no tadpoles or ducklings, or beaver kits.

NAIL began the work of finding out what to do about this situation. We contacted the Department of Fish and Game and the Santa Clara Valley Water District. We received some assurance that their agencies would look into the situation.

After that flood, the creek slowly healed. There were more flowers and lots of fish, there were mallard ducklings and two beaver kits in the pond.

Only a month later, on July 13th, I saw what looked like tiny pieces of sand. They were tadpoles, just hatched, hundreds of them, with tails almost too small to see. The frogs must have laid more eggs after the first flood that killed so many tadpoles. I was thrilled and awed by the power of life.



*Tadpoles rally when the water returns*

Two days later, July 15th, the flood came

again. I tried to walk up the creek to see what damage had been done. But the creek was flowing deep, above my knees and the force of the water made walking up the creek impossible.



*Beauty abounds near the stream*

My husband and I drove to a nearby overlook to see the beaver dam. Water was flowing fast over the top of the dam, and rushing down the creek with incredible force. I thought the dam would be washed out by morning, but the flood stopped in the morning, and the dam was still there. The new willow branches on top showed how the beavers had worked all night swimming through the torrent to save their dam. Some experts say this behavior is instinct, but I think it is just what any good parent would have done.

I found five or six of the tiny tadpoles, their pond was completely gone. A lot of the little

Continued on page 10

# Advocacy

## Protecting Upper Los Gatos Creek

by Mercury & Rea Freedom, members of NAIL

fish survived, most of the flowers, too, maybe because the dam held.

NAIL called Department of Fish and Game yet again; they, along with Santa Clara Valley Water District and were told they were “looking into the situation”.

Maybe a few tadpoles, fish and ducklings aren't very important to people in their busy lives. To me the life here is the magic of this place. So if the floods come again, I am ready with my bucket, scoop, and Wildlife Rehab on speed dial.

We hiked the creek a lot in the summer of 2009 and it was a greatly restored environment! Minus the flash floods the creek bed wasn't as straight -- rather it was more meandering and full of nooks and bends with shaded pools -- the sort baby fish and frogs need to grow up strong!

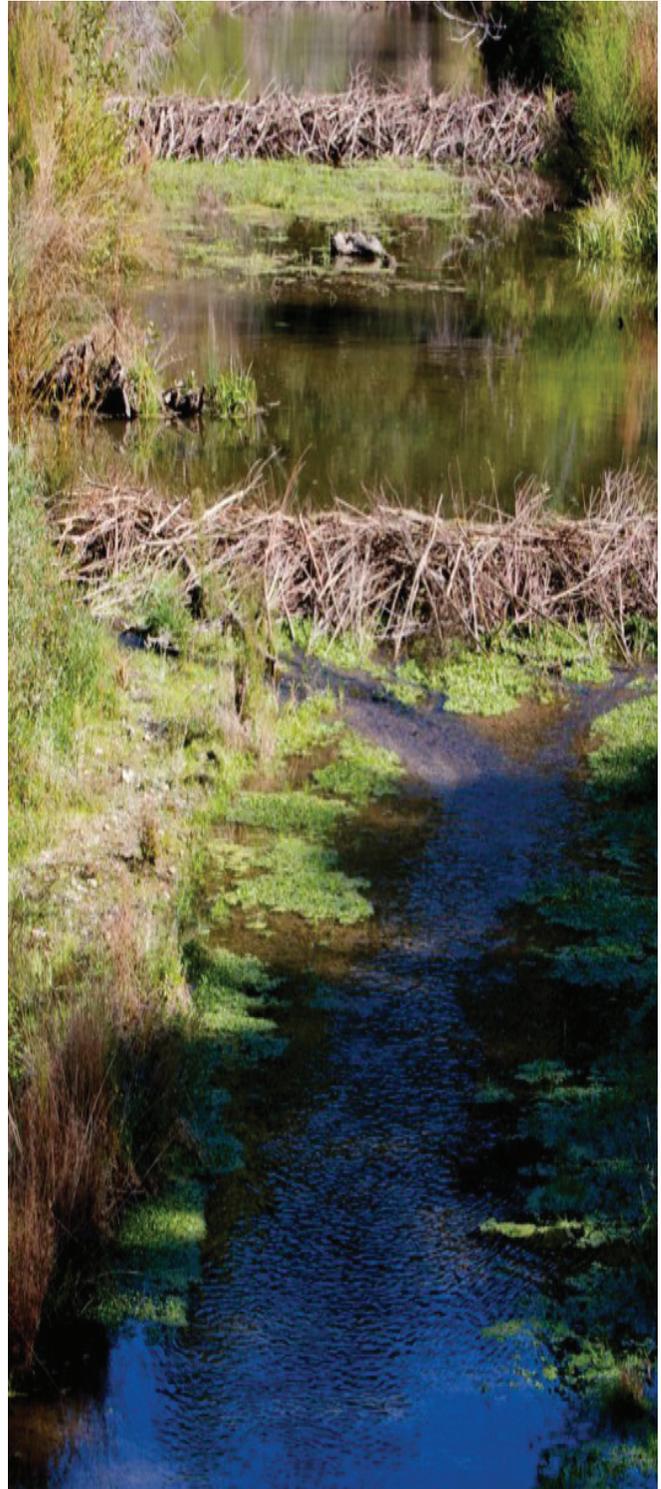
Present also were a plethora of egrets and heron and other water fowl. Beavers and kits happily chewed willow sprouts. We haven't seen a dry creek bed or flood since the late summer of 2008, and we hope it will remain that way. Needless to say we expect to continue to watch over it!

We also pledge to do whatever we can to protect the watershed and the wonderful wildlife that shares it with us.

Mercury Freedom is a very accomplished photographer as you can see. Check out his website at: [http://web.me.com/mercury.freedom/Site\\_2/Welcome.html](http://web.me.com/mercury.freedom/Site_2/Welcome.html)

For more information about NAIL contact:

MRG/NAIL  
P.O. Box 1975  
Los Gatos, CA 95031  
[www.mountainresource.org/nail](http://www.mountainresource.org/nail)



*Peace resored after the flood*

# Education

## STEP - Salmon & Trout Education Project

by Hugh Miller, ED Foundation, Flycasters, Inc.

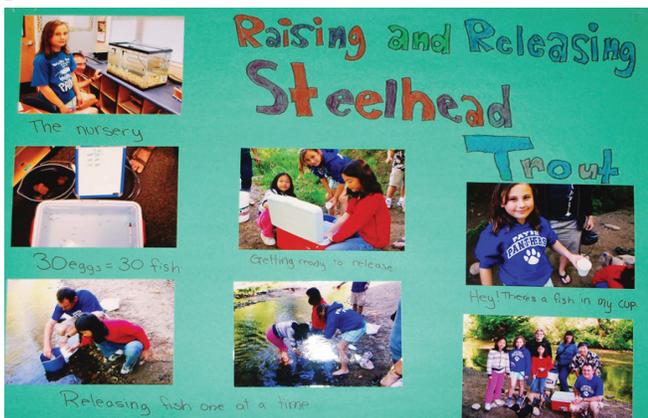
**H**ave you heard about STEP? Many local K-12 classrooms know about STEP. Over 50 Greater-Santa Clara County K12-classes participate in this well-recognized conservation, thematic education program.

The Salmon & Trout Education Project (STEP) teaches K12 school children about our important native, anadromous (sea-going) steel head trout and salmon...and the critical environment needed for these fish.



*Students pose as the eggs are loaded in their chiller*

The “high-light” for school children is the incubation of about 30 steelhead eggs in their own, approved classroom aquarium-chiller equipment. Then, later, after the eggs hatch and the alvens become fry the students release them in an approved coastal stream,



*School projects such as this poster are common*

All this is done with a permit-approved by the California State Fish and Game. Department and in consultation with the National Marine Fisheries



*Students conduct on-stream science during the release*

Service.

STEP is administered by the Monterey Bay Salmon & Trout Project (MBS&TP). The Project rears up to 150,000 steelhead trout and coho salmon each year in their Conservation Hatchery near Davenport.

At present, MBS&TP has over 100 active STEP classes in a local, six-county area. The Project conducts a two-day Workshop, usually in February, to “certify” new STEP teachers. In recent years, the Workshop has been conducted at the well-recognized National Marine Lab in Santa Cruz.

Locally, the San Jose Flycasters supports over 50 STEP classes in the greater Santa Clara County area. Support, by Flycasters, is given both in mentoring and with financial aid.

Do you know a teacher that would be interested in having a STEP class? If you do, have them contact Hugh Miller, STEP Coordinator, HMiller334@aol.com or 408-268-3945.

# Initiatives

## It Takes a Village – Zero Litter Initiative

by Melody Tovar, City of San Jose

Each year, Santa Clara County agencies spend millions of dollars to clean up litter and debris from our streets and waterways.

San José estimates that it spends more than \$3 million alone on various programs and services that remove trash. This includes maintenance activities, volunteer programs, community outreach, and targeted creek cleanups. Yet our best efforts to date have proven insufficient. So much so that the State agency responsible for regulating discharges to our waterways, the Regional Water Quality Control Board has declared many of our local creeks to be “impaired” by trash, and they have taken a bold step to stem the tide.



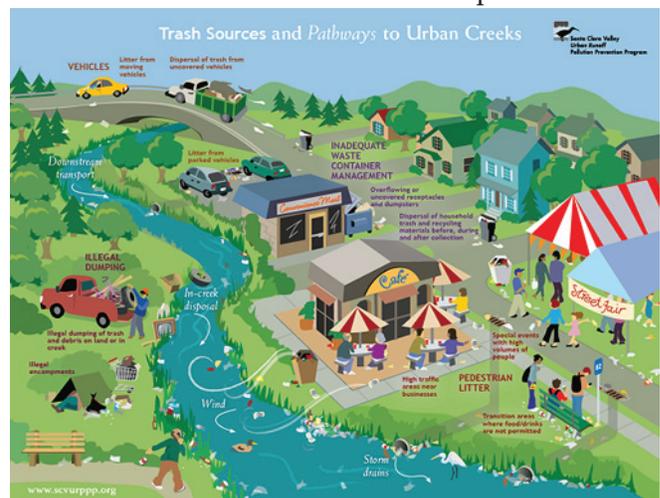
*A typical Trash Raft*

In October 2009, the Water Board adopted a Municipal Regional Permit for Stormwater that includes ambitious requirements to address the impacts of trash in our waterways. This permit regulates municipal stormwater dischargers that flow to the San Francisco Bay. This includes all Santa Clara County cities - except Morgan Hill and Gilroy, the County, and the Santa Clara Valley Water District. The Stormwater permit requires several important actions, including:

- Annual cleanup and assessment of creek “Trash Hot Spots;”
- Installation of some structural devices that intercept trash in storm collection systems; and
- Reduction of trash entering the creeks from the storm sewer systems by 40% by 2014.

The permit has a five-year term, but it also sets targets for future regulations for reductions of trash from storm systems – 70% by 2017 and 100% by 2022!

As the Stormwater Permit was being developed, local stakeholders were already working to better understand the problem and potential solutions. In 2007, the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program (or SCVURPPP, the group of local agencies convened to implement stormwater permit requirements), developed a Trash Tool Box of best management practices to reduce litter reaching creeks. They also developed a conceptual model (see illustration) of the various sources and pathways of how litter gets to our creeks. What you find out very quickly, is that litter comes from many different places, and the storm system is just a conduit for how it gets into our creeks. There isn’t any one single solution that addresses the whole of the problem.



*Sources of trash*

In 2008, the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative (a multi-stakeholder collaborative group) convened a wide array of stakeholders to share information on existing efforts and potential solutions. More than 30 people from local and state agencies and from the community gathered to identify the kinds of programs being implemented for the various sources of litter, the gaps in current programming, and ideas for what kinds

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# Initiatives

## It Takes a Village – Zero Litter Initiative

by Melody Tovar, City of San Jose

of ideas should be implemented to reduce litter in our communities. It was clear that litter is not just a water quality issue, but one of solid waste management, street safety, community aesthetic, and economic development. The group followed up in 2009 with an additional summit, and what emerged was the need for an ongoing forum for problem solving and collaboration to address litter ... so began the Zero Litter Initiative.

The mission of the Zero Litter Initiative (ZLI) is to eliminate litter and littering throughout Santa Clara County, including roadways, waterways, and the community. ZLI is in its formative stages and is anchored by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the cities of Campbell, Palo Alto, and San José; Santa Clara County; the Santa Clara Valley Water District; Cal Trans; Valley Transportation Authority; SCVURPPP; and the Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition. The group seeks to build on the priority actions identified during the last summit and more formally engage cities, businesses, community groups, and other agencies in collaborative efforts. The Steering Committee has already begun building a relationship with the Santa Clara County Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission and envisions using this group of elected officials as Policy Advocates for implementing initiatives.

### Priority Areas

The Steering Committee has identified seven priority action areas and is developing specific actions to advance work in all those areas in 2011.

**Business Engagement:** The objective is to engage businesses that tend to generate litter in eliminating and controlling litter coming from their establishments. An Implementation Committee will be formed to work with business leaders and targeted businesses to better understand the impacts of litter on the community and implement specific actions to reduce litter from these business types.

**Homeless Encampments:** While the broader problem of homeless is beyond the scope of this group, it is clear that something must be done to

address the effects of our homeless population on our local creeks. Trash and other wastes are routinely found near and in our creeks. The objective for ZLI in 2011 is to convene a Roundtable discussion of the various agencies and organizations involved in social services to the homeless to identify and begin implementation of near term strategies for managing the impacts of homeless encampments in creeks.

**Enforcement:** Enforcement agencies face severe resource constraints and are forced to prioritize the array of community needs. With litter being such a multi-faceted problem, it isn't always practical to get enforcement agency representatives to large stakeholder group forums. In 2011, ZLI will convene a Roundtable workshop to focus on this topic and identify key actions to enhance anti-litter enforcement.

**Reduce Highway Litter:** The objective is to engage garbage haulers and landfill operators to reduce highway and roadway litter. Palo Alto has implemented a program to require a fine for un-tarped loads at their landfill wherein a tarp is also provided for future use. In 2011, ZLI will convene haulers and landfill operators to advance this or other ideas.

**CalTrans Highway Litter Pickup:** Amid shrinking budgets at the State level, CalTrans is the first to note that the litter conditions of our freeways is not good. Based on a pilot evaluation (a collaboration of CalTrans and the Valley Transportation Authority), they estimate that it would require additional funding of \$11-19 million annually to maintain Santa Clara County roads to a condition of "slightly littered." It is unlikely that such a scale of additional resources would be available from the State. ZLI continues to explore opportunities with our CalTrans partners to enhance alternative programs for highway litter pick-up.

**Legislation:** The scale of resources needed to solve this issue at the "end of the pipe" via capital

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# Initiatives

## It Takes a Village – Zero Litter Initiative

by Melody Tovar, City of San Jose

improvements to collection systems and dramatically increased levels of maintenance simply is not there today. The objective for ZLI is to garner support for legislation to reduce litter creation and increase redemption values for commonly littered items.

**Public Education Campaign:** In order to change public behavior and fundamentally shift the community ethic regarding litter, the objective of ZLI is to leverage resources among partners and other interested agencies in support of a broad-based, multi-year education campaign to reduce litter to our streets, waterways, and community.

In order to galvanize support for advancing these priority action areas, the ZLI Steering Committee is working on an organizational structure that will enhance participation while minimizing new bureaucracy. As we discovered through our stakeholder summits, it's going to "take a village," as they say, to make real change. With the sources of litter being so diverse, it will take a variety of people, ideas, and resources.

Some level of ring-leading is crucial, and to that effect, San José is actively pursuing grants and shared funding for a ZLI Coordinator that would provide that level of support and leadership.

Along the way, there will be opportunities for all interested stakeholders to provide input to ideas and elbow grease to make it happen.

You can find more information on the SCVURPPP products referenced in this Article at the following links:

[http://www.scvurppp-w2k.com/pdfs/0708/Trash\\_Sources\\_and\\_Pathways\\_FY0607.pdf](http://www.scvurppp-w2k.com/pdfs/0708/Trash_Sources_and_Pathways_FY0607.pdf)

[http://www.scvurppp-w2k.com/trash\\_bmp\\_tool-box\\_2007.htm](http://www.scvurppp-w2k.com/trash_bmp_tool-box_2007.htm)

For more information on the Watershed Management Initiative:

<http://www.scbwmi.org>



*This Trash Task Force all day session brought stakeholders together to talk about issues and potential solutions.*

# Updates

## Watershed Council Activities Report

by Mondy Lariz, Executive Director, Stevens & Permanente Creeks watershed Council

The Stevens & Permanente Creeks Watershed Council recently completed more than three years of work to close out the grant we received from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Stevens Creek, like streams throughout our area, has been altered from its historical condition first by agricultural practices and later by extensive urbanization. Water capture by the Stevens Creek Dam, management of that dam, storm water discharges, and surface and groundwater withdrawals have greatly changed both the water-flow and sediment-flow regimes. Plus, myriad chemicals from commercial and residential activities now make their way into the creek. Regular monitoring allows SPCWC to document and track water quality along the length of the creek through time. We have monitored water chemistry since 2003 and added testing for general toxicity and fecal indicator bacteria late in 2008.

Our 162 page report presents important information related to our stewardship programs including

our monitoring of water chemistry, fecal indicator bacteria and general toxicity, our aquatic habitat study using benthic macroinvertebrates, our riparian habitat restoration program and our general education and outreach events.

We are very grateful to our partners and the many supporters we have. But we could not have accomplished this work without our incredible volunteers.

In the last year alone we logged more than 3700 volunteer hours

We offer our sincere thanks to our many inspiring volunteers, partners and donors who have made SPCWC such a success... and a lot of fun.

We do not have funding to provide printed versions, but we are proud to make this report available to all interested parties in electronic form on our website [www.spcwc.org](http://www.spcwc.org)



*Volunteers collecting Macroinvertebrates*

# Updates

## Land Use Issues

Once again Ross Creek neighbors are handed bad news by the Town of Los Gatos with the approval of the plan by developers who have been trying for five years to win town approval for the project on Linda Avenue and Stephenie Lane, bordering Ross Creek.

The council stated that architecture and site design for a planned seven-home development on Ross Creek should be decided by the town's planning commission.

Neighbors have resisted, saying seven homes is too many. They even went so far as to file a lawsuit that prompted an Environmental Impact Report.

The EIR was completed earlier this year and indicated that the creek's riparian corridor would not be "significantly" harmed if seven homes were built. It did say that the dusky-footed woodrat's habitat might be harmed by the development, so the developers say they've taken steps to mitigate that concern. but this project requires deviation from the guidelines and standards set form by the Watershed Resources Protection Colaborative designed to protect riparian areas.

Meanwhile the City of San Jose has approved a development on Guadalupe Mines Road called Brookside Estates.

On October 12, 2010 The following letter was sent to the Mayor and San Jose City Council

Re: Brookside Estate project on Guadalupe Mines Road

Dear Mayor Reed and City Council Members;

The Committee for Green Foothills believes that the Brookside Estate rezoning project on Guadalupe Mines Road suffers from both legal flaws and policy flaws. The legal flaws stem from the beginning of the project when environmental groups

were not notified of the environmental review, and from the dismissive response of a Negative Declaration for a project that uproots hundreds of trees, requiring years and decades before the replacement trees will grow to size (if they actually grow successfully). Legal flaws also include the vast expansion of the use of the site from the limited intensity of activity only during the work hours for five days a week, to a 24-hour, seven days a week activity of nearly 90 residences. Policy flaws include the significant job losses to the City from the permanent jobs from the company that is presently on the site, to the decision to ignore the recommendations of both Planning staff and of the City's Planning Commission and exempt this project from the 100-foot riparian buffer policy that the City talks so proudly about in other contexts. Flaws also include a lack of contact or follow through with regulatory agencies, ignoring that there are special status species in the vicinity, and a faulty method of determination of 'riparian edge'.

Despite all the above, and while the Committee for Green Foothills has openly considered litigation regarding this project, we are also aware of good faith efforts by staff, the Mayor's Office, and by Council Members Kalra and Pyle to address the issue of stream protection. While every effort would be made to separate that work from ongoing litigation, some defensiveness is inevitable.

Given the potential conflict, the potential for progress on overall policy, and the subsequent planning that will still occur on the Brookside Estate project, the Committee for Green Foothills' Board of Director members support a dual path in lieu of litigation at present, where the Committee will stay intensely involved in all subsequent planning for Brookside Estate, and the Committee will be involved with better overall policies.

We hereby request that from this time on, unlike the previous practice, that we and all other

Continued on page 17

# Updates

## Land Use Issues

environmental organizations be notified of any project, permit, or environmental review related to Brookside Estate. We appreciate the willingness to improve the present policy, and hope to achieve substantial improvements to protect the environment and surrounding community near the Brookside Estate project.

Please contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely, Brian A. Schmidt  
Legislative Advocate, Santa Clara County

This project is also an exception to the Guidelines and standards of WRPC.

Lastly advocates in Los Altos are fighting a proposed development by Heifer International on Adobe Creek which is under Santa Clara County jurisdiction which calls for a 150 foot setback yet the proposed project would have features less than 25 feet from the creek.

According to these advocates Heifer International's proposed Global Village would obstruct the existing wildlife corridor that connects Byrne Preserve and Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve.

This corridor passes through four properties located between the two preserves:

- 26789 Tanglewood Lane (adjacent to Byrne Preserve)
- 26707 Tanglewood Lane (across Moody Road from the proposed Global Village entrance)
- Hidden Villa
- Murietta Ridge Preserve

The Tanglewood properties have conservation easements along the north side of Moody Road that connect to Byrne Preserve to accommodate animal passage. Directly across Moody Road from these easements, the corridor passes across Hidden Villa's field and up the heavily wooded hillside to Murietta Ridge Preserve and Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve. The deer-proof

fence erected around the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) field restricts the passage of larger animals to using the area east of this field.

This is the location where Heifer International proposes to put their welcome center, parking lot, and access road. It will disrupt this major wildlife corridor.



One neighbor says Heifer -- with Hidden Villa's blessing -- appears to be planning a year round overnight camp for teenagers in an environmentally fragile area -- a wildlife corridor within a few feet of Adobe Creek. This is one of the few areas of Adobe Creek which has not been developed, although it is surrounded by many homes. Building close to the creek will likely damage the creek bed, triggering erosion and possible flooding. I am equally concerned about the destruction of habitat for the local bobcats, deer, coyotes, small mammals, and birds.

If you want more information contact:  
Shari Emling at [swelahc@comcast.net](mailto:swelahc@comcast.net)

# Recognition

## Creek Advocate of the Year

By Cynthia D'Agosta, Executive Director - Committee for Green Foot Hills

Continued from page 3

Being a child of the Sputnik era Pat grew up revering science and in high school attended a National Science Foundation program which put her intellectual curiosity into overdrive. From there on it was a matter of refining her interests through college.

She began by attending Mount Holyoke College where she received an A.B. in Geology and History. Once this was completed she took a hard look at what was to come next and came to a point of realization that the all things she liked about Geology had to do with water. She took a class in Hydrology and has been focused / hooked on the subject ever since.

Pat explains: "Other people might not think that the water cycle and all of its permutations are fascinating and important, but I do".

She went on to study Hydrology in engineering school at UC Berkeley, receiving an M.S. in Civil Engineering but was distraught at being taught to produce and deliver the technical information without commentary on how it might be used. Pat had learned along the way, and cared too much about public involvement in these processes to be only providing the engineering solutions.

One early career highlight that confirmed this opinion for her was an opportunity to study the effectiveness of numerous agencies conducting groundwater management. The resulting study showed that the most successful agencies had an active public participation component. For Pat, straight out of college, this experience would ultimately have an impact on her career path. And although she spent the first ten years of her career immersed in technical work, she also became involved in community organizations.

Serving as an Environmental Planning Commissioner (EPC) for the City of Mountain View was her first experience combining planning and local politics. While on the EPC she was an environmental and housing advocate and joined Friends of Stevens Creek Trail.

After this experience, which she describes as a "real education", she began to look for positions which would allow the combination of both technical and public aspects of work in water systems.

Her re-entry into the working world afforded her the opportunity to marry her love of hydrology and local politics as the Coordinator of the San Francisquito Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP). Here she spent five years building and leading a watershed alliance of over twenty-three signatory stakeholders.

Currently Pat is a Senior Project manager for the Santa Clara Valley Water District working on securing Endangered Species Act Permits through two Habitat Conservation Plans which includes work on the Fisheries and Aquatic habitat Collaborative Effort (FAHCE).

Since 2000, Pat has served on the Santa Clara County League of Conservation Voters Board which endorses and promotes good environmental candidates for local offices. She also has served on the Mountain View-Los Altos League of Women Voters Board.

Never satisfied sitting on the sidelines, Pat and her husband have also been seen out on a local creek picking up trash to help out with a creek cleanup.

When asked what accomplishments she's most proud of in her career, she mentions Geokids of which she was a founding Board member; the Acterra Native Plant Nursery; and Blackberry Farm Restoration / Stevens Creek, Cupertino. Indeed three major projects which have benefitted our community.

Throughout her career Pat has stayed true to her words: "As an environmental professional, I try to make connections between people and projects whenever possible. It always seems to pay off, even if you have no way of knowing what time-frame things will happen in".

# Watershed Poetry

## Language Of Water

---

by Devreaux Baker

Water calls out the names of the dead and the living  
Tells stories about our past

Moves through our dreams in great currents of desire  
Pulls the dialect of our days strung together in steady vowels

Water is the gathering place and the scattering  
The vessel and the drink

It wraps the planet in a mantle of blue  
And spins her out into the universe longing

For connection with each stone she passes  
She empties words of mourning and words of bliss

Carries undone houses in floods, so spirits live on through generations  
Swimming in her body

Every flood plain is marked by the shape of her face  
Every suicide that is called home through her portal

Dreams of light and movement and wanders  
Vast plains of blue speaking in tongues of ocean, or river, lake or pond

To understand her speech you listen to fish, heron, or eel  
You watch bird, turtle, fox, or bear bend down to drink from her mouth

You swim the long channels of her mind  
And rise back up dripping with news from her underworld

Water calls out all our names, offers us second chances to heal  
Reminds us to look at what we cannot now see,

And to listen for what we cannot now hear.

Poem inspired by the vision of Watershed Poetry Mendocino 2009  
[www.devreauxbaker.com](http://www.devreauxbaker.com)

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 awards to the **Creek Advocate of the Year**, and our new award to a **Watershed Keeper**.

If you know an exceptional person who should be considered for these honors, 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.

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 wildlife, 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.

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.

Individual Membership \$20  
 Family Membership \$30

Creek Lover Membership \$50  
 Low income Senior or Student \$10

Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_ + Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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City State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Your gift of any amount is tax-deductible and appreciated, and please ask your company for a matching donation.

Mail checks to us 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