

# Friends of Sausal Creek

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

August-September '07

## Monthly Meetings

**August 15**—Come try your hand at drawing native plants, experience unnecessary! Sheelah Weaver will provide instructions and materials, or feel free to bring your own. We will walk to Dimond Park and draw.

**September 19**—Laurel Marcus will talk about how to reduce your impact on the environment and create a healthy yard and house. Learn how to reduce the use of pesticides in your garden by using alternative pest control. Also learn how to reduce chemical use in your house, conserve water and energy, care for your creek banks, and increase butterfly and bird habitats in your yard. Free copies of her book *The House and Garden Audit* will be provided.

## Summertime Shifts

The heat is on and the creek slips into slumber after the brief growing season. Although it's a dry year, the streamside looks lush and small trout linger in the deeper pools. FOSC is also lying low, and there have been some changes. Our best friend Kristen Hopper has moved on from the position of Nursery Manager and will be joining our Board in September; our hardworking Vice President Sheelah Weaver has moved on to tend to her own garden, and long-time friend Mark Lane has relocated. We want to thank them all for their commitment to FOSC. With your help this fall, we will tackle a new project in the El Centro creekside area to improve public access and we'll restore eroded trails in the redwoods of Monterey Blvd. With all of us pulling, FOSC can have a full and productive fall, and when the rains return, we'll be ready to grow.



*Kristen Hopper:* Since 2002, KHOP has been a source of insight, inspiration and home-cooked pastries. Kristen came to FOSC when a fledgling nursery was growing and the creekside restoration project was still raw and in need of green swaddling clothes. As our Field Manager, she grew the plants and organized the labor to get them in the ground. Some 20,000 plants later the green is complete, and the nursery, a shining citadel on the hill. With a legacy of accomplishment, Kristen decided it was time to move on to her own nursery, Oaktown, but graciously volunteered to keep her experience in play as a Board member of FOSC.

*Sheelah Weaver:* Champion of the lower watershed, Sheelah has made her mark with the Friends. As a Secretary and President and then Vice President, Sheelah has shepherded our group through a rough patch when the funds were only a trickle. After a long stint as an officer, she has decided to develop her other skills and pull out of everyday responsibilities. But she pledges to keep at work at the nursery and on East 26th St., where a new restoration effort is making the neighbors take notice. We owe a great deal to Sheelah and look forward to joining her at work in the watershed. *continued on back >*

## Creek to Bay Day: Saturday Sept. 15th 8:45am-noon

Creek to Bay Day is sponsored by the City of Oakland. This event is held every year and is an opportunity for communities to come together in the clean up and restoration of their watershed. We will be working to clean up Sausal Creek and begin special projects that we will continue through the winter planting season. And we'll have a free lunch following the work day! For more information, please contact us at 387-9744 or by e-mail at field@sausalcreek.org.

To volunteer in Dimond Park, Dimond Canyon, and Barry Place, come sign-in and get your free T-shirt at the Dimond Park Scout Hut, behind the Recreation Center at 3860 Hanly Road; To volunteer at the Joaquin Miller Native Plant Nursery, sign-in and get your free T-shirt at the Joaquin Miller Park Nursery, located at 3594 Sanborn Road, behind the Woodminster Amphitheater.

We are looking for people to lead restoration crews in Dimond Park and Dimond Canyon. We also need people to help with registration and meal preparation, set-up and clean-up. If you'd like to take on a leadership role, please attend our General Meeting at the Dimond Library on August 15th, 7:00 pm, or contact me directly. *—Kathren M. Stevenson*

## Join FOSC on Sept. 30 for a Free Outdoor Concert!

Fall is almost here, and we want to celebrate the glorious weather together! Join us on Sunday, September 30, for a free world music concert at Joaquin Miller Park's Woodminster Amphitheater. You'll also get a chance to meet our new Nursery Manager. Please meet us for snacks at 1:30pm at the nursery, and we'll head over to listen to the free music at 2pm. Contact me for more info at coordinator@sausalcreek.org or 501-3672. Hope we see you there! *—Sara Marcellino*

## SUPPORT THE WORK OF FOSC

Please help us maintain and expand our efforts in the Sausal Creek watershed by making a donation today!

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

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\$500  \$250  \$100  \$50  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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P.O. Box 2737  
Oakland, CA 94602  
(510) 501-FOSC  
www.sausalcreek.org

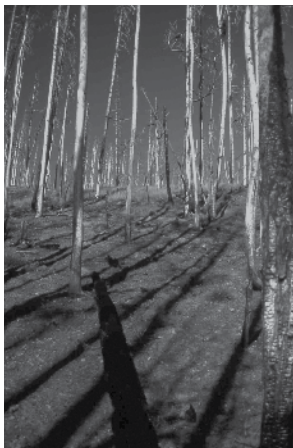


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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Don't miss our monthly meeting on August 15<sup>th</sup> and September 19<sup>th</sup>, 7-9 pm at the Dimond Library. Newsletter printed on recycled paper. Thanks for recycling!

### Fire Ecology in the Watershed: A Look Back



The primary management tool used by California's indigenous peoples was fire, and its regular use affected the landscape profoundly. In an ecological setting where annual rainfall is variable and streams and springs often dry up in the summer, fire was a food production technique far more efficient than agriculture.

Although there is little ethnographic or archaeological data on the Huchiun Ohlone—who would have inhabited the Sausal Creek watershed—it is likely that they

followed a subsistence pattern. They used fire, digging, pruning, and coppicing to increase plant resources for their benefit. The Huchiun must have coevolved with the landscape, in the sense that they had millennia to learn what resources it held for them and how to manipulate those resources to their best advantage.

Many of California's ecosystems are adapted to fire because this process serves to rejuvenate communities by initiating secondary succession. It is well documented that plant production and diversity increase after fire due to reduction in cover, addition of nutrients to the soil, and increases in water availability. Therefore, indigenous people used fire ecology to manage the Sausal Creek watershed.

California's native peoples burned grassland on a frequent basis, annually to every few years, as grassland fires rejuvenate senescent perennial bunchgrasses and remove dead thatch, providing the opportunity for other forbs to germinate. By returning nutrients to the soil, grassland fires increase bulb production as well.

In chaparral, burns at intervals from 7 to 30 years result in an overall increase in the biodiversity and production of shrubs and herbaceous species, with both direct and indirect benefits for hunting and gathering. Fire reduces the shrub canopy, allowing grasses and other herbaceous plants to grow until the shrubs resprout and gain dominance. The seeds of some herbaceous species are capable of lying dormant for many years and will only

### FOSC ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Unless otherwise noted, call 501-FOSC or email [coordinator@sausalcreek.org](mailto:coordinator@sausalcreek.org) to get information about all activities. For details about ongoing projects, check the Volunteer section of the Friends' website at [www.sausalcreek.org](http://www.sausalcreek.org).

#### Monthly Meetings

*3rd Wednesday of the month.*

- Wednesday 8/15, 9/19.  
7pm-9pm at the Dimond Library,  
3565 Fruitvale Ave.

#### Board of Directors Meetings

*2nd Wednesday of the month.*

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

#### Saturday Workdays

*FOSC Field and Nursery programs go on hiatus in August, to begin again in Sept.*

Go to [www.sausalcreek.org/volunteer/calendar.html](http://www.sausalcreek.org/volunteer/calendar.html) for more info or contact 388-5676 or [field@sausalcreek.org](mailto:field@sausalcreek.org).

#### Water Quality Monitoring

*Quarterly.*

- Sunday 9/22. 9am-noon;  
call Nick to confirm, 530-4490.

germinate following fire. Pallid manzanita, for example, is a species that depends on fire for reproduction.

In oak woodlands, fires at least every three to five years clear out the understory and reduce competition for water and nutrients, thus producing healthier trees while maintaining a diverse, herbaceous understory.

—Martha Lowe, excerpted from her *Master's Thesis*, The Upper Sausal Creek Watershed (Oakland, California): Historical and Contemporary Ecology, Watershed Assessment, and Recommendations for Ecosystem Restoration and Management.

*continued from front* > Mark Lane: Former board member and long-term volunteer Mark Lane moved to Woodland to take a new job. Mark was our water quality monitor, a job he has passed along to Nick Kish. He has been a watchdog of pollution. And over their long-term monitoring, Mark and Nick have witnessed an improvement in water quality. As a result, trout are more in evidence and while there's still some pollution, things are better and kids who play in the water are less at risk. Now if we would not wash our cars in the driveway, our watershed would actually be cleaner!

—Mark J. Rauzon

#### August-September '07 newsletter contributors:

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