

Currents

Newsletter of Friends of San Leandro



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Storm Drain Nostalgia *by Laurey Hemenway*

As a little girl I used to help my grandmother clean her house. With buckets of hot water and detergent, we'd scrub any surface that could be scrubbed. "You can clean anything with hot water and elbow grease," she used to tell me.

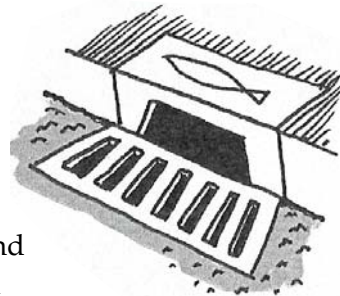
With all her years of acquired housecleaning wisdom, I never questioned my grandmother on this. What I did question was her "graywater disposal method" of dumping all dirty and/or contaminated water down the

storm drain in front of her house.

Even before years of college ecology and stewardship courses, I knew this practice was wrong. I asked my grandmother many times why she chose to empty her buckets down the storm drain instead of the sink. "That's what they're for", was her reply.

A child of the Depression, my grandmother grew up in an era when it was acceptable to dump refuse in creeks and streams, and even

large bodies of water like the Bay. Up until the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, the San Francisco Bay was, for lack of a better word, a cesspool, because of this practice. Household sewage, industrial waste from canneries, butchers and other food manufacturers, lumber mills, and other municipal polluters piped or di-



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Up The Creek

With the winter rains the creek has risen and fallen, and with increased water levels have come increased levels of

graffiti on the cheerful images of the mural underneath the East 14th Street bridge. Through January and Febru-

ary the mural suffered an onslaught of taggings that have resulted in a severe defacing of the mural's

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Did you know...

Non-point source pollution, pollution from an unknown source, is the number one cause of coastal water pollution, and is caused by rainfall moving over and through the ground. As runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and manmade pollutants, depositing them in creeks, rivers, wetlands, coastal

waters, even ground-



Up The Creek

Cont. from page 1,



While the graffiti has been removed and will continue to be removed, on-going maintenance is an expense that must be absorbed by FSLC. Please report any graffiti on the mural or suspicious behavior to the San Leandro Police Department right away by calling 510-577-3201.

We plan to begin our creek monitoring program again this summer with a volunteer training at Chabot Park. If you're interested in helping us collect data on water quality, vegetation, and wildlife, and are available one Saturday a month. Let us know. Please contact watershed awareness coordinator Laurey Hemenway at 577-6069 or laureyh@fslc.



Public Works has been monitoring water quality in San Leandro Creek over the past year. Samples from Chabot Dam to Root Park have revealed high levels of bacterial contaminants from animals and humans. Please pay attention to signs posted by Public Works and do not come in direct contact with the wa-

15th Annual Watershed Festival

Saturday April 26
at Root Park in downtown San Leandro
12pm - 4pm

Recycle! Broken or unwanted CD's and DVDs, jewel cases, floppy disks, audio and video tapes, cell phones, pagers, handheld games, CD players, MP3 players, and toner cartridges at the City of San Leandro booth.

Enjoy! Free family friendly activities and entertainment with East Bay Depot for Creative Re-use and Rock Steady Juggling.

Chat! With local organizations that have information, displays, activities, and live animals. This year's participants include Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District, Hayward Shoreline Interpretive Center, Sulphur Creek Nature Center, Crab Cove Regional Shoreline, REI & Leave No Trace, Stopwaste.org, Alameda County Industries, Kids for the Bay, and much more.

Learn! Simple actions to take to protect the watershed.

Cheer! For participants in the art, writing, and photo contests.

Watershed Quiz

How many square miles is the San Leandro Creek watershed?

Where are the head waters of San Leandro Creek?

48 square miles, Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve in Berkeley

2008 Environmental Forum

This year's Environmental Forum, held on Saturday, February 23rd, was another great morning of information sharing to increase public awareness of local environmental issues.

Panel speakers included Senator Ellen Corbett, Assembly member Mary Hayashi, Alameda County Supervisor Alice Lai-Bitker, and Public Works Service Director Michael Bakaldin.



With nearly 40 in attendance, issues discussed ranged from pharmaceutical and household recycling to non-native plant control to green buildings practices.

Storm Drain Nostalgia cont. from page 1,

rectly dumped their refuse into the creeks and streams that flow into the Bay.

Once we figured out that these pollutants were killing fish and other marine animals and plants, affecting water quality, and quality of life for human inhabitants of the Bay Area (who wants to live near a 1,600 square mile cesspool, anyway), it began to make sense to dispose of pollutants and waste in less harmful ways.

Creating laws to prohibit dumping in the Bay and waterways has greatly increased water quality, but there is still a serious problem with polluted runoff from our city streets.

Runoff is any water that runs off the streets or other surfaces and drains directly into a creek, river, bay or the ocean. This drainage is a natural function of a watershed and it is what keeps surface water moving. It also creates a great highway for pollutants of all kinds.

In urban areas, runoff water carries fertilizers, pesticides, yard waste, pet droppings, fluids from automot-

ive leaks and spills, detergents from car washing, paint and many hazardous household chemicals, along with litter and eroded soil into waterways and out to the Bay, especially after a large storm or spring rain.

We know the effects that past and present pollution has had on the ocean, bays, creeks, and streams. Now, it is the responsibility of all of us to make sure we keep our watersheds clean.

There are so many things we can do to prevent this unnecessary pollution and it all begins with not dumping anything down storm drains. Here are a few more:

- Use compost and natural methods of controlling pests in your yard instead of toxic pesticides and fertilizers.
- Use environmentally-friendly cleaning products in your house that don't contain phosphorus.
- Dispose of used motor oil, anti-freeze, paint, and household chemicals properly.
- Dispose of lawn clippings and leaves in your green waste container. Wash your car at a car wash or on your lawn.
- Pick up at least one piece of trash everyday.



Our Membership

Every member is vital to support the work of FSLC!

Student	\$1.00
Individual	\$5.00
Family	\$15.00
Non-Profit Corp.	\$25.00
Business	\$100.00

By becoming a member of Friends of San Leandro Creek you are actively supporting our ongoing Watershed Education program and events like the Watershed Festival, creek clean-ups, and restoration and monitoring of the creek.

Please renew or become a member by sending your name, address, e-mail address, and dues to our mailing address: P.O. Box 202, San Leandro, CA 94577

Officers

and

Board of Directors:

- T.W. "Rick" Richards, President*
- Dave Owen, Vice President*
- Jan Woycheshin, Secretary*
- Paul Woycheshin, Treasurer*
- Claudia Taurean, Membership Coordinator*

Other Representatives:

- Laurey Hemenway, Watershed Awareness Coordinator/Newsletter Editor*
- Chris Richards, Webmaster*

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The San Leandro Creek Watershed Awareness Program

is a comprehensive watershed education program funded by Alameda County Flood Control and Conservation District, with additional support from the City of San Leandro and implemented by Friends of San Leandro Creek. Thank you to the following for your continued support: Alameda County Industries, Alameda County Public Works, Robert and Lois C. Braddock Charitable Foundation, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and FSLC Members and Volunteers.



**Please recycle
this newsletter!
Thank you.**



Our Meetings

Meetings are held at 7:00pm on the second Tuesday of every other month at the San Leandro Library, 300 Estudillo Avenue. Everyone is welcome to attend! Check out www.fslc.org to confirm meeting dates and find out what topics will be discussed.

2008 Meeting Dates

April 8 (watershed contest judging)

June 10

August 12

October 14

