FRIENDS OF SAN LEANDRO CREEK

The Splash

Spring/Summer 2019

General Meeting:

Wednesday, April 10 6:30 PM

Trustee Room

San Leandro Main Library

Upcoming Events

General Meeting

- **Wednesday** April 10 Stan Dodson will host a screening of his film, *Old Survivor*, a film about ancient redwoods in the Oakland Hills 6:30-8:00 PM San Leandro Main Library

Creek Cleanups/Restorations

- Saturdays April 20 & 27 at Chabot Park 10:00 AM—3:00 PM Go to www.fslc.org for details

This Issue:

Nature Deficit Disorder

By Michael Gregory

Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD) is not a medical condition (yet) listed in the Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. More on what it is below (with an assist from Wikipedia). First, my own introduction to it: I've been blessed living in and around nature my entire life (my brothers and sister as well. A gentle knock frequented on the Gregory kids growing up: "*We were raised by wolves*." I want to believe this was more about our outdoor proclivities, not our folk's parenting style). (Continued in next column)

Until I had to hunker down and earn a living I was an aspiring biologist, undergrad and grad work spanning marine and entomological science (read - lots of field work).

A blaring example of NDD occurred when I took a tour of the Tule Ponds a few years ago, where Dr. Joyce Blueford has created a wetland learning center adjacent to the Fremont BART parking lot. We reached the northern part of the preserve and Joyce stopped to say, "This is where we show the kids how to cross the creek." I felt a bit disoriented looking for something larger than what was in front of me. No whitewater here, just a rivulet of water trickling from a spring. "Really?" I said to Dr. Blueford. "Really" she replied. This was 8 years ago, and it still haunts me.

"We cannot protect something we do not love, we cannot love what we do not know, and we cannot know what we do not see. Or hear. Or sense."
~ Richard Louv

Wikipedia: "Nature (Continued on pg. 2)

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Friends of San Leandro Creek is a 105(c)(3) non-profit organization made up of citizens, students, and businesses dedicated to improving community understanding and awareness of San Leandro Creek and its watershed.

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"Every child needs nature. Not just the ones with parents who appreciate nature. Not only those of a certain economic class or culture or set of abilities. Every child." ~ Richard Louv

Deficit Disorder is the idea that human beings, especially children, are spending less time outdoors, and the belief that this change results in a wide range of behavioral problems. This disorder is not recognized in any of the medical manuals for mental disorders, such as the ICD-10 or the DSM-5. Evidence was compiled and reviewed in 2009. Richard Louv has stated, 'Nature-Deficit Disorder is not meant to be a medical diagnosis but rather to serve as a description of the human costs of alienation from the natural world.' Louv claims that causes for the phenomenon include parental fears, restricted access to natural areas, and the lure of electronic devices. Recent research has drawn a further contrast between the declining number of National Park visits in the United States and increasing consumption of electronic media by children. The idea has been criticized as a misdiagnosis that obscures and mistreats the root problems of how and why children do not spend enough time outdoors and in nature."

Consider this: San Leandro has a Mediterranean climate, is sandwiched between the Bay and hills to the East, plenty of easy access points for hiking, biking et al. It's not as warm as Southern California, but it can't get much easier. What are the impediments to getting outside?

- **Screen addiction**. It starts early now, toddlers getting a screen 'babysitter'; increased time spent on social media is now competing for occasions teens and adults historically spent outside. *Pokémon GO* was a cool attempt to bridge this gap (digital goes outdoors!) Do we need a new version, or yet another tech solution to getting folks outdoors? I'd suggest bird watching introduced to all as a link to dinosaurs to generate some interest.
- **Comfort**. My dad coached sailing and fitness for the Peralta Colleges (Laney and Alameda). For 35+ summers he ran water-based programs for a small private summer camp east of Fresno (@ 7,000' in the High Sierra, close to the Muir Trail). Until the 1970's the area bustled with camping activity; the Saturday night dance attracted Fresnans willing to drive 1½ hours up a treacherous road. My theory as to why it has become vacant now by comparison: swamp coolers were ubiquitous in the San Joaquin Valley, barely taking the edge off the heat. Air conditioning became

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affordable, VCRs and video games (precursors to *screens)* were taking off. "Why risk that drive, I can finally beat the heat at home." This is one of my takes on today's *comfort,* feel free to add your own to the discussion. I have more examples and opinions on this – let's hear yours!

Who and what is going on to counter Nature Deficit Disorder here in the San Leandro Creek watershed?

- Check out East Bay Regional Park District's 'Healthy Parks Healthy People ' initiative at https://www.ebparks.org/activities/hphp/default.htm .
- Friends of San Leandro Creek: http://fslc.org/ . You can reach myself or Susan Levenson here to schedule group or classroom.
- Do your own thing: take yourself out for some air; better yet, take some kids with you!

"Nature is imperfectly perfect, filled with loose parts and possibilities, with mud and dust, nettles and sky, transcendent hands-on moments and skinned knees."
~ Richard Louv

We're on the web: www.fslc.org

*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, implemented by Friends of San Leandro Creek. Thank you to the following for your continued support: Alameda County Public Works, The City of San Leandro, Robert and Lois C. Braddock Charitable Foundation, and FSLC Members and Volunteers like you.*

Friends of San Leandro Creek Membership Application

Yes, I would like to become a member/renew my membership in the following category: (Please circle one)

Student $ 1 **Individual $5** **Family $15**
Non-Profit $25 **Business $100**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

I have a special skill or interest in: _____

Make checks and please remit to:

Friends of San Leandro Creek
C/O RHSD
835 E. 14th St.
San Leandro, CA 94577

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FRIENDS OF SAN LEANDRO CREEK

Only Rain Down The Storm Drain!