



The Splash

General Meeting:

Tuesday, October 20 2015
San Leandro Main Library
300 Estudillo Ave.

Spring/Summer 2015



Upcoming Events

General Meeting

- October 20 6:30 - 8:00 PM
San Leandro Library

Creek Clean-ups/Nonnative Plant Removals

- Saturdays August 29,
October 24
9:30 AM-12:30 PM Root Park



It is found among the oldest fossils (3 billion years) and is among the largest group of bacteria on Earth. HABs (harmful algal blooms), are caused by higher than normal levels of phosphorus and nitrogen, turbid warm water, low oxygen levels & plenty of sunshine. The result is called eutrophication. This specific bloom in Lake Chabot is caused by a unicellular microcystic bacterium that occurs in California, usually in the months between summer and fall. Typically, cyanobacteria algal blooms run their course in 1-3 weeks. Since this one is a *Microcystic* bloom (two-four month lifespan), at Lake Chabot, it has been ongoing since September of 2014.

If animals come in contact with the algae (drink it or lick their fur after swimming in water with algae), it can be fatal. It is the same with most small mammal species, and can cause sickness and death even in larger animals like cattle *and humans*. This bloom is the believed cause of three dog deaths, two in 2014 and the last in January of this year. The final death in late January was a chocolate lab belonging to a local family. The family made sure the deadly algae bloom made the local news. In September EBRPD posted warning

This issue:

Cyanobacterial Bloom

A *Cyanobacterial Bloom* sounds like a lovely, exotic flower. It's not. It's the scientific name for the toxic blue-green algae currently found in Lake Chabot and San Leandro Creek.

Cyanobacteria are naturally occurring algae that grow in fresh water ways.

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Officers and Board of Directors:

*Michael Gregory President; Dave Owen Vice President, Jan Woycheshin Secretary, Paul Woycheshin Treasurer, Claudia Taurean Membership Coordinator, Maureen Forney Member at Large
Susan Levenson, Watershed Awareness Coordinator/Newsletter Editor*

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.



Toxic blue-green algae at Lake Chabot

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signs around the lake (which were updated twice in 2015 after the deaths occurred). EBMUD and EBRPD began testing the lake for toxicity levels. According to Hal Mac Lean (EBRPD's Water Management Supervisor), algal levels in Lake Chabot were higher than their standard equipment could read. Samples were subsequently sent to UC Davis and Florida, and results tested as high as 150,000 parts per billion (ppb). Mac Lean said the wind blows the algae into areas like the boathouse and in certain coves, and currents redistribute the algae throughout the lake. It is highly visible when concentrated, resembling thick, green paint. Blooms with the highest biomass can affect the central nervous system, cause gastrointestinal symptoms – cramps, vomiting diarrhea, nausea; muscle and joint pain, and rash. Ingestion of significant levels can cause liver damage and dysfunction in humans and animals.

On Thursday April 16, 2015 the City of San Leandro was notified by EBRPD that testing below the dam confirmed that blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) was present in San Leandro Creek. It tested significantly lower than Lake Chabot, at less than 20 ppb. San Leandro Recreation Department posted the warning posters provided by EBRPD at Chabot & Root Parks where the creek is easily accessible by the public. Friends of San Leandro Creek made sure an ad was placed in local papers and email notices were sent out to all our contacts and members to avoid creek water. FSLC has not received any notification that any person or animal has become sick by coming into contact with San Leandro Creek water.

Questions as to the cause of this toxic bloom have surfaced. Many people have expressed concerns about chemical/fertilizer use at the two golf courses that adjoin Lake Chabot. Casey Brierley (Integrated Pest Management Specialist with EBRPD) stated that testing for pesticides is a regularly scheduled event at Willow Park (recently renamed Redwood Canyon Golf Course). Redwood Canyon (owned by EBRPD) and Chabot Golf Course are both managed by Touchstone Management Group. In EBRPD's 2014 pest management report, Touchstone "used very little herbicide other than for control of broad leaved turf weeds and an algaecide for the water features". Hal Mac Lean said traces of phosphorus in fertilizers used up to *35 years ago* can be found in soil. It is

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these chemicals (phosphorus and nitrogen) in fertilizers, *not pesticides* that contribute to algal blooms. Interestingly enough, *fertilizer use is not monitored* because it is not legally mandated.

Because Lake Chabot is so large, (200 acres) is it too costly to consider an algae treatment like PAK 27. This was used on a similar algal outbreak in 2014 on the much smaller, 10 acre Lake Temiscal. Pak 27 is an oxidizing agent and considered “green”. It was approved for Temiscal by the State Water Board and California Fish and Wildlife.

So what is an option for Lake Chabot, besides praying for a good freeze? We certainly can't place blame on the golf courses, because *there is no record* of fertilizer use or its drainage into the creek. However, there is a real option for golf courses to *clean up*, by seeking certification to become an Audubon International Certified Golf Course.

As the Audubon name implies, courses that are certified must “responsibly care for the land, water, wildlife and natural resources upon which the course is sustained”. Because Redwood Canyon is being operated only *in the interim* by the Touchstone Management Group (contracted through next year only) the multi-year process of receiving the Audubon certification is not an option, *for now*. It would behoove us all to strive for this coveted certificate whenever it is possible. EBRPD, the surrounding community, Redwood Canyon and its wildlife would benefit. That includes our little creek that runs right through that course. Let us all hope (and send letters and email!) that EBRPD can find a long term management group soon so the course is managed without use of chemical fertilizers with potential to run into San Leandro Creek and Lake Chabot. Maybe, just maybe that will cut down on future toxic algal episodes in Lake Chabot *and* our creek which runs to and from it.

To find out more about Audubon International, click here: <http://www.auduboninternational.org/Resources/Documents/Environmental%20Management%20Guidelines%20for%20Golf.pdf>

Have you checked out our web site?



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, Robert and Lois C. Braddock Charitable Foundation, Fremont Bank and FSLC Members and Volunteers.



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

Make checks and please remit to:

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Friends of San Leandro Creek is a 501(c) (3) not for profit corporation. Your donations are tax deductible

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