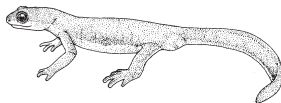


# SPAWNERS

*San Pablo Watershed Neighbors Education and Restoration Society*

Winter 2006

## Celebrate Our Winter Wildlife!



**Wednesday, February 1, 7:00-9:00 P.M.**  
**El Sobrante Library, 4191 Appian Way**

Annabelle Travis, coordinator of the El Sobrante newt rescue, will give a presentation on our local newt and the annual effort to assist these unusual amphibians. And we will discuss the fish and frogs who are active now in our wet winter. We will also review our work plans for this year. Refreshments served. Newcomers are always welcome.

## February gardening tips

Although the days are chilly and wet there are still many garden activities to enjoy, and it can be delightful to spend a little time outdoors in the fresh air. A few sunny days will stimulate your plants into a frenzy of growth in the early spring - the weeds too!

**Plant perennials:** We have a couple more months when the soil will be naturally wet, so get those plants in the ground NOW so they can get their roots established before the dry season.

**Start Wildflower and other annual seeds:** Rake lightly to expose bare soil, scatter your seeds, then barely cover with fine soil or compost. Keep the surface moist by watering if there's a break in the rain. If the area is weedy, start your seeds in pots. Transplant them into the ground after you have controlled the weeds, and the seedlings are big enough to identify.

**Weeds:** They can easily get ahead of you if you don't pay attention! A little pulling or hoeing now can save you a lot of time and work later. Once the weeds are gone, add a thick blanket of mulch to discourage the next batch of seeds that are likely hiding in the ground. Avoid the use of chemicals, which can be very harmful to birds, beneficial insects, and our creeks. We'll discuss weed control more next time.

**Slugs and snails:** Control these common pests with non-toxic techniques. Remove vegetation they hide in, such as ivy. Provide just a few hiding places as traps, such as overturned saucers or boards propped up on one edge. Check the traps every morning. A cocoa hull mulch or vertical copper bands can help protect new seedlings. Use Sluggo or other iron-based baits if needed, as these are less toxic to other creatures.

## Meeting Recap

Our December meeting was a lively holiday party and potluck supper. The library meeting room was well decorated and everyone brought wonderful food. The opportunity for conversation with long time supporters and quite a few new friends was very enjoyable. And our raffle raised some much needed funds! Thanks to all who provided raffle prizes, including original art work, reference materials, a County Watershed Atlas, field tools, garden and household items. Special thanks to Maria's Gourmet Bakery for donating gifts certificates for yummy baked goods.



## Change in our legal status

More than five years ago the Watershed Project, then known as the Aquatic Outreach Institute, began a watershed awareness program in the communities along San Pablo Creek and its tributaries.

This program became SPAWNERS and attracted a number of community volunteers who were interested in caring for local natural resources. SPAWNERS has led community participation in restoration work days, creek clean ups, water quality monitoring, and special events such as watershed tours and Earth Day celebrations. SPAWNERS' most visible effort to date has been the demonstration gardens and restoration project on the banks of San Pablo Creek at the El Sobrante Library.

During the development and growth of SPAWNERS, the Watershed Project provided the management and administrative support roles of fundraising, legal and professional services, office space and support, staff supervision, and program direction and development. Over the past year, SPAWNERS steering committee considered its long term goals and the organizational structure most likely to support them. As a result of this deliberation, the steering committee has asked the Watershed Project to become our fiscal sponsor.

As a fiscally sponsored project, SPAWNERS steering committee and volunteers will be responsible for ongoing programs, new program development, and fundraising. Meetings, work days and other events, and the newsletter will be the responsibility of the coordinator under the direction of

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*Visit our website at [www.spawners.net](http://www.spawners.net).*



the  
watershed  
project

**SPAWNERS**  
1327 South 46th Street  
155 Richmond Field Station  
Richmond, CA 94804

**NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE PAID**  
Richmond, CA  
Permit #226

**Dated Material - Please  
Deliver by January 28.**

Join us for the next **SPAWNERS** meeting on Wednesday, February 1, 7:00 P.M.,  
at El Sobrante Library

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the steering committee.

Our sponsor, the Watershed Project, will provide legal, accounting, and insurance services.

As a fiscally sponsored project of the Watershed Project, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, financial contributions to SPAWNERS will continue to be tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

## West County Symposium

In place of our regular public meeting in April, we will be joining with the CC Watershed Forum and many other creek groups to hold a West County mini symposium. West County has many creeks and more than a dozen creek and watershed groups working for them. This will be a great opportunity to meet members of these local creek groups and learn about their activities and projects. The location has not yet been decided. Mark your calendar and check our website in March, [www.spawners.net](http://www.spawners.net), for the location and more details.

## Social Calendar

### SPAWNERS Meeting

February 1, 7:00-9:00 P.M.

### Restoration Days at the Library

February 11, March 11, April 8 & May 13

### Mini-Symposium

Wednesday April 5

LOCATION TBA

## Review of 2005

2005 was in many ways, a “watershed” year for SPAWNERS. Not only did we meet our work project and public education goals, we also began the transition to a self-managed and self-directed group, at once more responsible for our own fate and with a clearer understanding of our mission and direction. This transition will continue into 2006, increasing the challenge both to our group and to the watershed community upon which we depend. In other words, dear reader, we will need your support more than ever.

Accomplishments:

- 5 public meetings held, with guest speakers
- 12 creek clean-ups, with teams pulling out everything from Styrofoam cups to old water heaters and tires
- 14 work days at the library, cleaning out the ivy and replacing the cleared slopes with native vegetation
- 3 GPS surveys, two along San Pablo Creek, and one along Wilkie Creek, next to De Anza High School
- An “adopt a creek” clean-up and information fair along Clark Creek in October
- A “botany walk” in April, along the creek near the intersection of Bear Creek Road and the Dam Road
- A “ramble” along Sobrante Ridge in June
- Benthic Macro-invertebrate samplings at 3 sites in the watershed to monitor the health of our creeks
- Along with other groups, we hosted a “dumpster day” for El Sobrante residents, at the Boys & Girls Club
- At the “Stroll” in September, we conducted creek tours and expanded our membership
- We conducted a children’s workshop on watershed basics, at the El Sobrante Library
- And most importantly, we completed our “Watershed Plan” which will serve as a guide for our efforts in the future.

In addition to these significant public accomplishments, our “steering committee” has been working behind the scenes to make sure that everything we do happens smoothly, safely, and efficiently. Along with our coordinator, this small group of seven people has and will continue to chart a course to the future, a future that will require more of our volunteers and of the community as a whole.

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## Who to Call for Dumping and Spills in the Creek

- For dumping in progress, call 911.
  - For spills and dumping in El Sobrante creeks, storm drains, and waterways, call (925) 646-2441.
  - For spills and dumping in San Pablo creeks, storm drains, and waterways, call (510) 215-3030.
  - For spills and dumping in Richmond creeks, storm drains, and waterways, call (510) 412-2009.
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