



SPAWNERS

San Pablo Watershed Neighbors Education and Restoration Society

Spring 2007

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY IN EL SOBRANTE

Saturday April 21st from 9 AM to 1 PM
Hosted by the Chamber of Commerce and
SPAWNERS

From 8:30-9:00 Sign up at the Boys and Girls Club
and at the El Sobrante Library

From 9-12 we will have a series of projects to beautify
the city and care for our environment. Among them:

-Removal of invasive ivy from the creek bank behind
the library

-Demonstration of how to build a bird box to care for
the local cavity nesting bird population

-Clean up of Appian Way

-Tree mulching in San Pablo Dam Road

-Kids drawing and photo contest awarding ceremony
and art exhibit.

At noon all the volunteers will be thanked with a great
BBQ and we will end the day with the kids drawing
contest ceremony and exhibit.

**Because you care! Come out and
join the earth day fun**

Plans for the Childrens Reading Garden Moving Forward

As some of our members and readers are aware, the R-9,
Parks and Recreation Committee, has spent the last couple
of years working on creating a children's play area and read-
ing garden out of the unused square of ivy-choked land just
to the west of the El Sobrante Library parking lot. Finally,
if all goes as planned, actual construction of the project will
begin this Spring. More in our next issue.

Creek and Upland Hike

In place of our regular meeting we will have a summer hike in
Kennedy Grove on Wednesday June 6. We will take an easy
walk along San Pablo Creek, observing wildlife and plants.
Then we will hike the spillway trail to see late blooming
chaparral vegetation.

EPHEMERAL CREEKS OF EL SOBRANTE VALLEY

In previous
articles we discussed
the tributary creeks that
flow year round into
San Pablo Creek from
the north side of the El
Sobrante Valley. Now
we will consider the
ephemeral or summer
dry creeks that flow
only during the rainy season and drain



the south side
of the Valley.

In this group there are nine creeks large enough
to be mapped although only five of them are named. Sev-
eral more creeks are not mapped because they are so small
they are quickly enclosed in the storm drain system. All
of the creeks begin in the undeveloped hills below San
Pablo Ridge between the 300 and 600 foot level. The first
named creek is Oak Creek a medium length stream which
begins above Oak Creek Lane, runs parallel to that street,
and enters San Pablo Creek after going under Dam Road.
The next is Lila Creek or Del Valle Creek. This longer
creek begins above the 400 feet level, meanders through
a heavily vegetated area, then into a short culvert under
Dam Road and continues for about 500 feet through a
tree lined gorge before joining the main Creek west of La
Honda Road. Next is Big Oak Creek a short creek join-
ing San Pablo Creek west of Pheasant Lane. Then comes
Clark Creek which drains the area along the Clark-Boas
trail leading to Wildcat Canyon Park. This creek has sev-
eral small tributaries and a spring fed pond in its upper
reaches. Lower down it parallels Clark Road to enter a cul-
vert before joining the main stem. Clark Creek's drainage
area illustrates the power of water in the slide prone hills
of the valley. Rain water flowing over the heavily grazed
area forms rills which become large gullies tearing away
tons of soil. Segments of saturated ground collapse into
the flowing water and each winter the streambed incises a
little more. Over time this little creek is changing the face
of the land it traverses. The last named creek is La Co-

Illustrations by Rachel Diaz-Bastrin

Visit our website at www.spawners.net.



the watershed project
SPAWNERS
 1327 South 46th Street
 155 Richmond Field Station
 Richmond, CA 94804

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Dated Material - Please Deliver by April 10

Join us for **SPAWNERS** Earth Day Celebration, April 21, 9-1 P.M.,
 at the El Sobrante Library and the Boys and Girls Club

lina which also demonstrates these forces. This creek has several ponds and three tributaries arising south west of the Waldorf School. Its rapid flow through the steep upper areas erodes the banks and incises the creek channel. Shortly before reaching Dam Road, the slope decreases and much of the sediment the creek carries is deposited on a small flood plain.

Together these nine creeks convey significant amounts of water to San Pablo Creek. Where does the water come from? Several of the creeks have springs which supply some water. Most of the water comes from the sky as rain. When rain falls on the undeveloped hillsides it lands on vegetation and trickles through to reach dry earth. The ground absorbs rainwater and then filters it through the soil, recharging the water table. During heavy rainfall, water moves overland and also seeps out of the saturated ground along the path of least resistance in low areas between the rolling hills. This gravity driven flow establishes the creek bed and over time can deepen and confine the channel.

Why are these small creeks important? Even though they are active only in the rain season they perform the all the functions of natural creek systems. They filter rainfall and provide uncontaminated water to the creek, partially offsetting pollutants coming from areas with houses and development. They provide critical resources for fish and wildlife and encourage biodiversity. Ninety percent of wildlife in urban areas depends on creeks and their surrounding vegetation for survival. And they are an integral part of the wild lands that were once prevalent in California. Look for these little creeks and enjoy and cherish them.

By Elizabeth O'shea

Kids Corner: Photo/Drawing Contest

We invite children in grades 3 thru 12 to submit a photo or drawing of the San Pablo Creek or one of its tributaries. The general topic of this year's contest is "waterways, wildlife and pollution of San Pablo Creek and its tributaries". Contest entries will be judged on artistic merit and ability to inspire awareness about our local creeks, its inhabitants and the impact humans have on the natural life of the creek. Prizes and awards will be given for best picture and best drawing in two categories: Grade 3-7 and Grade 8-12. Awards will be presented during the Earth Day celebration on April 21st at the Boy's and Girl's Club in El Sobrante, where the artwork will be displayed. Please complete the entry form available on our web page www.spawners.net. Drawing or pictures must be **received by April 17th, 2007** at: The Watershed Project, attn: Juliana Gonzalez, SPAWNERS, 1327 South 46th street, 155, Richmond Field Station, Richmond CA 94804. For further info. call: (510) 665-3538

Calendar of Events

Biomonitoring Training

April 14

Library Work Days

April 14, May 12, June 9

Drawing/photo contest dateline

April 17

Earth Day

April 21

Creek Clean Up at Kennedy Plaza

June 2 - City of San Pablo

SPAWNERS meeting

June 6 - Nature Walk

