



Summer 2017

# SPAWNERS

*San Pablo Watershed Neighbors Education and Restoration Society*

## Expanding SPAWNERS Creek Monitoring Program

by Helen Fitandes

This summer concludes another year monitoring water quality in San Pablo Creek. Our monitoring intern Kelsey Trippany paid monthly visits to four sites on San Pablo Creek and its Appian, Wilkie, and Castro Creek tributaries, measuring water temperature, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, pH, nitrates and phosphates. For detailed information about these parameters, please visit the water quality monitoring page on our website, [www.spawners.org](http://www.spawners.org).

As we have seen in years past, we are still recording high levels of nutrients in the creek, which may be linked to fertilizers, pet waste, and waste from sewer leaks. We also see spikes in turbidity (how cloudy the water is) during and shortly after rainfall. This is a common phenomenon in urban creeks, when water runs off impervious surfaces like roads and hits the creek very quickly, bringing pollutants with it and causing erosion of the soil. However, we're happy to note that temperature and dissolved oxygen have remained in a healthy range this past year.

In the coming year, we are thrilled to be working with our fiscal sponsor The Watershed Project to expand our successful creek monitoring program! We are including five new sites in the upper San Pablo Creek Watershed, as well as adding four new creeks: Wildcat, Grayson, Walnut, and Marsh Creeks.

The Watershed Project has been working with the Contra Costa Watershed Forum for the past year and a half, bringing together creek groups to share datasets and best practices, with the goal of establishing a standardized water quality monitoring system. We will use SPAWNERS model of monthly monitoring with a trained intern, combined with protocols from the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program's Clean Water Team. This program will cultivate more highly-trained citizen scientists in Contra Costa County, as well as generate reliable data on creek water quality throughout the county.

If you are interested in learning more or tagging along with an intern in the field, please contact Helen at [helen@thewatershedproject.org](mailto:helen@thewatershedproject.org).



Water quality monitoring interns Kelsey Trippany and Tessa Diem calibrate their YSI meters in Alvarado Park.

## Ribbon cutting ceremony

SPAWNERS formed in 2000, when community members came together on Earth Day to pick up trash from the creek and surrounding area behind the El Sobrante Library. We have worked there ever since, restoring native habitat by removing invasive plants, replacing them with natives, picking up trash, and building a demonstration garden complete with interpretive signs.

This September, after extensive construction funded by the East Bay Regional Parks District's Measure WW, the library will debut a new plaza area and porous paving in the parking lot. Join us for the ribbon cutting ceremony at noon on **Saturday September 9**, to be followed by a community work party where we will prepare a section of our former demonstration garden (cleared during construction) for replanting, as well as clean up the creek. Please see calendar at right for more information, and hope to see you there!



Young volunteers next to their weed pile at Earth Day 2015.

### Helpful numbers

Broken hydrant or street flooding: 1-866-40-EBMUD

Debris dumped in the creek: 1-800-No-Dumping

## Calendar of Events

### *Ribbon Cutting Ceremony*

*Saturday, Sep. 9 from noon-2pm*

*El Sobrante Library*

*4191 Appian Way, El Sobrante*

Join us to celebrate the opening of the El Sobrante Library's new plaza! Come for the ribbon cutting ceremony, and stay for a community work party on Library grounds. We look forward to sharing this new space with you!

### *El Sobrante Stroll*

*Sunday, Sep. 17 from 11am-4pm*

*San Pablo Dam Road between Appian and El Portal,*

*El Sobrante*

Come learn about our creeks and the bugs that live in them! Find our table at the El Sobrante Stroll for the low-down on what the bugs at the bottom of the creek have to say about water quality. We'll also show you some ways you can help the health of the creek.

### *Exhibit at El Sobrante Library*

*October 2017*

*El Sobrante Library*

*4191 Appian Way, El Sobrante*

Stop by the El Sobrante Library anytime during the month of October and see our exhibit on the San Pablo Creek Watershed! Learn about our work in the watershed, ways you can help protect the creek, and get involved in our upcoming work parties and watershed talks.

Visit us at [www.spawners.org](http://www.spawners.org) for our full schedule of upcoming activities.

# Photos from the Watershed: Summer 2017



Gudrun Kleist



A bumblebee visits the poppies at SPAWNERS Wilkie Creek restoration site.



Gudrun Kleist

Mallard ducks play in San Pablo Creek.



Gudrun Kleist



A red dragonfly spotted in Gudrun's yard.

Nature Walk participants cast shadows on newly opened Dotson Marsh.



Helen Fitanides