



Friends of Sausal Creek

PROMOTING WATERSHED AWARENESS

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Improvement in Dimond Canyon February 6, 2017

In the spring on 2016 Friends of Sausal Creek (FOSC) was awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission (ACFGC). This funding is supporting a project to enhance bird and fish habitat and discourage public access to sensitive trout spawning riffles and rearing pools in Dimond Canyon, a deep canyon that extends for over a mile within a densely populated residential area in Oakland.

Over the course of the summer and fall of 2016, FOSC staff led community volunteers on watershed-local seed collection hikes and plant propagation workdays to grow 343 native plants for creekside and erosion control projects in Dimond Canyon Park.

In November and December of 2016 the FOSC trail stewardship crew (initiated through ACFGC 2015 funding) installed three rolls of erosion control fabric along the slopes of the Bridgeview Trail switchbacks in the canyon to reduce sedimentation in the creek. Native planting along the switchbacks began in December 2016 and January 2017, and planting will continue in February 2017 through a field trip with ARISE High School students.

In December 2016, volunteers planted 26 trees (maples, alders, elderberries, and willows) along the creek to enhance bird and fish habitat in the canyon. Volunteers also installed over 320 native, locally-collected willow and dogwood stakes along the creek banks in December 2016 and January 2017 to enhance bird habitat, shade the creek to enhance fish habitat (older trees are starting to die and fall), and create a barrier to discourage public and dog access through critical trout habitat areas.

To complete these habitat enhancement projects FOSC has partnered with buildOn, ARISE High School, Piedmont Community Service Crew, Skyline Key Club, Albany Key Club, Oakland High School Key Club, Skyline Leadership Club, Hayward Interact Key Club, local Boy Scouts, and Student Conservation Association. We project that over 200 volunteers will benefit from environmental education through field trips and habitat stewardship workdays through this year's funding.

During fall 2016 FOSC staff also regularly filled trail map boxes with the dog owner educational flyer sponsored by the commission in 2015 and *Birds of the Sausal Creek Watershed: A Checklist* (updated February 2016) to educate the community about how dog waste can be harmful to the creek and what birds live in Dimond Canyon.

This funding also supports FOSC's paid intern, Rebecca Armstrong, who in fall 2016 installed three new doggie bag dispensers in heavy-trafficked trails in the Sausal Creek Watershed to encourage the removal of dog waste that can leach into the creek. Since installation, Rebecca has been regularly refilling the dispensers with bags.

Rebecca also mapped the cape ivy (toxic to rainbow trout) invasion in Dimond Canyon on FOSC's Calflora public account to guide future management, prioritize removal, and monitor spread of this highly invasive, nonnative species. This initial mapping was done and will continue to be updated through the purchase of a Nexus 7 tablet and Garmin GLO portable GPS receiver supported by this year's funding.

Due to a reduction in our proposed budget, we were unable to map bare soil or begin to remove cape ivy in the canyon. We also reduced the number of trees grown and stakes installed along the creek. We hope to continue this work in the future.

Thank you!



Picture 1: Students from the Piedmont Community Service Crew installing erosion control fabric along the Bridgeview Trail switchbacks in Dimond Canyon



Picture 2: FOSC trail crew takes a break from installing erosion control fabric along the slopes in November 2016



Picture 3: Students from buildOn pose after installing native dogwood and willow stakes along the creek in January 2017.