



PROTECTING THE RARE, ENDANGERED AND UNUSUAL PLANTS OF SAUSAL CREEK WATERSHED

December 15, 2021

In the spring of 2021, Friends of Sausal Creek (FOSC) was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission. Part of this funding supported our organization's ongoing work to ensure the survival of the endangered pallid manzanita (*Arctostaphylos pallida*) within the Sausal Creek watershed. Additionally, with this grant, FOSC expanded a project to relocate, update inventories, and protect other precious, rare and locally uncommon plant populations in the Sausal Creek Watershed. In addition to a more thorough knowledge of sensitive plant populations, this inventory and monitoring project will make us better stewards of the watershed through more focused conservation and restoration efforts.

This grant has allowed FOSC to continue and expand its work to support rare and locally uncommon plant species and engage community members in the following ways:



A volunteer helps monitor what are now quite tall pallid seedlings

- Volunteers assisted in two pallid seedling monitoring workdays at the Chabot Space and Science Center (CSSC) and Big Trees pallid manzanita colonies. This monitoring continues to ensure quality collections of pallid manzanita data. The monitoring events included some education and training for first time volunteers. Utilizing this data, FOSC is working on a report of the Chabot pallid population's seedling progress.
- FOSC led three invasive plant removal workdays in addition to the monitoring workdays. Volunteers as well as staff members worked to remove encroaching invasive plants from around pallid manzanita seedlings.
- Through ongoing efforts of FOSC volunteers and staff, we have pushed back invasive vegetation and created buffer zones around the pallids. The CSSC population of over 100 seedlings continues to thrive, and almost 20% of the population now produces fruit. This is an amazing accomplishment as there were only three mature pallids onsite in 2015.
- With Eagle Scout assistance, temporary fencing around the Chabot pallid population is scheduled to be replaced by protective wooden split rail fencing early in 2022.

- FOSC has begun consolidating 20 years' worth of rare plant data, and has created an internal database in addition to contributing to Calflora's public database. This step has been vital for monitoring these rare and unusual plant populations.
- In addition to staff surveys, FOSC has run three hikes in which staff and volunteers collected rare and unusual plant data. At least one volunteer hike is scheduled per month in the winter and spring of 2022 to continue to identify new and monitor known populations. Data collected on these hikes is also added to Calflora's online database.
- During rare plant hikes, FOSC has recorded location and population information for 27 different species considered rare and locally uncommon in the watershed. Four of these species are listed in California as rare or threatened, and 12 are listed as species of concern in this area by the California Native Plant Society, East Bay Chapter.



While searching the vegetation understory for previously recorded plant species, an unknown patch of meadow rue was discovered



With only one known occurrence in the watershed, it's a treat to see this Hosackia in bloom

FOSC's continued efforts have been made possible through the generous funding of the Alameda County Fish and Game Commission. We are grateful for the support of this important restoration and public education work as we strive to protect our watershed's rare and unusual plant populations.