

Watershed in Bloom

Photos by Katie Bergman, P.E.
Civil Engineer, USDA-NRCS



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We welcome your feedback and submissions for the next edition of Watershed Lookout. [Contact us](#) to submit your ideas.

Watershed Lookout

A great shift has occurred in how we work in the watershed over the past few months as we ride the wave of the shelter in place. It has showcased creative thinking, flexibility and strong leadership. Thank you to everyone who has continued to support the care of the Alameda Creek Watershed in many different ways. It has become an even more important space for our communities as life has become local. Biking, jogging, walking and mental breaks are all taking place in the watershed. The State of the Watershed event scheduled for March is currently being reconfigured for the Fall. We hope you will all join us to hear the great speakers we had scheduled.

Helping From Home

Climate Action Plans at the city and county levels are currently being updated. Climate Action Plans provide road maps to reducing harmful emissions on the local level. As stewards of the Alameda Creek watershed, you can actively participate in this by filling out the survey for your community. Many cities conducted surveys in 2019. Here are a few that are still open for submission.

Please visit:

[Freemont's Survey](#)

[Livermore's Survey](#)

[Pleasanton's Survey](#)



Please check your cities website to see the status of it's Climate Action Plan 2.0 update.

Fire Mitigation At Home

As we move from Spring into Summer and experience some late season rain, it gives the feeling of a non-drought year. As of May 2020, the area still remains below critical levels. The need to continue practicing water conservation is as important as ever. These drought conditions also lend themselves to a summer fire season, which is all too common. According to Governor Newsome's Instagram, from January to May 10, 2019 there were 675 wildfires. From January to May 10, 2020 we have already had 1,130 wildfires. That's a 60% increase!

As a homeowner or renter, there are many ways to create a first safe home. Please visit the [CAL FIRE safety checklist](#) for both the inside and outside of your home. Not only do these fire safety measures help your home, they also help keep our fire fighters safe!

HIGHLIGHTS



Fieldwork These Days

Written by: Katie Bergmann, P.E. Civil Engineer, USDA-NRCS

Through the NRCS EQIP Wildlife-Friendly Pond Initiative, the Alameda and Contra Costa field offices work resumed with ranchers to reconstruct and enhance older or deteriorated ponds after a temporary pause due to the COVID-19 Shelter in Place. The projects improve habitat for listed species such as California Red-Legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) and California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) and provide important livestock water infrastructure. To navigate technical and regulatory complexities, we pull expertise from several NRCS disciplines and rely heavily on our relationships and partners, such as a streamlined regulatory permit processes we have developed with the two county Resource Conservation Districts.

Given the usual hurdles and timelines, we had no time to lose this spring planning projects we hope to construct in the fall of 2021, even in the face of new hurdles raised by the pandemic. As an engineer, I am responsible for understanding the current conditions and redesigning the structure to meet NRCS standards. I take to the field to survey topography, collect design data, and strategize feasible solutions. I often invite NRCS soil scientists or NRCS state geologist Julia Grim for their expert input. Julia recently joined me, rancher Russ Fields, and representatives for landowner SFPUC at several ponds in Sunol, CA.

The ranchers, with close observational experience of the ponds and often knowledgeable contractors themselves, are critical partners at every stage. These days they are “crazy busy” (as one told me); they must continue business as usual but with additional concerns such as finding supplies and changing industry conditions. Still, rancher Russ Fields, pictured here in 2016, made time to join us in the field.



HIGHLIGHTS *(continued from p. 2)*

Fieldwork These Days

SFPUC, thinking carefully about protecting their staff and visitors, reduced attendees by half and incorporated their own safety protocols. We removed topics that could be covered in a call and split the field group into two, one to investigate slope failures and the other construction access routes near sensitive plant populations.

Fieldwork is done carefully in the age of COVID-19. My co-workers and I coordinate vehicle use online to stretch time between drivers. Our former lunchroom is now the staging area for spray bottles of disinfectant, gloves, and hand sanitizer. We try to follow a precautionary mindset by assuming I carry the virus (likewise those around me) and am extra careful in the office. I find disinfecting to be nerve-wracking; in a vehicle you touch almost everything! Sanitizing gear and vehicles and ensuring I am prepared with the mandatory personal protective equipment is a new step I make time for when doing field work.



To survey a remote site, I may have previously arranged a UTV ride. This month I repurposed backpacking gear to carry my equipment solo. I've carried the 50-pound pack about 7 miles to survey 3 sites, with more to come.

Finally, true to the times, my work life is closely intertwined with my family life now and I cannot tell the story of a single non-teleworking day without mentioning that my family is part of the 'team effort'. We cannot impose the risk on my in-laws for childcare, so my husband takes off work (like the ranchers, he is otherwise busy trying to keep his commercial fishing boat operating as normally as possible). My son tries to adjust his routine to another 'new teacher' and has even accompanied me to public park sites to help with measurements.

With a little flexibility and extra care and caution, we can still get out there and serve, and get conservation on the ground safely. Thank you to all the Alameda Creek watershed partners for your hard work!

~WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU~

Send us a **PHOTO** of you in the Alameda Creek watershed along with a **short write up** about **how** you interact with the watershed and **why** the health of the watershed is **important** to you.

How are you conducting conservation work differently during the Shelter in Place order?

We would love to hear from you and see your work!
Please email responses to:
allison.rodacker@acrcd.org

Spotlight

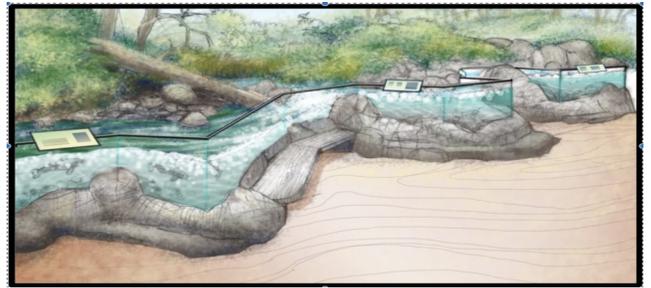
The long-anticipated Alameda Creek Watershed Center in Sunol broke ground on May 18th. The project is expected to take 18 months to complete according to Carla Schultheis, from SFPUC's Natural Resources and Lands Management Division.

Located next to the Sunol Water Temple in the East Bay at the historic confluence of two creeks, the Alameda Creek Watershed Center will explore the interaction of people and nature and the significance of water in sustaining both. The location of the center is the ancestral home of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area. The SFPUC and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe began a multi-year partnership on the pre-excavation, study, and careful preservation of archaeological finds from their ancestral heritage site at the Watershed Center area. The lessons of what has been discovered there, and replicas of some of the more than 13,000 artifacts that have been found will be reflected in the Watershed Center exhibits and education programs.

The design of the center is focused on complimenting the existing structures and habitat with added features for people to gather and learn about the importance of the

watershed. One such structure is the Sunol Water Temple which marks the convergence of multiple water sources that at one time provided San Francisco half of its water supply. Over a hundred years later it still is a part of the larger SFPUC water system. According to the sfwater.org website, the goal is to celebrate the site's legacy stories and to help visitors understand the significance of the watershed and the Sunol Water Temple in relation to the much larger SFPUC water system.

A few of the exciting Alameda Creek Watershed Center features include a virtual reality trip through the lifecycle of a steelhead trout, the watershed discovery trail, the watershed wall with flip books of educational materials and the stream profile aquarium.



Along with the educational features, the state-of-the-art LEED Gold Net- Zero building design will house a meeting room for public use and will offer school aged educational programs. There will be opportunities to volunteer at the center when it opens to the public. This is an exciting hands-on educational center set to open sometime in 2022.

SEE YOU THERE!

acwForum

CONTACT US

Chair:

Elke Rank, Zone 7 Water Agency
erank@zone7water.com

Coordinator:

Ian Howell, ACRCO
ian.howell@acrcd.org

Vice Chair:

Ralph Johnson, consultant

Website & Newsletter:

Allison Rodacker, ACRCO
allison.rodacker@acrcd.org

acwForum Signatory Members:

- Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (ACFC&WCD)
- Alameda County Water District
- Alameda County Resource Conservation District (ACRCO)
- East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)
- Friends of the Arroyos
- Livermore Area Recreation and Park District
- City of Livermore
- City of Fremont
- San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Zone 7 Water Agency

ABOUT US

The Alameda Creek Watershed Forum (a.k.a., acwForum) is a voluntary, non-regulatory stakeholder group that supports the community's interest in protecting and achieving a healthy and sustainable Alameda Creek watershed.

acwForum stakeholders include signatory members—agencies and organizations with stewardship interests and purview in the Alameda Creek watershed that have signed the Letter of Understanding—and other interested local agencies, watershed organizations, landowners, land managers, and residents.

The purpose of the acwForum is to facilitate communication among watershed stakeholders and demonstrate their commitment to understanding, protecting, and restoring

www.acwForum.org

Funded by ACFC&WCD with support from Zone 7 Water Agency