

Dear acwForum stakeholders, partners and friends,

Fall is upon us. What are you/your organizations doing to prepare for the rainy season? Please email allison.rodacker@acrwd.org and share with us project updates and photographs!

As you know, September was Coastal Cleanup Month and even in the face of the pandemic, wildfires and smoke, volunteers still showed up to clean up their local areas, keeping trash out of the watershed prior to the rainy season. Below you will find an article from a Las Positas student who participated in one such clean-up effort with her Intro to Horticulture class. Thank you, student Anne and instructor—and longtime acwForum stakeholder—Cindy L.M. Angers!

Creek Clean up at Arroyo Mocho by Las Positas College's Intro to Horticulture students

Written by student Anne, photos by student Alice and Cindy Angers

What do a stuffed pink pig and a boomerang have to do with a creek cleanup, one might ask?

On Saturday, September 19, 2020, the students of Professor Cindy Angers' horticulture class at Las Positas College discovered the answer to this riddle! These were two of the unusual items found when the group participated in a "creek clean-up" along the Arroyo Mocho in Livermore, California.



Those two items were found along with a several other unusual objects, which included a very large bone (species unknown!), an unused roll of toilet paper, and a broken American flag.

The class cleaned up a total of 5-1/2 bags of trash plus two long lengths of plastic pipe, preventing all of this trash from impacting

downstream areas when the rain comes.

The Arroyo Mocho is a 34.7-mile-long stream which originates in the far northeastern corner of Santa Clara County and flows northwesterly into eastern Alameda County.



It flows through Livermore, into Pleasanton, and then joins Arroyo de la Laguna, which in turn flows into Alameda Creek and thence to San Francisco Bay.

There have been attempts to use the Arroyo for different projects, such as raising trout, but the severe droughts in 2014 and onward have rendered these projects unattainable. The dryness of the area prompted student Othman to state that the trash could not have washed down from rain, but was just dumped or left there. Some trash seemed to be carelessly thrown there by people. The stretch of Arroyo Mocho where the cleanup took place, Robertson Park, is well known to house the Livermore Rodeo Grounds and also contains popular hiking trails. These trails have been heavily used in 2020 as residents opted for the open outdoors due to the “shelter in place” rules this year.

Professor Angers and fellow Adopt A Creek Spot Advisory Board member, Kerry, had set up a shade canopy with buckets, grabbers, gloves, and other appropriate supplies as students geared up for the walk up and down the creek. For three hours, the intrepid group picked up every sort of trash one might think of.

Besides the “pig”, and other unusual items, there was an empty bag of dog food, a boomerang, two soft balls, a fishing lure, and other detritus such as plastic water bottles and bags.

Student Alice remarked that because the creek was completely dry, the creek structure that would usually be underwater was exposed. Along the creek edges were big clumps of reeds and trees - that’s where she found a lot of the trash, caught in those reed clumps.

Alice also noted a couple of unusual plants which would be interesting to the budding horticultural students. One was a Sacred Datura, which is a plant native to the Southwest USA with beautiful white flowers but is quite poisonous. It is used in some Native American rites and ceremonies.



The other was a California Black Walnut which is edible, but the shells are very hard and contain a powerful dye.

The clean up ended with a vote on the most unusual item contest: the pig and the large bone both won a prize. The prizes were a coffee table book about a private garden featuring California native plants (donated by a Las Positas College Botany professor), and a soil moisture gauge in the shape of a frog (donated by the City of Livermore).

The very successful day gave the students a chance to get to know their classmates off of the present “Zoom” model, outside, and with all the appropriate personal protective equipment. They learned about watersheds and riparian plants, and also got a good lesson in how human behavior affects the environment.

We are excited to announce the first State of the Alameda Creek Watershed Web Series event. These virtual events are taking the place of the cancelled State of the Watershed Conference that had previously been scheduled for March 2020. We encourage you to enjoy your lunch and learn about some of the projects happening in the Alameda Creek Watershed.



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