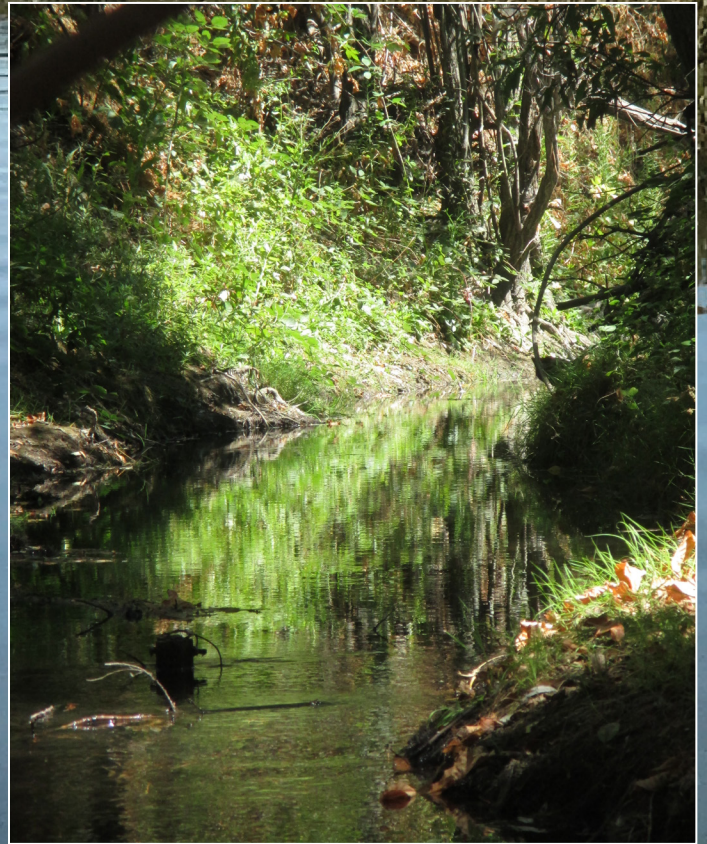


# A Lot Can Happen in 20 Years



FRIENDS OF PINOLE CREEK WATERSHED

*A group of volunteers at the Pinole Library Garden in 2009. The garden features California native plantings, and is one of many projects attributed to the Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed.*



## Highlights from the First 20 Years of the Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed

## 2001 – Dr. Joe Mariotti and Carol Arnold co-found the Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed

- FOPCW's first group meeting is held to begin developing a vision plan and to set goals. Board members are elected.
- FOPCW begins holding monthly meetings with speakers.
- FOPCW members participate in the Pinole Creek Watershed Vision Planning process which lasts two years.
- FOPCW proposes to create a native plant garden at the Pinole Library and obtains funding through the Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) program.
- The Aquatic Outreach Institute obtains state funding for watershed coordination and selects FOPCW to receive coordinator support.
- FOPCW members participate in the County's monitoring of aquatic macroinvertebrates (bioassessments).
- FOPCW's first Earth Day Creek Cleanup—it rains, but we picked up lots of trash!



*Left to right, Melissa Lawton, Dr. Joe Mariotti and Carol Arnold during a very wet Earth Day creek clean-up.*

# 2002 – FOPCW member designs our logo and begins producing our newsletters



## Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed

**Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed**  
A Publication of Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed Winter 2016-2017

**Pinole Fish Passage Improvement Project Ribbon Cutting Ceremony**

**Did you know?**  
In 1995, the Army Corps of Engineers amended the creek channel between Interstate 80 and San Pablo Bay for flood control.

**Pinole Fish Passage Improvement Project**  
On October 24, 2016, the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (RCD) held a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the completion of the Pinole Fish Passage Improvement Project. This type of project requires good partners, and the Resource Conservation District worked with the property owners, the California Department of Transportation, and the Contra Costa County Flood Control District, as well as Federal, State and Local funding sources to make this project possible. The Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed also contributed to that project providing letters of support for grants and organizing community meetings for the RCD. This project is an environmental milestone that will allow steelhead populations of Pinole Creek to access pristine spawning grounds that they have been restricted from for decades.

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**Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed**  
A Publication of Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed Spring 2014

**Wood Ducks in Pinole**

**Did you know?**  
The Wood Duck is one of the most stunningly iridescent ducks and, given, with ornate patchy elegant females has a distinctive profile and eye. These birds live in wooded swamps, where boxes put up around lakes or water ways. They are equipped with strong claws that can grip bark.

**Did you know?**  
In December of 2012, a group of volunteers from the FOPCW, together with others from the California Waterfowl Association, and East Bay MUD, placed Wood Duck nesting boxes in oak trees along upper Pinole Creek on EBMUD watershed land as an invitation to the charismatic and beautiful birds.

**Did you know?**  
In February 2014, only to find one completely full of bee comb and others full of squirrel nests. From the one, we removed the comb (the bees were gone) and placed new shavings inside to try again. And the boxes with squirrel nests! Well, apparently squirrels find the boxes a temptation too fine to resist and who can blame them.

**Backyard Habitats Contribute to Healthy Watersheds**

**Did you know?**  
As a gardener for wildlife, you can take steps to make your yard a home for wildlife. Now is a good time to step back and consider how your yard fits into the bigger picture: your watershed!

**Human impact on watersheds**  
Human impact on watersheds, local watersheds, and water bodies has become the stuff of headlines—polluted beaches, contaminated drinking water, poisoned lakes, declining fish runs, and more. What don't make the headlines are the things we can do in our own backyards and communities to not only benefit the people and wildlife in our neighborhoods, but also the people and wildlife downstream.

**Find out what watershed you live in.** Wherever you live, you live in a watershed. A watershed is a drainage area defined by the hillsides and ridges where rainfall and groundwater collect in a common body of water, like a river or a lake. Everything you do in your backyard affects the water quality of your watershed, and the wildlife that depend on it.

**Plant and maintain your habitat for the benefit of the wildlife you won't see, as well as for the wildlife you will.** Not everyone can live on the banks of a stream, river, or lake—but we all influence the health of aquatic creatures in those habitats by the way we manage and care for our yards. The following is a list of ways you can work to protect your watershed. Share them with your neighbors. Together, your actions are cumulative, and can make a difference in the health of your watershed:

- Landscape with plants native to your region; they don't require the pesticide and fertilizer applications that are common watershed pollutants.
- Reduce the size of your lawn or replace it altogether with a water-wise "ecolawn" or a meadow of native wildflowers and grasses. This will not only attract birds and beneficial insects, but requires no pesticides and infrequent mowing.
- Soak diversity. By choosing a variety of plants with different root depths and structure, you can improve the stability of your soil and the drainage of rainwater into the ground.
- Limit the amount of storm water and run-off leaving your property with densely planted buffer areas along your property's perimeter; or create a storm water marsh.
- Utilize new and existing wetlands and land features as habitat and storm water run-off filtration.
- If you live near a stream, protect or restore the riparian zone. Plant trees or other vegetation to shade the water, provide food and habitat for aquatic wildlife, and act as a buffer against erosion and run-off.
- Water efficiently. Use soaker hoses or drip irrigation early in the morning or at night to avoid water loss through evaporation. Stunure your plants according to their watering needs.
- Recycle yard debris in your own yard or participate in your community's recycling program.

Excerpted from Saving Watersheds: Backyard Habitats Contribute to Healthy Watersheds, Habitats, 1996, National Wildlife Federation.

Each FOPCW newsletter covers topics of interest to the community such as improvements to Pinole Creek, wildlife, and restoration projects like the Pavon Creeks area in the upper watershed.

## 2003 – Activities that include kids, native plant gardening, assessments and tours

- FOPCW launches the Pinole Library re-vegetation project led by Board Member Tim McDonough.
- FOPCW Board Member Carol Thompson organizes the first Kids Creek Fest.
- FOPCW participates in a Pinole Creek Watershed Tour.
- FOPCW members continue to participate in bioassessments as well as a GPS survey of the creek for the County's GPS Watershed Atlas.



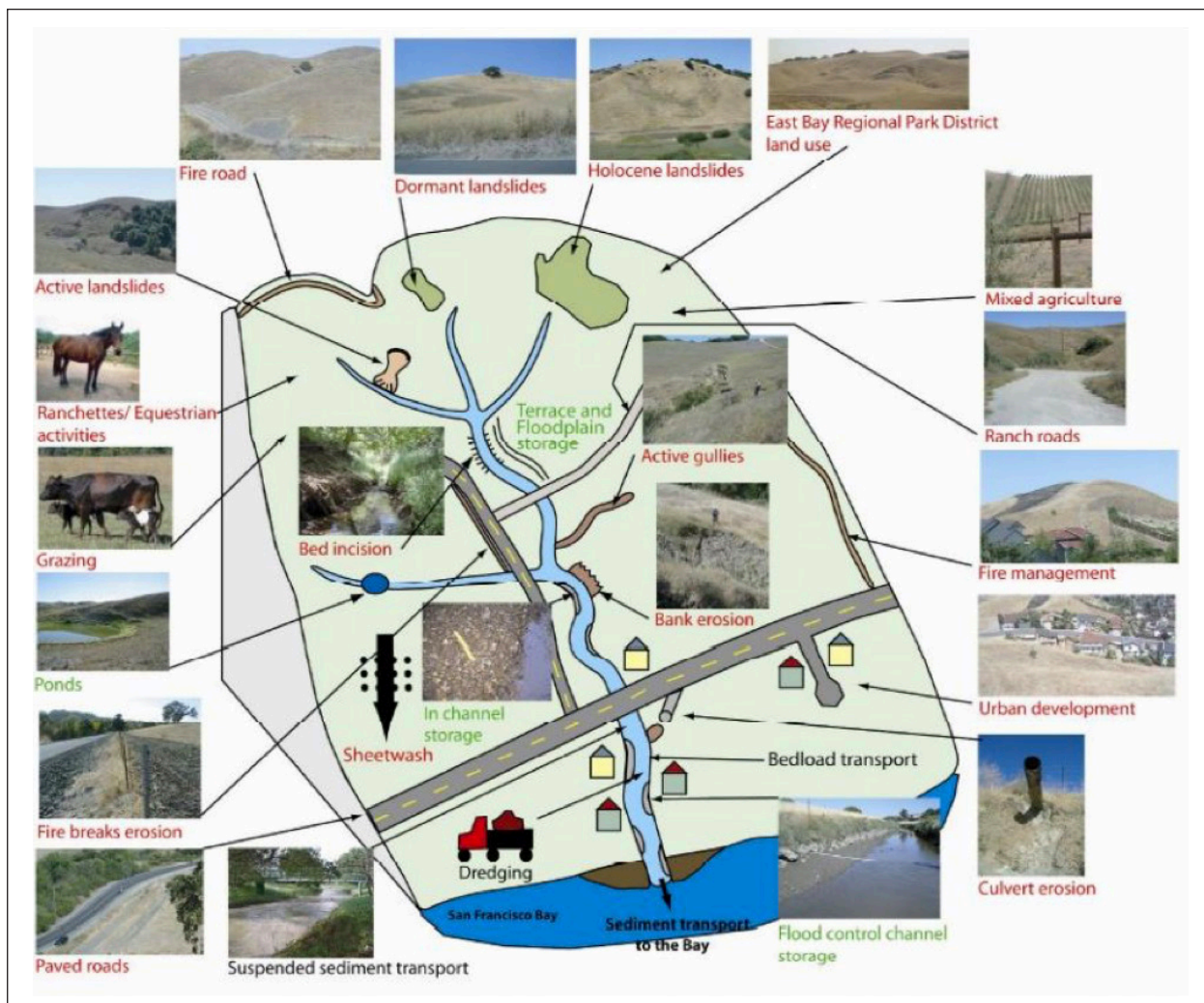
*FOPCW volunteers and members help with bioassessments in the Pinole Creek.*



*“Kids Creek Fest,” launched by Board member Carol Thompson, is developed to encourage youngsters to participate in activities around the creek, learn about the environment, and become early stewards of Pinole Creek.*

## 2004 – The Pinole Vision Plan becomes a reality

- The Pinole Creek Watershed Vision Plan is published. It includes assessments and a list of opportunities for restoration.
- Watershed signs are installed in the Pinole Creek Watershed.
- FOPCW works with several agencies on the Pinole Creek Sediment Source Assessment, which provides the scientific basis for the need of the Pavon Creeks Restoration. The agencies include the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI), the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (CCRCD) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



*Conceptual model of sediment processes occurring in Pinole Creek (developed by SFEI) as part of the Sediment Source Assessment.*

## 2005/2007 – FOPCW continues to thrive in the community

### 2005

- FOPCW launches a new program to expand stewardship activities to the upper Pinole Creek Watershed.
- FOPCW works with the City of Hercules to obtain a state grant for Chelsea Wetlands restoration and the group participates in the restoration planning process.

### 2006-2007

- FOPCW continues to organize regular cleanups, native plant garden workdays, public meetings, and student activities.



*A volunteer helps FOPCW clean up debris left along Alhambra Valley Road in the upper watershed.*

## 2008 – FOPCW-supported activities take shape

- Pinole Creek Steelhead Habitat Assessments are completed. The CCRCD sponsored these studies which provided scientific data and are a key step in gaining support and funding for the subsequent Fish Passage at the I-80 culvert. FOPCW Board member and fisheries biologist, Bert Mulchaey, assists the CCRCD in managing these surveys.



*FOPCW leads a Bay paddle for kayakers and canoeists from the mouth of the Pinole Creek to Rodeo on the San Pablo Bay.*



## 2009 – The Pinole Creek Demonstration Project is completed

- FOPCW works with the City of Pinole's graphic design consultant to develop interpretive panels for the Demonstration Project.
- The Pinole Creek Demonstration project is awarded the Outstanding Creek Restoration Project in Contra Costa County since 2008 by the Contra Costa Watershed Forum.
- The Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed helps map invasive pepperweed along the shoreline just west of the mouth of Pinole Creek, with the help of a CalFed grant.



*Interpretive signage appears along the Pinole Creek trail, as well as benches, lighting, and a new pedestrian bridge, all part of the Pinole Creek Restoration Project.*

## 2010/2011 – Working with partner agencies helps to improve the upper watershed

- Partner agency EBMUD restores Pavon Creeks in the upper watershed.
- Progress is made on many projects with the help of the Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed.

*A group of volunteers, led by Board member Bert Mulchaey from EBMUD, views the completed restoration project at Pavon Creeks in the upper watershed.*



## 2012 – FOPCW makes contributions to award-winning watershed project

- The Pinole Creek Demonstration Project is awarded Outstanding Creek Restoration Project in the County by the Contra Costa Watershed Symposium. FOPCW is honored as one of many partners on this project.
- FOPCW places wood duck boxes in the upper watershed.
- FOPCW assists with post-project monitoring on the Demonstration Project along Pinole Creek. This 5-year post monitoring was a requirement of the state grant, and the City of Pinole requested the FOPCW's involvement. Group members are trained by the Restoration Design Group.
- A king tide of 7.1 feet is recorded at the mouth of the Pinole Creek.



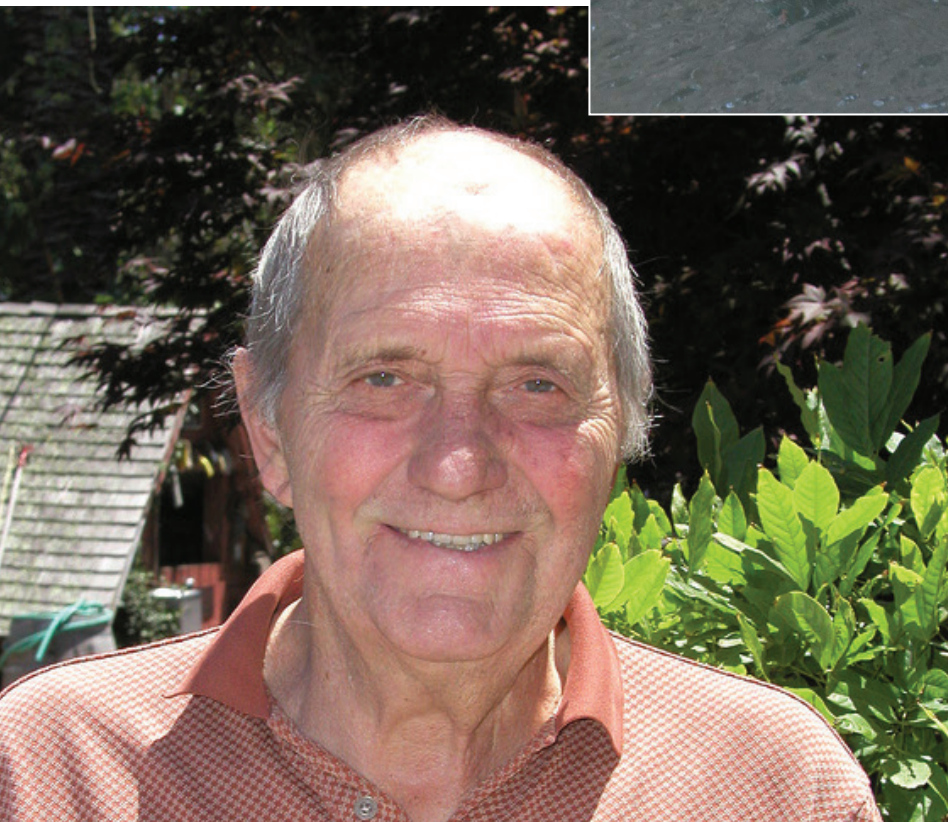
*FOPCW Board member Bill Voigt and volunteer, Doug Taylor, collect data for cross sections at the Pinole Creek Demonstration site.*

## 2013/2014 – FOPCW organizational changes and activities

- Dr. Joseph Mariotti, better known as “Dr. Joe”, passes away in October 2013. He was a co-founder of the Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed, and inspired many of us to find the time to better our community.
- Ann Moriarty is named as Board member for FOPCW and assumes a leadership role.
- Monitoring of wood duck boxes in the upper watershed continues.



*Male wood duck  
photographed in  
Pinole Creek Watershed  
near Collins School.*



*“Dr. Joe” served the community in many ways, co-founding organizations such as the Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed. He was an environmentalist before the term was popular.*

## 2015/2016 – The long-awaited Pinole Creek fish passage is completed

### 2015

- FOPCW follows plans for Gateway Development along the creek and begins to provide input to ensure that creek access and awareness are incorporated into the plans.

### 2016

- Pinole Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project is completed by the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District. FOPCW supported this project for many years.
- Bill Voigt, FOPCW Board member, represents FOPCW on the Technical Advisory Committee for the Pinole Creek Fish Passage to identify monitoring needs.



*FOPCW Co-founder Carol Arnold and Board member Bert Mulchaey walk inside the newly renovated fish passage on Pinole Creek. The old box culvert, which prevented fish from spawning upstream, was removed with the help of the Friends of Pinole Creek.*

## 2017/2019 – The Bay Trail extension enhances the Pinole Creek experience

### 2017

- A long-awaited Bay Trail connector is completed linking Bay Front Park to areas south. It includes a bridge over the train tracks and wetlands.

### 2018

- Lisa Lacky develops an interactive Map App, leading to a brochure and City Council presentation.
- Board member Maura Sullivan launches FOPCW's FaceBook and Instagram pages.
- FOPCW participates in Contra Costa Quadrennial Watershed Symposium.
- The CCRCD's Pinole Creek Fish Passage Improvement Project at I-80 is awarded Outstanding Contra Costa Watershed Project for 2016–2019 by the Contra Costa Watershed Symposium.
- FOPCW organizes a Coastal Cleanup Day event in collaboration with EBMUD.



*The Bay Trail bridge over the rail road tracks along Bay Front Park greatly enhances the Pinole Creek trail and experience.*

## 2020 – California Native Plant garden gets a boost

- The County Fish and Wildlife Propagation Fund awards \$1400 to FOPCW for improvements to the Pinole Library Native Plant Garden.
- Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed is selected to participate in a new project with the American Geophysical Union’s (AGU) Thriving Earth Exchange program. FOPCW will work in collaboration with an AGU Community Science Fellow, the City of Pinole, the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District, Earth Team, and the public to complete a community science project right here in Pinole, called “Engaging community to protect the Pinole Creek Watershed: Assessment of trash impacts to promote a thriving ecosystem.”

*Students from Earth Team at Pinole Valley High School participate in the planting at the Native Plant Garden at the Pinole Library.*



## 2021 – FOPCW celebrates 20 years of Pinole Creek stewardship

- FOPCW celebrates their 20th anniversary with a banner displayed on Tennent Avenue and an anniversary picnic. The group is commended with a proclamation by the City of Pinole.
- Findings from the Thriving Earth Exchange study are presented to the City Council in Pinole. Many of the recommendations were enthusiastically received.



*FOPCW co-founder Carol Arnold reads the proclamation from the City of Pinole at the 20th Anniversary Celebration.*



*From left to right: Lisa Anich, FOPCW's coordinator; Norma Martinez Ruben, Pinole Mayor; and Ann Moriarty, FOPCW's Board member; pose at a trash assessment project event.*





*A group of FOPCW Board members and volunteers spend a day clearing trash from the upper watershed along Alhambra Valley Road.*



*Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed*

This booklet is a collaborative publication from the Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed.

Written by Lisa Anich and Carol Arnold

Designed by Melissa Lawton

Thanks to all who participated with input, photos and encouragement.

For more information visit: [friendsofpinolecreek.org](http://friendsofpinolecreek.org)