



# Creek Speak

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*The Voice of East Bay Citizens for Creek Restoration*

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## Notes from the Editors

You may have wondered where EBCCR went to after Fall Creeks Weeks. We took a brief respite to reflect on our direction and to metamorphose on our little monthly "newsletter" into Creek Speak. Many of us closely involved with the group felt it was time, after almost two years of existence, to branch again... by creating a newsletter that addressed the wider context of creek advocacy in the East Bay and that provided a form of news and a tool for sharing for local creek activists. As the Urban Creek movement has continued to gain momentum, the need for such a medium has increased. Browse through this first issue of Creek Speak and you'll catch glimpses of notable local action, news from stream colleagues elsewhere, upcoming events, and a East Bay Creek profile. Please feel free to contribute to this bi-monthly journal. After all, it's meant to improve our links with our creeks and with one another.

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## Healing/Revealing Strawberry Creek

Last Spring East Bay Citizens for Creek Restoration (then Berkeley Citizens for ...) focused on the celebration, restoration and interpretation of Strawberry Creek and the leading role of the University in fostering restoration activity. Creek renewal initiatives begun or publicized then are continuing to this day, notably water quality and habitat restoration on the stream's reaches on campus and the plans to daylight the creek in the Downtown. The creek's future is for the first time looking brighter. The deepening awareness for the values of streams appears to have begun to reverse the process of the creek's defilement through concrete pipes and pollution.

The University has continued to work quietly to carry out a water quality and habitat enhancement program on the North and South Forks of the creek. The water quality of the creek has markedly improved following a two-year program to identify and control erosion, along with the influx of contaminants to the creek on campus. Creek flora and insect life have grown to a point where the stream could again support fish -- unseen since the 30's. Stickleback, native to the Bay Area, were planted in the late spring of 1989. They spawned and survived the summer and fall drought. Hooray! continued page 4.

## Recap of Fall Creeks Weeks

Fall '89 Creeks Weeks was the largest project EBCCR has undertaken to date, involving coordination with three cities in two counties and another group, Los Amigos de Codornices. Planning began in July with field work by the reconnaissance team of Dale Smith, Tom Parrish, and Barry Waldman, who braved blackberry thickets, dank culverts, and suspicious neighbors, from Peralta Creek in Oakland's Fruitvale district to Cerrito Creek in Kensington's Sunset View Cemetery, to search out the best sites for restoration projects. Four sites were selected, with one dropped later because the neighborhood group needed more time to work out its plan for the area.

The first event was the 'Creek Tech' workshop and revegetation in Berkeley's Live Oak Park. A morning seminar featured Ann Riley on hydrology and Dave Kaplow on revegetation techniques. The afternoon revegetation went beautifully, and thanks to the energy of volunteers from the Institute for Culture and Creation Spirituality, we nearly were able to replant twice the area we had planned.

The next event was a cleanup and revegetation on Cerrito Creek underneath the elevated BART tracks on the Albany-El Cerrito boundary. A small group of volunteers managed to clean up many bags of trash, as well as remove much of the ivy and acacia which had all but crowded out the native sedges, violets, cattails, and horsetails.

The last restoration project was a joint project with Los Amigos de Codornices, a neighborhood group which has worked for years to restore and improve the environment of Codornices Park. Over twenty-five volunteers from both organizations participated in the planting and cleanup. People worked in teams of 4 to 5 to stabilize a number of slides and prevent future erosion on the Creek's southern branch through the planting of 120 native riparian species to build soil and prevent further erosion.

In addition to Creeks Weeks planting projects, EBCCR and Urban Ecology Cosponsored a successful cultural benefit for the restoration of Strawberry Creek in Downtown Berkeley Sunday November 12.

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