and left in the ground. Since all of the rainfall runoff from the buildings and the landscape drain into this pipe, the abandoned culvert will become a giant cistern, collecting thousands of gallons of water for irrigation on the Town Center site.

The Sausal Creek Daylighting Project is endorsed by the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Committee for Green Foothills and Acterra.

How You Can Help

While the Sausal Creek project will be integrated with the current Town Center construction project for substantial cost savings and to limit disruption to the site, the funding is to remain completely separate. Thus, the Portola Valley Friends of Sausal Creek was created to raise funds for the project. All donations to the Friends will be channeled through the Town of Portola Valley and kept in a separate bank account to be used exclusively for the creek daylighting work.

This project will not happen without the financial commitment of those who believe in the inherent value of opening the creek. If you would like to see a living creek run through the Town Center site, please send a pledge or tax deductible donation to:

Sausal Creek Daylighting Project
c/o Alex Von Feldt
5 Creek Park Drive
Portola Valley, CA 94028

Checks should be made out to Town of Portola Valley and marked "Sausal Creek Daylighting Project" on the memo line. All donations are tax deductible. Tax I.D. #94-1581254

For more information, please contact Alex Von Feldt at 851-8201, alex_vonfeldt@yahoo.com, or Danna Breen at 851-2101, pvlily@aol.com.

FAQs

What about safety for the children?

Research shows that more children have been seriously injured getting stuck in culverts during floods than in open creeks. Sausal Creek is a seasonal creek, with peak flow during the rainy winter months. Since the current culvert does not provide much friction for the water, it exits the end of the culvert onto the church property at a much higher rate than if it flowed in a natural, open channel. The proposed design of the daylighted creek will slow down the creek considerably.

Will the creek create a line of willow trees bisecting the performance lawn?

The creek will bend through the proposed native meadow along the same line as the central path. The banks will be planted with grasses and other appropriate low growing shrubs with a few strategically placed trees for shade and vertical interest/structure.

What will it look like in the dry season?

Throughout the year, the creek will change. In the dry season, grasses and sedges will remain along the banks and gravel and stones will be revealed in the creek bed where children can play and explore among the exposed rocks and plants. The subsurface water is relatively shallow, so the creek will still support and provide valuable habitat and refuge for animals and insects during the dry season.

PORTOLA VALLEY FRIENDS OF SAUSAL CREEK

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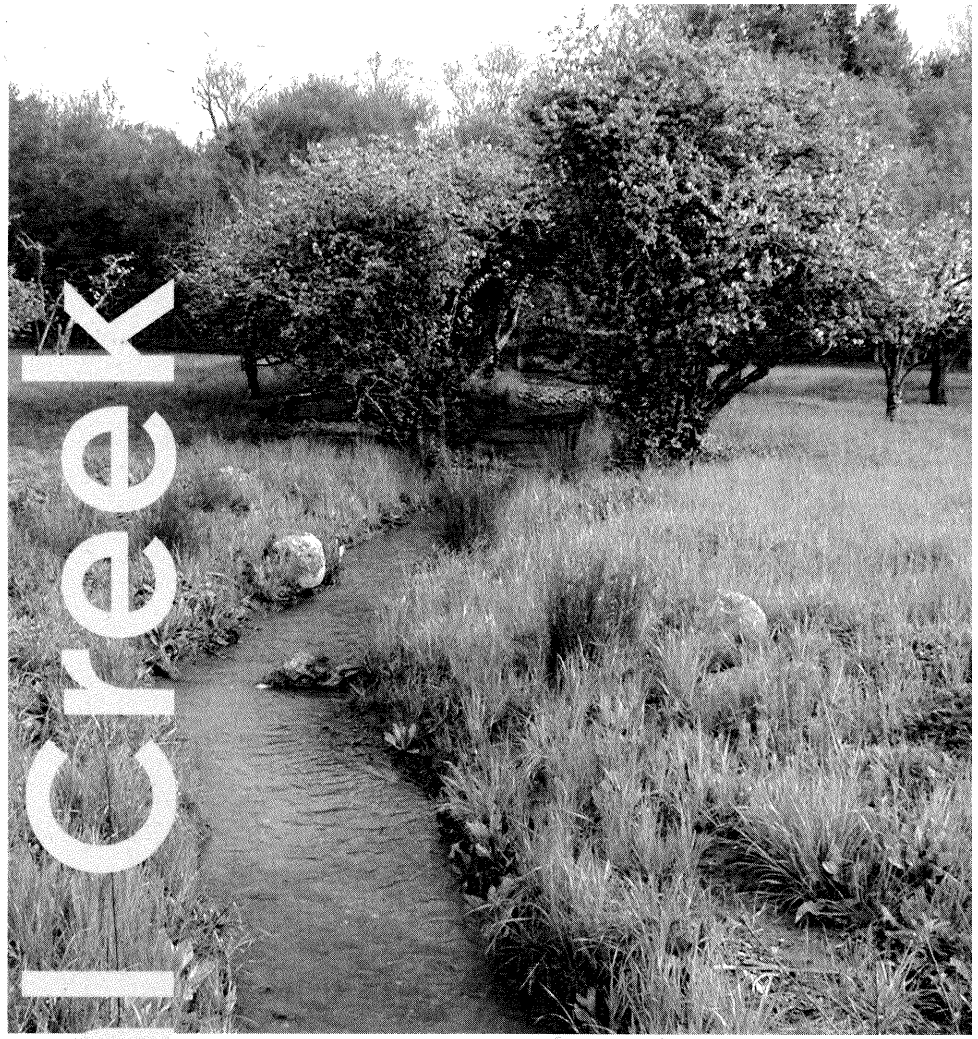
creek



"Eventually all things merge into one and a river runs through it."

Norman MacClean,
A River Runs Through It and Other Stories

"The lands and waters of Portola Valley and its planning area comprise nearly one-half of the headwaters of the San Francisquito Creek watershed and a substantial amount of the natural foothills and hillsides remaining on the Midpeninsula. The town and its residents are the stewards of these natural resources."

Conservation Element, General Plan, Town of Portola Valley, CA

Sausal Creek is an ephemeral stream that meanders through Portola Valley, open except for a 650' culverted portion that runs under the entire length of the Town Center property. The creek is one of 24 tributaries that comprise the San Francisquito watershed, a funnel-shaped area covering 47.5 square miles and two counties on the San Francisco Peninsula. The watershed supports dozens of species including Steelhead trout, the Western pond turtle, the California red-legged frog, the San Francisco garter snake and the salt marsh harvest mouse. As upper watershed residents, people in and around Portola Valley have an important role to play in preserving and bettering the health of the watershed. Opening a portion of Sausal Creek represents both a stewardship opportunity and a critical step in improved watershed health, and ultimately reflects the Town's core values.

History

The Town Center property was an area where water collected during the rainy season. While the overall formation of the channel network is not completely understood, we know that the waterway conveys water from the upper gulches down through the Town Center property, exiting through the area we now know as Christ Church. This multi channeled waterway is called Sausal Creek, named after the willows that grow sporadically along its bank.

Benefits of Daylighting

During the 1950's and 1960's, public bodies in the U.S. regularly paved over streams and creeks by burying them underground in concrete pipes.

Fortunately, the beginning of the 21st century has brought promising trends in environmental awareness including the newly emerging science of stream daylighting and today towns all over the country are removing culverts to restore creeks. Daylighting the 350' stretch of Sausal Creek will not only be a step in restoring the entire creek system, but will also provide a functional and stable creek channel for the future, enhancing connectivity and offering refuge for animals.

Functional Culverts may have choked flows and flooded upstream areas and experts contend that the buried creek actually contributes to the downstream erosion of the channel by increasing conveyance and velocities through the culverted section. Properly designed waterways can have better hydraulic function than culverts because they can slow rates of runoff and increase infiltration benefiting downstream residents by reducing flood or erosion potential.

Illustrated vision for daylighted Sausal Creek at the Portola Valley Town Center

Environmental Unlike a culvert, an open creek provides biofiltration to improve water quality. Exposure to sunlight, air and soil allows growth of aquatic and riparian vegetation that can improve water quality by taking up organic and inorganic pollutants. Biologically and ecologically, burying streams results in a loss of habitat for fish, birds, invertebrates, insects and other creatures, invaluable to the fragile ecological food web of a riparian corridor.

Experiential and Recreational An open creek is beautiful, whether experienced in the spring when full of water, or in the fall, when dry. Sausal Creek will inform residents about the value of natural systems and illustrate how native plants can be used in private spaces as well as giving families the opportunity to hear the soothing sound of running water.

Educational The open portion of Sausal Creek can be a valuable tool for environmental education and stewardship programs providing a special place where children can explore the temporal and dynamic nature of an ephemeral stream. Children can observe how wildlife use the creek differently each season and how plants change from spring to fall. Once they witness how nature enriches their daily lives, we hope they will take this knowledge with them as they grow up and become the stewards of the next generation.

The Details

The daylighted portion of Sausal Creek will flow through the northeastern part of the meadow at the Town Center, pass under the entry drive and transition into the existing channel in front of the church. The major construction aspects include realignment of the existing culvert to allow it to flow and dissipate into the meadow and a creek crossing that will allow traffic to pass over on the entry drive.

> *"I've spent much of my life as an environmentalist working to protect some very large and famous waterways. Sausal Creek is neither large nor famous, but its restoration is equally important if we in Portola Valley are to be true to our environmental values."*
>
> **--Martin Litton, former member Sierra Club Board of Directors, John Muir Award recipient and current leader of the effort to save Redwood National Monument by placing it in the National Park system.**

The channel will be designed as a stable and functional waterway. The creek will maintain or improve existing flood conveyance capacity and enhance aesthetic and habitat values. For example, boulders and/or log weirs will be thoughtfully and strategically placed to form pools and to slow down the water.

Appropriate, low-growing native plants will revegetate the creek banks, carefully chosen to blend in with the native meadow and performance lawn on either side. Several clusters of native riparian trees will provide shade to specific locations along the creek while maintaining views across the site and to the ridge beyond. Also, a bridge will be integrated with the pathway system to separate pedestrian circulation from vehicular traffic.

Sustainable Living Practices

True to the Town's green values, the existing concrete culvert will be capped