

September 6, 2002

Dear Creek Owner:

The City of Pinole Public Works Department has created this fact sheet for all residents whose property is confluent with the Pinole Creek. It is our hope that the information contained in this document will help you to enjoy your property and at the same time maintain the health and vigor of the creek environment.

As you probably know, the creek and its surroundings are a living organism; a habitat for plant life, fish and animals. The creek habitat is a vital part of a larger ecosystem and its health reflects the health of our macro-environment. Although other agencies and organizations like the City of Pinole, Contra Costa County or the Friends of Pinole Creek may take an interest in the creek and perform tasks related to the creek's health, it is imperative that you as homeowners and caretakers provide attention to the creek habitat in the way of ongoing maintenance and care.

A healthy creek has cool, clear water that is flowing and free from debris, contaminants or algae. Fully vegetated banks are stable and free from extreme erosion, which would cause the water to be filled with sediment. Natural erosion may occur but it is slow and does not normally make significant changes in the configuration of the creek. The riparian or bird environment along the creek has a preponderance of native plants. The creek is home to a variety of aquatic animals and organisms.

Unfortunately, as population growth occurs, the environment around our creeks may suffer from the introduction of toxins, garbage, animal wastes, and yard waste causing warm, murky and cloudy water in the creek. As the flow increases from runoff from our urban area impermeable surfaces (asphalt, concrete etc.), excessive erosion may occur along the creek banks causing turbidity or cloudiness and sedimentation, which interferes with the normal creek flow. These unfortunate circumstances adversely affect the diverse, native plant life and create an environment for opportunistic, non-native species. Also, lack of flow and sedimentation in the creek discourages a thriving population of animals and other organisms.

What can you do to enhance the health of the creek environment?

Being aware of the fragility of the creek environment and informing friends and family about the importance of keeping pollutants out of the creek is a place to start. Remind yourself and family and friends often that storm inlets flow directly to the creek and on to the Bay. Unlike sewage, storm water is not treated before it is discharged to our Pinole Creek. Nothing other than clean water should be put into any storm water inlet.

- Use a hazardous waste facility/service for disposing of all toxic substances. Free drop-off is available at the Hazardous Household Waste Facility for West County residents at 101 Pittsburg Avenue in Richmond on Thursday, Friday and on the first Saturday of every month between 9 am and 4 pm. If you have any questions, they can be reached at 1-888-412-9277 or visit www.recyclemore.com
- Do not wash down paved surfaces. Remember the water carries any pollutants from that surface to the storm inlet
- Wash all vehicles on an unpaved surface or go to a commercial facility
- Do not discharge swimming pools to a storm inlet
- Do not allow sediment to flow from your property to the creek
- Report all incidents of illegal discharge to your local Public Works office at 724-9010
- Schedule all construction projects on your property during the dry season (May 15 to Oct 15)
- Cover all exposed, unplanted soil to stabilize and keep from eroding
- Plant native material only (the California Department of Fish and Game can help you choose the correct plants for planting near a creek)
- Limit the use of pesticides (see the City of Pinole's website at Departments/Public Works/Pesticide Disposal <http://www.ci.pinole.ca.us/> and a very informative UC Davis website <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu> for information in this regard)
- Be careful with your home landscape maintenance practices. Do not dispose of clippings in or near the creek. Recycle or compost. Do not remove trees without considering the effect they have if they are part of the creek canopy
- Do not do any construction on or near the floodplain. If you are in the vicinity of a creek it is a good idea to consult the City engineer before planning to build
- **Be aware of the City of Pinole Storm Water Ordinance:**

8.20.10 Intent and purpose.

A. Intent. The intent of this chapter is to protect and enhance the water quality of the city's watercourses pursuant to, and consistent with, the Federal Clean Water Act.

B. Purpose. It is the purpose of the city council in enacting this chapter to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the city's citizens by:

1. Eliminating non-storm water discharges to the City's storm water system;
2. Controlling the discharge to the city's storm water system from spills, dumping or disposal of materials other than storm water;
3. Reducing pollutants in storm water discharges to the maximum extent practicable. (Ord. 577 §1(part), 1995).

The entire document is available upon request from the City of Pinole Public Works Department.

Enclosed is a plot plan of your property as it relates to Pinole Creek. There are many groups that can assist you with creek issues. The Urban Creeks Council of California has initiated a pilot program to provide technical and educational support to those located on or near a creek. They are located at 1250 Addison Street #107, Berkeley, CA., 94702. You may contact Joshua Bradt at (510) 540-6669 Ext. 200. The Aquatic Outreach Institute has assisted in restoring local natural resources with education, restoration and outreach projects. They are a great resource for information and can be located at 1327 South 46th Street in Richmond, CA 94804. You may contact them at 231-5655. These groups and others can assist you as homeowners and caretakers to provide attention to the creek habitat in the way of ongoing maintenance and care.

For spills and dumping in Pinole Creek, storm drains and waterways call the City of Pinole, Public Works Department at (510) 724-9010 or the Contra Costa Clean Water Program at 1-800-663-8674.

We sincerely hope that your experience with 'creek living' is a responsible one as well as a pleasant and rewarding one. Thank you for helping us to maintain the health and vitality of our Pinole Creek.

**BILL MATTICK
NANCY VOISEY**

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