

Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation



Fall/Winter 2012

Four Years at Bayberry / 2008-2012

We last reported on Bayberry Pond in the spring of 2010. At that point we had had two planting seasons during which we filled most of the back of the dam with chaparral and planted two areas of native grass.

Since then, nature has given us a hand when a number of grass and chaparral seedlings generated naturally, but we have also interplanted where nature did not provide. We weeded the leymus, which was there when we started the project, and then we mowed it to thicken it up. It responded nicely and has been mostly weed free since. We have created a wild rose patch at one edge of the chaparral.

We planned to add a couple of new species to the chaparral this

winter, but unfortunately the plants died when we had an irrigation problem at the nursery. That has also delayed our plans to add flowers to the grass areas. We did very little planting last winter because we had so little rain, but this year is looking better and we hope to finish most of the grass planting along with the flowers we have.

The surest measure of restoration success is whether the animals will use it. Several egrets and a young cormorant have dropped by. Just recently we found fresh coyote scat. Every year we have had more mallards that stayed longer but they have yet to nest. Killdeers have also been present from the first and this year we know they bred successfully.

Lesley Hunt



Before: Bayberry Pond in 2008, as restoration work began, a blank canvas. (Brad Heckman photo)



After: Bayberry Pond in 2012, reflecting four years of restoration work. (Brad Heckman photo)

Our Restoration Plans for 2013

Foundation project leaders have been busy planning for next year's restoration projects in Shell Ridge and Lime Ridge North. Following are summaries of these projects. If you want more information or would like to get involved, the contact info for each project leader is at the end of the summary.

Bayberry Pond – Project leader Lesley Hunt. See Lesley's article, "Four Years At Bayberry" for details on our progress there. In addition to the plantings described, we'll be working with Open Space staff to extend fencing above the pond so that the large logs that help control water flow can be stabilized, minimizing erosion. Work days are often on Tuesday mornings or by special arrangement. To volunteer to help, contact lesleyh@wcosf.org.

Sutherland Mustard Eradication Project – Project leader Phil Johnson. Volunteers worked ceaselessly this year to eliminate *Brassica nigra* (black mustard) and later, *Hirschfeldia incana* (a perennial that looks like mustard) on a section of Fossil Hill near the Sutherland entrance to Shell Ridge. Goal for the coming year is to plant a mixture of native perennial grasses and forbs. Would you like to help plant or further eradicate mustard? Contact Phil Johnson at: phil360@astound.net. (Cont. on page 3)

Foundation Outreach Committee Gets the Word Out



Foundation's Outreach Committee reaches out at Howe Homestead's annual Harvest Festival, from left: Katrina Nagle, Stephanie Cota, and Linda Judd. (Nancy Dollard photo)

To gain new members and spread the word about the Open Space Foundation to the community we've created an Outreach Committee, whose members are Linda Judd, Katrina Nagle, and Stephanie Cota. Their goal: Update old materials and create new ones to be used for passing out during volunteer activities and at events. At the recent Howe Harvest Festival the group showcased our newly redecorated display board and had native plants for festival goers to examine. In the coming months look for an updated brochure, a new look for the website, a refreshed logo, and lots more activity. For more info on volunteer opportunities, email us at: contact@wcosf.org.

Awards Bestowed on Foundation

The Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation received two awards from the Walnut Creek Action for Beauty Council at its year-end gathering at Scott's Restaurant. We were honored, along with other collaborators, with the Peg Kovar Poppy Award for our help in the acquisition of land for Acalanes Open Space, and we also received a Habitat Special Recognition Award for our restoration work at Bayberry Pond in Lime Ridge.



Honorees shown here are, from left: Eliot Hudson, Acalanes Ridge Committee, Linus Eukel, Muir Heritage Land Trust, Lesley Hunt, Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation, Walnut Creek Mayor Bob Simmons, and Lafayette Mayor Carol Federighi.

Caring for Our Hundreds of Oaks



Oak Maintenance Team Leader Dick Daniel, at left, discusses the morning's assignments with Foundation members Jerry Christopherson and Tim Ory.

There are hundreds of oak trees that have been planted in our open spaces which need nurturing and regular maintenance. Dick Daniel, co-founder of the Oak Habitat Restoration Project, is heading up this maintenance program.

"Since the trees have been protected by screens and plastic tubing, we need to remove weeds and leaves, as well as do some pruning. We have also found that trees often require additional protection from voles (meadow mice)," remarks Dick.

The group meets on Saturday mornings in various areas of the Open Space, starting at 9 a.m. and finishing by noon. The schedule for the next few months is: December 15, January 5, January 19, and February 2. If you would like to give Dick and crew (including Ralph Kraetsch, the other co-founder) a hand, you can contact him at: oakhabitat@wcosf.org.

Our Restoration Plans for 2013

(cont. from page 1)

Indian Valley Pond – Project leader Sean Micallef. In the past year, Sean and team have worked to remove weeds, clean the pond area, and restore native plants in selected areas around the pond. They've planted 600 *Elymus glaucus* and 400 *Stipa pulchra*, with several hundred surviving. Plans for 2013 include planting more native plants and grasses, weed removal, and pond cleanup (see photo, right). Live in the Lakewood area near Indian Valley Pond? Want to help? Sean is also looking to involve students from Indian Valley School. Contact Sean at: skmicallef@astound.net



Chaparral Project – Project Leader Gary Muerle. The chaparral project is a continuation of the quail project begun by the late Bob Wisecarver. The group has done chaparral plantings, including chemise and black sage, in Shell Ridge, in protected areas between Borges Ranch and Twin Ponds, and also in North Lime Ridge along a stream near the Rock Oak Entrance. The photo at left shows black sage planted in enclosed area near Borges Ranch. Plans for this winter include direct sowing of black sage seed in a cleared area in a large enclosure in the Rock Oak area. To get involved, contact Gary at 932-9597.

Volunteer This Winter

We apologize for not providing more volunteer opportunities last year after asking for your help; we were regrouping and revising our techniques. In addition, the weather did not cooperate and, as a result, we carried out very little planting. This year we have it figured out and would love to have your help maintaining oaks and planting natives. Work is planned on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Please sign up on your membership renewal form or email us at contact@wcosf.org and we will be in touch with additional information.

Photos at Heather Farm Kiosks

This summer, Open Space staff began a program we had proposed several years ago – posting photographs of Heather Farm wildlife in the kiosks at the entrances to the Nature Area. A number of photographers have become contributors, and you can enjoy their work whenever you're in the park. Since Heather Farm is on an important wildlife corridor, there is a wide variety of subjects. If you have photos to contribute, contact Mike Vickers at vickers@walnut-creek.org or 256-3538 to make arrangements.

Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation
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Yes, I want to help protect and preserve Walnut Creek's Open Space

We invite all who share this goal to join the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation. Memberships and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. There are numerous areas where you can help. If you are interested, please drop us a note or email, or visit our website at www.wcosf.org. Fill out this form and mail it to: WCOSF, Box 309, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0309.

I would like to join the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation

Name _____
 Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Email (*we never share*) _____
 Skills I am willing to share _____

I would like to volunteer!

____ Oak Restoration Project
 ____ Native Grasses
 ____ Quail Habitat
 ____ School program

MEMBERSHIPS

Patron.....\$500
 Benefactor.....\$250
 Sustaining.....\$100
 Sponsor.....\$50
 Family.....\$40
 Individual.....\$25

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