



**KIDS for  
the BAY**

1771 Alcatraz Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94703



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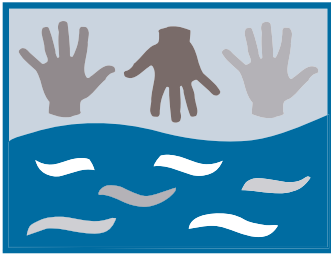
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# KIDS for the BAY

Environmental education through action

## Newsletter

March 2006

[www.kidsforthebay.org](http://www.kidsforthebay.org)

A Project of Earth Island Institute

## KIDS for the BAY Students Help Restore Steelhead Habitat

*Hundreds of Steelhead Trout race down Codornices Creek eager to make their way to San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. Their shining bodies glide by houses and swim through tunnels under familiar streets . . .*

It's still just a dream today, but it's a dream that will become reality if elementary school students in Berkeley and Albany have their way.

This school year, 240 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students are participating in KIDS for the BAY's Codornices Creek Action Program. They're learning about the creek, which sits on the Berkeley-Albany border, and they're becoming experts on the reasons why the Steelhead Trout that once swam freely through Codornices and other East Bay creeks are now on the verge of extinction.

### The students are also taking action.

Working with representatives from our partner organizations—the Friends of Five Creeks, the Urban Creeks Council, and EcoCity Builders—the students are helping restore the creek as a Steelhead habitat.

In January, two classes from Berkeley Arts Magnet Elementary



*A student explains the fascinating lifecycle of a Steelhead Trout.*

worked with Susan Schwartz of the Friends of Five Creeks to plant over 50 natives along the section of the creek in Live Oak Park. The plants will stabilize the creek's banks and decrease erosion, which will make the creek a more hospitable environment for Steelhead. Fish don't like it when dirt gets in their gills!

The students also picked up five 20-gallon bags of trash, and Schwartz taught them about the creek's history and Native American's historical use

of many of the native plants in Live Oak Park.

Also in January, two classes from Berkeley's Emerson Elementary traveled to the lower region of the creek (near 8<sup>th</sup> and Harrison in Albany) to plant natives such as Cows Parsnip and Canyon Gooseberry. The students became particularly excited about their project when Richard Register of EcoCity Builders told them that the site is one of the spawning grounds for Steelhead. He noted that he had seen a 1.5 foot Steelhead there a few years ago!

Other classes will assist the Urban Creeks Council in counting and weighing fish along Codornices Creek, and a

"This program is great! My students really get to see how their actions can make a direct impact on the endangered Steelhead."

—Andrea Dunn, 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Emerson Elementary, Berkeley

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## 11th Annual Wildcat Creek Clean Up

Eleven years ago, a class of 4<sup>th</sup> graders at San Pablo's Dover Elementary School saw an opportunity to become environmental leaders and acted on it. Dismayed by the

lamps and bicycles, which city workers later carted away.

"The creek clean up is a productive and enjoyable way for students and their families to take action to impact

KIDS for the BAY Program Manager Francis Mendoza. "When they learn that our bays are so contaminated with toxins that California's EPA has declared it unsafe to eat more than two local bay fish each month, they become very concerned about their families' health, as well as concerned with cleaning up their waterways."

KIDS for the BAY and the City of San Pablo thank everyone who participated in this year's clean up. We also thank the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students, who, 11 years ago, decided they could make their community better and got us all involved! ♦

"The creek clean up is a productive and enjoyable way for students and their families to take action to impact their community. The students, especially, gain a sense of empowerment when they see the clean creek at the end of the day."

—Pam Auxter, former Dover Elementary School Teacher

amount of garbage in and around their local creek, they worked with KIDS for the BAY staff and their teachers, Pam Auxter and Tony Ramirez, to organize a community clean-up of Wildcat Creek at Davis Park.

It may have seemed like a simple class project at the time. But today, even after these students have graduated from high school and gone on to jobs and college, their legacy at Wildcat Creek lives on.

Each year, KIDS for the BAY teams up with the City of San Pablo to organize a clean up of Wildcat Creek, and last fall, on a cold October morning, 85 people—60 students and 25 adults—put aside their regular weekend routine to participate in the 11th annual clean up.

Armed with gloves and garbage bags, this year's volunteers collected 30 large bags of trash. They also flagged larger items such as discarded tires,

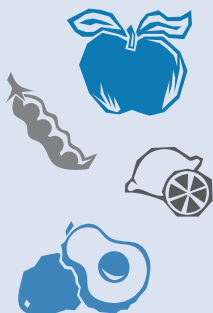
their community in a positive way," explained Auxter. "The students, especially, gain a sense of empowerment from their participation and efforts when they see the clean creek at the end of the day."

Prior to the clean up, KIDS for the BAY staff made presentations to 14 Dover Elementary School and eight Richmond High School classes to teach students why it is important to keep their watershed clean and healthy.

"Students are always sad to learn that marine animals can be injured and even killed by floating debris," explained



Students and family members all pitched in to help clean up Wildcat Creek.



**KIDS for the BAY**  
thanks everyone who shopped at  
**WHOLE FOODS on SEPT. 16th!**

Based on the store's income for the day,  
Whole Foods has made a generous  
**\$5,725 contribution to our programs!**





## \$25,000 CHALLENGE GRANT!

There's never been a better time to donate to KIDS for the BAY. The Dean Witter Foundation has generously agreed to match each personal contribution we receive this year, dollar for dollar, up to \$25,000. We hope you, all of our wonderful supporters, will help us get a quick start on meeting this challenge by considering a donation in the early part of the year.

### Cal State East Bay Teams Up with KIDS for the BAY

**K**IDS for the BAY is pleased to announce that teachers who participate in our Watershed Action and Four Rs Action Programs can now receive four to eight units of academic credit from Cal State East Bay.

"The credit will help make teachers eligible for pay increases," explained KIDS for the BAY Education Director Sheela Shankar, "which is great because we would like to see teachers rewarded when they make the effort to include quality environmental science lessons in their curricula."

"We also believe the credit program will help other teachers and principals see the value of using the local environment as a highly effective learning resource," she added.

Twenty teachers have chosen to enroll in the credit program this school year. It provides four units of credit for teachers who enroll while KIDS for the BAY is still actively working in their classes. These teachers meet regularly with KIDS for the BAY staff and complete reports on their and their students' experiences with the Watershed and Four Rs programs.

Teachers can earn an additional four units if they enroll in the program in the year after KIDS for the BAY has worked in their classrooms. For these teachers, the program provides credit as they complete the work of integrating KIDS for the BAY's Watershed and Four Rs programs into their year-long curriculum.

"The credit program is helping me incorporate quality, hands-on learning opportunities into my curriculum while at the same time helping me satisfy State requirements for on-going professional development," explained Hillcrest Elementary School teacher Susan Weinberg.

Weinberg also noted that because all of the credit program's training occurs in her own classroom and because the assignments all center on projects she is currently undertaking with her class, it is both convenient and tailored to her own classroom situation.

"KIDS for the BAY's credit program has presented a great opportunity for me!" she exclaimed. ♦

"The credit program is helping me incorporate quality, hands-on learning opportunities into my curriculum while at the same time helping me satisfy State requirements for on-going professional development."

—Susan Weinberg, teacher, Hillcrest Elementary School

### Steelhead Habitat

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class from Cornell Elementary in Albany plans to create informational brochures about the creek and its Steelhead Trout population, which they will distribute to neighbors and businesses in the Codornices Creek Watershed.

"It's amazing how these animals survive in the city!" noted one student after learning about nonpoint source pollution, habitat loss, and the other human created obstacles that Steelhead must overcome to survive in urban areas.

Steelhead begin their lives in freshwater creeks. In our area, this means



*Students plant natives at Codornices Creek to help prevent erosion and improve the creek as a habitat for Steelhead Trout.*

that they must be able to live in urban creeks to survive. They then migrate to the ocean where they feed before turning around and making their way back to the same creek to spawn a new generation.

Andrea Dunn, an Emerson Elementary School teacher noted the unique opportunity provided by the Codornices Creek Action Program. "This program is great! My students really get to see how their actions can make a direct impact on the endangered Steelhead."

Likewise, students are enthusiastic about their work in the creek. During his class's planting project, Michael exclaimed, "This is the best day of school that anyone could ever have!" ♦