



Learning how pollution affects watershed health.



Keeping Alhambra Creek clean!

Learn & Protect

Discovering new places in the watershed.



How Do Human Activities Affect Watershed Health?

As water flows over the landscape it carries beneficial sediment and nutrients used by plants and animals, but also pollutants and excessive sediment generated by human activity. When you drive your car or apply pesticides and fertilizers to your home garden, pollutants settle on the ground and are carried by stormwater into stormdrains and open creeks. In healthy natural areas, such as some of the surrounding hills in the Alhambra Creek Watershed, soil and plants filter and cleanse many of these pollutants, and allow stormwater to drain through the soil to replenish groundwater reserves. However, in developed areas like Martinez rain often lands on rooftops, parking lots, driveways and other hard surfaces that don't allow the stormwater to percolate into the soil. These "impervious" surfaces prevent this natural cleansing and replenishment, and increase runoff and flooding potential.

What is Being Done to Protect Our Watershed?

Community members are actively working to preserve the health of the Alhambra Creek Watershed. Individuals and groups participate in creek cleanups, restoration projects, and educational efforts to raise awareness about the importance of watershed health.

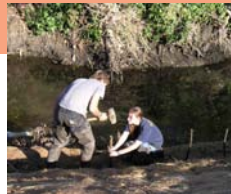


Collecting native plant seed on Mt. Wanda.



Restoring Strentzel Meadow.

Restore



Planting willow stakes at Martinez Adult School.



Thanks to recent revitalization efforts, you can enjoy lovely views of the creek by the Amtrak Station and downtown between Main and Green Streets, and a salt marsh thrives at the mouth of Alhambra Creek. A healthy watershed benefits all of us, providing beautiful views and recreational opportunities, clean water, and a place where human, plant and wildlife communities can flourish.

What Can I Do to Protect My Watershed?

You, too, can help. It's easy to make watershed-friendly choices in our daily lives, starting in our own homes. How we take care of our yards, how we dispose of waste, and how much we drive affect the

Get Involved in Watershed Group Activities!

- ◆ Join us to find out about current projects and hear speakers on a variety of watershed-related subjects at AWC meetings on the first Tuesday of each month (call ahead to confirm).
- ◆ Get involved in activities led by Friends of Alhambra Creek. Contact friendsofac@california.com or 925-672-6522 x110.
 - ◆ Get to know your creek – join volunteer efforts to map the creek using GPS technology.
 - ◆ What do you know about the health of your creek? Find out by sampling water quality and by looking at bugs as indicators of stream health.
 - ◆ Join the restoration team at Strentzel Meadow! Pull some weeds, get some exercise, and join your neighbors in bringing a meadow back to life.
 - ◆ Like gardening? Want to learn more about our native plants? Help grow and plant native shrubs and trees in local restoration areas.
 - ◆ Join the popular fall and spring creek cleanups on Alhambra Creek.

Want to know more? Visit the AWC website at www.ccrd.org or sign up on the mailing list to receive meeting information. Contact the RCD at 925-672-6522 x110 or carla-koop@ca.nacdn.net.



Surveying Alhambra Creek using GPS.

Monitor



Monitoring water quality.



Collecting bugs to assess stream health.

health of our watershed. Our individual impact may seem small, but collectively our choices affect the health of the entire watershed. For more information about actions you can take, contact the Contra Costa Clean Water Program (in the City of Martinez, call 372-3515) or the Contra Costa County Watershed Program (in unincorporated areas of the county, call 313-2313).

The Alhambra Watershed Council (AWC) is a stakeholder group dedicated to protecting and enhancing the health of our watershed by educating ourselves and the public about the watershed, providing a forum for new ideas and projects, and acting as a community resource.

Celebrate

Painting a mural at Martinez Adult School.



Enjoying the Alhambra Creek Watershed Celebration



The Alhambra Watershed Council (AWC)

In 1997 severe storms caused flooding and erosion in the watershed, galvanizing concerned citizens to address a variety of watershed issues through a four-year planning process. The planning group published the *Alhambra Creek Watershed Management Plan* in 2001. The plan provides a framework for voluntary, collaborative action that protects and enhances watershed health. Now known as the Alhambra Watershed Council (AWC), the group carries out specific projects to

implement plan goals. Its many members include residents, ranchers, members of government and business, public and private landowners, community groups, and other interested individuals. The group uses a consensus decision-making process to find solutions to watershed problems. Taking into account the interests of diverse stakeholders, and the interconnectedness of all elements within the watershed, ensures a healthy future for all.

Projects & Activities

- ◆ Alhambra Creek wetland restoration
- ◆ Alhambra Valley Creek Coalition*
- ◆ Downtown restoration and intermodal project
- ◆ Martinez Adult School: Creek restoration & environmental academy*
- ◆ Outreach and education*
- ◆ Strentzel Meadow restoration* & flood reduction
- ◆ Watershed tours and celebrations*

Resources

- ◆ Watershed Management Plan (2001). Issues addressed include flooding, water quality, erosion, wildland fire, watershed planning, economic and environmentally sustainable land use, watershed community, access to watershed resources, and wildlife habitat.
- ◆ Flooding fact sheet
- ◆ Full-color, poster-sized map of the watershed for public outreach and education
- ◆ List of native and non-native plants in the Alhambra Creek Watershed
- ◆ Walking tour brochure of the lower watershed
- ◆ Watershed tour brochure

To get involved, obtain resources, or find out more information, contact Carla Koop, Watershed Coordinator, at Contra Costa Resource Conservation District (RCD), 5552 Clayton Rd., Concord, CA 94521, (925) 672-6522 x 110, or carla-koop@ca.nacdn.net.

* ongoing projects



We all live in a watershed. But what is a watershed?

Imagine cupping your hands together to hold water.

A watershed can be a lot like your cupped hands. It's an area defined by hills or ridges surrounding lower land, such as a valley. Rain and other runoff flow from these surrounding high points downhill, in the form of surface creeks and water flowing underground. A watershed can look very different depending on whether you live in a flat or hilly area, in the city or country.



We live in the Alhambra Creek Watershed.

The Briones Hills, Franklin Hills and Martinez ridge form the “cup” of our watershed. From its source in the Briones Hills, Alhambra Creek flows for eight miles through parks, ranches, neighborhoods, businesses and industry before entering the Carquinez Strait.

Alhambra Creek drains a 16.5-square-mile region – about the size of ten Golden Gate Parks, and half the size of Mt. Diablo State Park.

Contra Costa Resource Conservation District
5552 Clayton Road
Concord, California 94521

