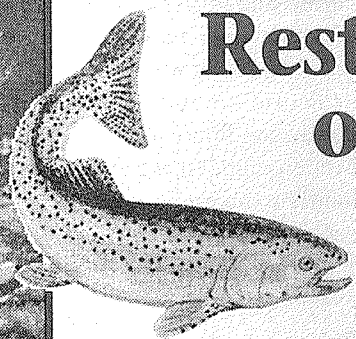
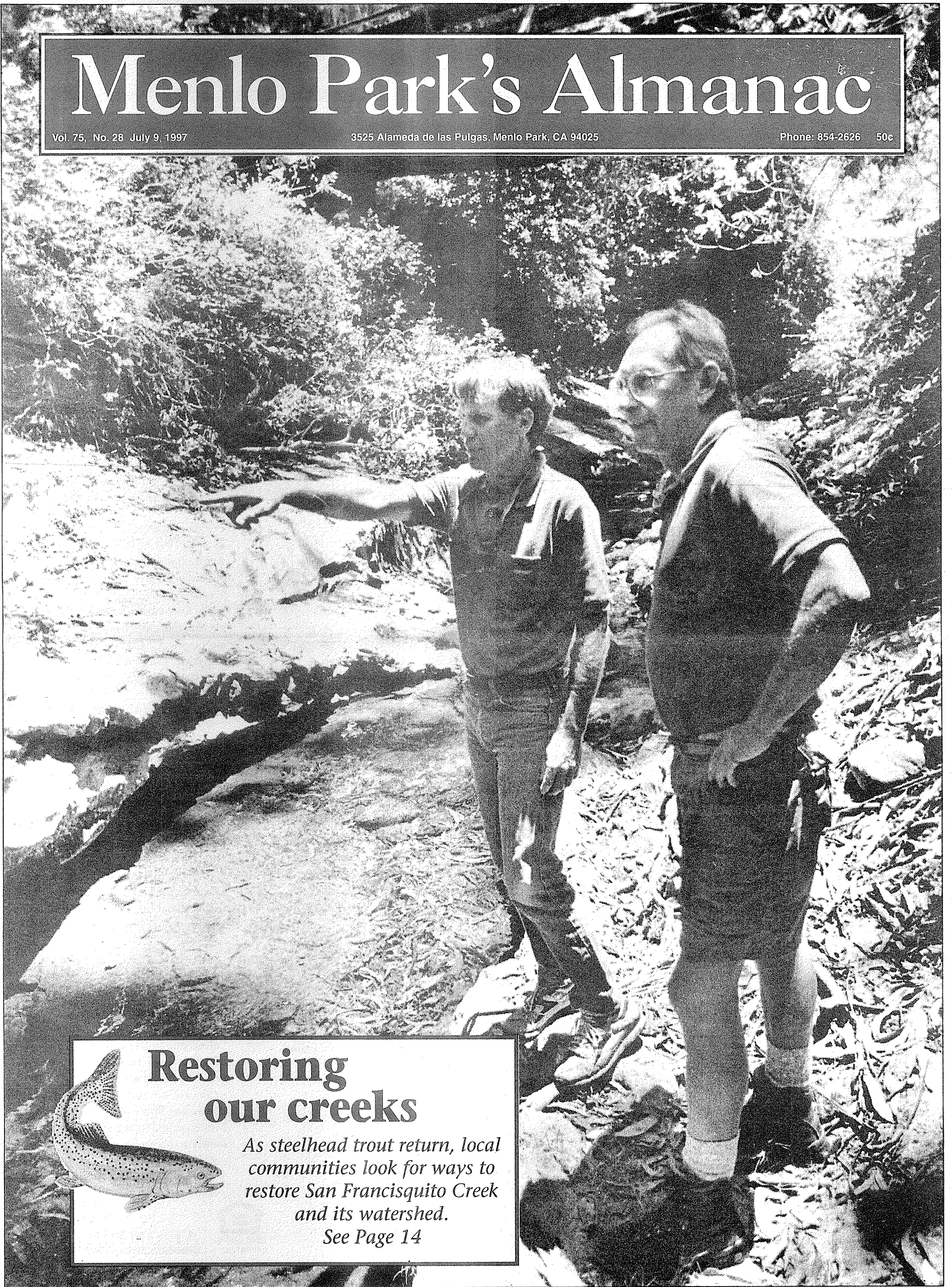


Menlo Park's Almanac

Vol. 75, No. 28 July 9, 1997

3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025

Phone: 854-2626 50c



Restoring our creeks

*As steelhead trout return, local
communities look for ways to
restore San Francisquito Creek
and its watershed.*

See Page 14

Mexican fast-food chains, started by Portola Valley residents, plan merger

Una Mas and Pollo Rey, two popular restaurant chains featuring Mexican fast-service food, are merging to form a new corporation. Both were founded by Portola Valley residents: Richard Hamner started Una Mas in 1992; Ray Klein opened the first Pollo Rey in 1991.

Exact details of the merger are not finalized, but the deal is expected to close by early September.

The Una Mas and Pollo Rey restaurants will operate separately,

keeping their existing locations and current menus. Both are distinguished by their colorful cantina-style decor and emphasis on fresh food. The new corporation plans to bring the total number of restaurants up to 52 by the end of the year.

Richard Hamner, founder of Una Mas, will serve as president and chief executive officer of the new corporation. Mr. Klein will be chairman. Both have spent years in the restaurant business. Mr. Ham-

ner co-founded Sundance Mine Company and the Pacific Fresh chain. Mr. Klein founded many California restaurants including Famous Enterprise Fish Company, Santa Fe Bar and Grill and Tutti's.

Una Mas has 26 locations throughout northern California, including one at Stanford Shopping Center. Pollo Rey has 21 restaurants, including one in Menlo Park, as well as others in the Bay Area, Sacramento, Oregon, Idaho and Pennsylvania.

Knishes, kabobs, crawfish among fare at Menlo festival

Thousands of food lovers will feast on international fare at the annual Connoisseur's Marketplace festival, to be held Saturday and Sunday, July 19-20, in downtown Menlo Park.

Now in its 11th year, this free-admission, two-day festival hosts about 20 food purveyors along Santa Cruz Avenue.

Siam Garden, a Menlo Park Thai restaurant, will serve dishes of pork and chicken satay, skewered and charbroiled meat marinated in coconut milk and Thai spices; red-curry chicken simmered in coconut milk with bamboo shoots and Thai basil; and vegetarian spring rolls with sweet-and-sour sauce.

For Cajun food fans, New Orleans Catering brings its Louisiana cooking to Connoisseur's Market-

place for the ninth year. Crawfish etouffee, seafood gumbo and grilled blackened shrimp are cooked fresh each morning from scratch.

GTO Catering, also specializing in Cajun cuisine, will serve fried and sauteed shrimp sandwiches, fried clams and garlic fries.

Other treats include sausages, grilled chicken and pork kabobs, Philadelphia cheesesteak sandwiches, knishes, fried calamari, barbecue oysters, strawberry and chocolate crepes, bread pudding and Italian sorbet.

To compliment the food, local vintners will pour their top varietals. Napa Valley's Barefoot Cellars will serve its Zinfandel and White Zinfandel, winner of three gold medals. Sonoma Creek Winery will pour its gold medal Carneros

Reserve Chardonnay, and J. Lohr Winery will serve its Riverstone Chardonnay, Seven Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon, Bay Mist Riesling and Wildflower Valdiguie.

Brews from the Great Northern Brewing Company, including Black Star lager, will be served.

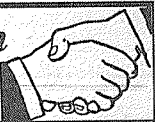
Souvenir wine glasses and beer mugs will be available for \$5.

Three large pavilions will be spread out on Santa Cruz Avenue selling souvenir glassware, along with selections of wine and beer, cold Pepsi and Black Mountain Spring Water. Eating areas with umbrella tables and chairs will be set up in several locations along the avenue.

The festival will take place from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, July 19-20, on Santa Cruz Avenue at El Camino Real in Menlo Park.

It is sponsored annually by the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce. Admission and parking are free. For information, call 325-2818.

People in Business



Barbara Tyler of Coldwell Banker's Santa Cruz Avenue office in Menlo Park was recently honored by Coldwell Banker Northern California as the top agent in gross commission income during the first quarter of 1997. Ms. Tyler is the No. 1 Coldwell Banker sales associate internationally out of 55,000, the company reported. She specializes in upper-end properties in Atherton, Woodside, Menlo Park, and Portola Valley. A former teacher and administrator, she has a master's degree in special education.

Dave Carver of Woodside has been promoted to the newly created position of chief operating officer at Network General Corp., a Menlo Park computer company specializing in network fault and performance management. In his new position, Mr. Carver assumes overall responsibility for the company's five business units: analysis tools, systems technology, Internet prod-

ucts, wide area products, and network general services. Mr. Carver, who has an MBA from Stanford University, joined Network General in 1995 as vice president of Network General services.

Peter Cowperthwaite recently joined Pacific Peninsula Properties in Menlo Park and will specialize in the Portola Valley and Woodside markets. Mr. Cowperthwaite has about eight years of experience in local residential retail sales. Managed by Rich Bassin, Pacific Peninsula Properties is an affiliate of Pacific Peninsula Group, a real estate development and construction company established in 1989.



Mark Jones of Menlo Park, an IBM employee, recently received the 1997 IBM Chairman's Award, and was honored with a crystal star. Mr. Jones, a member of the IBM Hard Disk Drive team, was honored by IBM Chairman and CEO Louis V. Gerstner, who cited his excel-

lence in teamwork and speed in support of customers. The Chairman's Award was established in 1995 to recognize IBM employees who demonstrate superior teamwork and customer service.

Kevin J. O'Brian of Portola Valley has joined the Menlo Park office of Piper Jaffray Inc., a Minneapolis-based investment firm, as an investment executive. Prior to joining Piper Jaffray, Mr. O'Brian was a financial consultant with Smith Barney in Menlo Park. He holds an MBA from the University of San Francisco.

Fred Rosenberg, manager and designer with PlanIt Right in La Honda, says his home design company produces a 3D computer model of a home that the client can use to tour the house from any view and zoom in on any area. "Moving walls, doors, windows and changing roof pitches is only a matter of a few key strokes," says Steve Lightman, another designer with the firm. In addition to computer modeling, the company creates house plans, obtains building permits and recommends contractors.



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Photo by Laura Hester

Streamkeeper Jim Johnson, right, and Jerry Hearn check out a turn-of-the-century dam above a year-round trout pool in Woodside. They are hoping to get funding so the dam can be fixed to be more steelhead-friendly. The old redwood log, with notches cut in it to concentrate the water so the fish can swim over it, is coming loose from its base, and allowing the water to spill through in sheets too thin for fish to jump.

Restoring our creeks

As our shadows move over the still pool below a turn-of-the-century dam, a couple of 10-inch trout dart for the deep shade of a bank. A couple of dozen of this year's hatchlings join them.

Is this rural scene in Colorado? The Sierra? No. This is Woodside.

It's hard for anyone used to the dry Peninsula summer to believe, but steelhead trout do survive the dry season in shaded pools of the upstream tributaries of San Francisquito Creek. Then, when winter rains surge down the dry moat that divides Palo Alto from Menlo Park, San Mateo County from Santa Clara County, an ancient cycle renews.

Steelhead from the ocean find their way into San Francisco Bay and to their ancestral stream, San Francisquito Creek. They change chemistry from salt to fresh water near East Palo Alto, swim upstream, and spawn.

Local communities join to bring historic steelhead trout run back to San Francisquito Creek and its tributaries.

By MARION SOFTKY

of Woodside and Portola Valley. Then they reverse the trip and return to the ocean, accompanied by young fish that have matured in the cool summer pools of the Peninsula foothills.

This ancient cycle is now a rarity around San Francisco Bay. As development has spread, natural streams have been channeled

stream in the South Bay. "There are not many other creeks in the Bay Area with steelhead," says Margaret Roper, fisheries biologist with the California Department of Fish and Game. "They used to be all over."

Now, an unusual alliance of some 25 government agencies, Stanford University, private groups, and individuals in two counties and counties are working to reclaim the creek and fish and wildlife and people. San Francisquito Creek is a living artery

of water which should bind us together. We need to value it and not treat it as a dump," says Jim Johnson, official "streamkeeper" for the creek and its watershed.

For the last four years Mr. Johnson has been the catalyst in the regional effort to restore San Francisquito Creek and the 40-square-mile network of creeks feeding it, and to rebuild the steelhead run.

The planning process, which involves 10 government agencies and Stanford University as well as community organizations and individuals, goes by the off-putting name of Coordinated Resource Management and Planning (CRMP) — informally called "Crimp."

CRMP has produced a draft watershed management plan suggesting policies to protect and restore the creek system and to prevent problems such as pollution and flooding.

Mr. Johnson and CRMP Coordinator Debbie Mytels have brought their presentation to Menlo Park, Woodside, and Portola Valley.



Photo by Jim Johnson

The bank of San Francisquito Creek just below El Palo Alto Park has been stabilized with gabions, wire baskets filled with rock. The above photo shows how the bank was taken over by invasive German ivy which displaced native plants. Right, the ivy has been removed as part of creek restoration efforts. Now plants that contribute to wildlife habitat can grow.

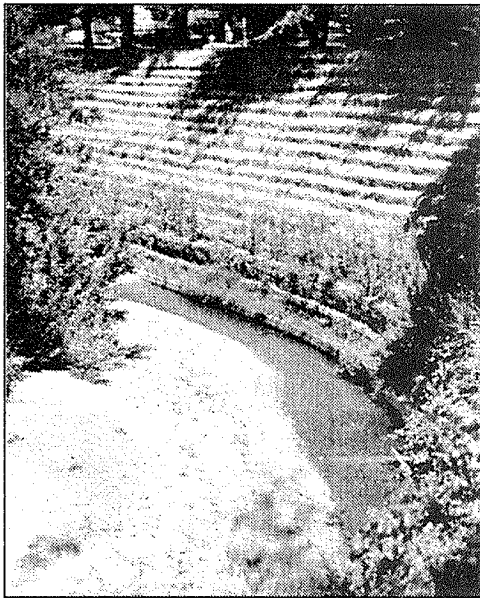


Photo by Laura Hester

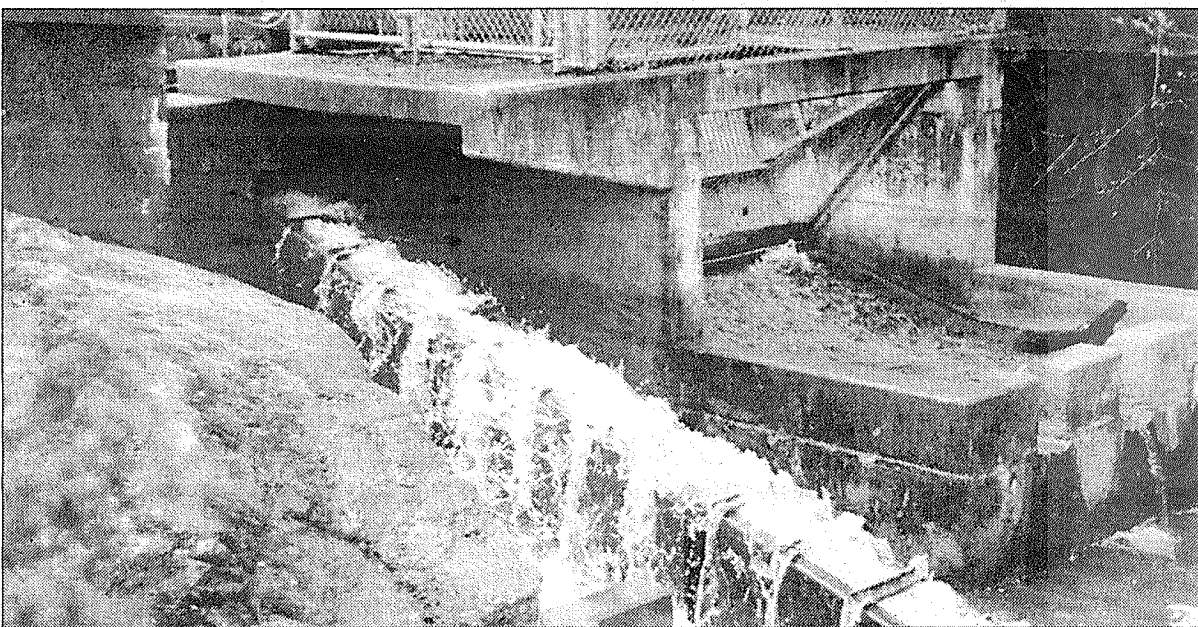


Photo by Jim Johnson

A new fish ladder built by Stanford in Los Trancos Creek near Alpine Inn bypasses a dam that diverts water to Felt Lake. It now allows steelhead trout to climb into upper Los Trancos Creek to spawn.

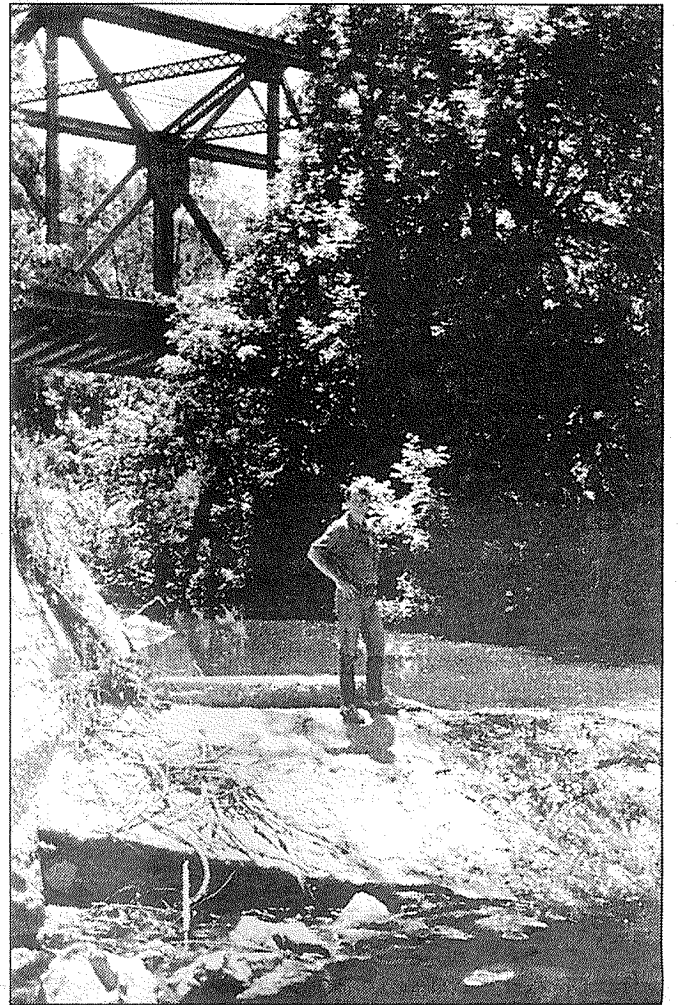


Photo by Laura Hester

Already there's a new bike bridge, as well as the railroad bridge shown here, in the background of this photo of Jerry Hearn of the San Mateo County Fish and Wildlife Advisory Committee below El Palo Alto. Creek lovers hope to build a series of pools to help steelhead trout pass over the low dam.

They will go to Palo Alto this summer. "We'd like to have a continuous riparian corridor from the ridge tops all the way to the Bay," says Ms. Mytels.

Looking back

"We...stopped upon the bank of a deep creek whose waters came down from the mountains and rushed precipitously to the estuary," wrote Fray Juan Crespi on Nov. 6, 1769, as the Portola expedition rested where the Stanford Park Hotel is now after discovering San Francisco Bay.

Back then, San Francisquito Creek really was a living artery supporting abundant fish and wildlife. Indians hunted, gathered acorns and fished from the salt marshes of the Bay through the oak meadows of what is now Menlo Park, all the way up to the redwood forests on the mountains.

The stream was so appealing the Spanish considered building a San Francisco mission across from El Palo Alto, a landmark redwood which could be seen from San Francisco to San Jose — until they came back in the summer and found the creek dried up even then.

Over the years, grazing, logging, housing, cities, pollution, flooding, and dams have taken their toll. But San Francisquito Creek has still fared better than other Peninsula waterways.

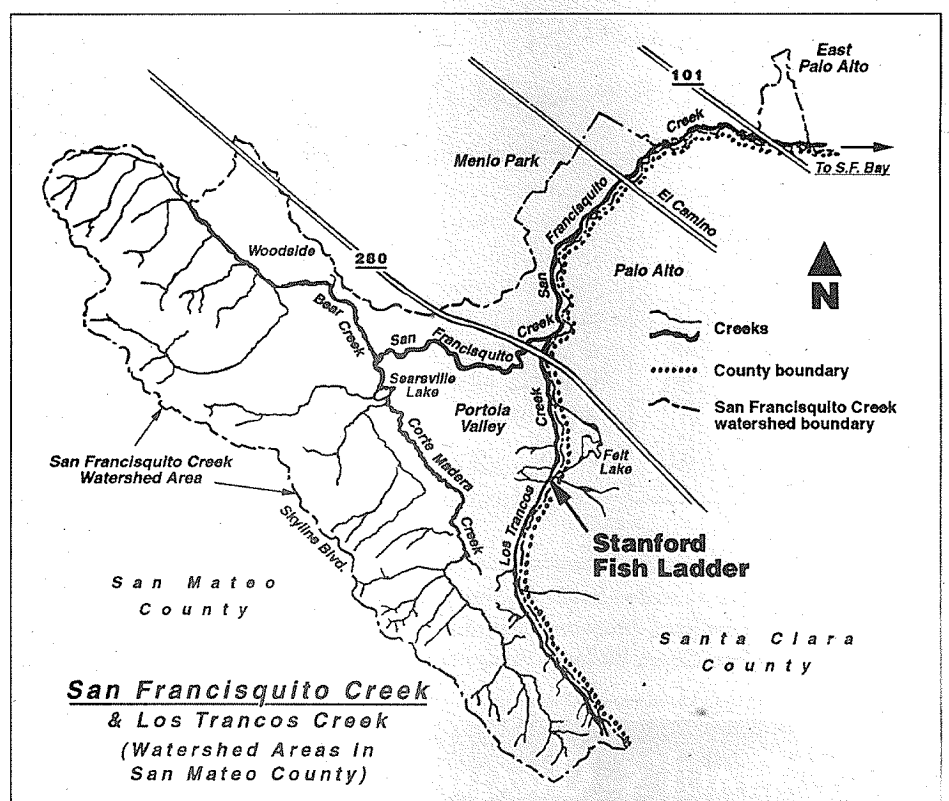
Portola Valley naturalist Herb Dengler has walked the length of the creek. He attributes its mostly natural state to Stanford University, which owns thousands of acres extending from El Camino Real on the flatlands past Searsville Lake in the foothills. "So much is on Stanford land; it hasn't been subject to tampering," he says.

Almost every drop of rain that runs off the Santa Cruz Mountains over 40 square miles ultimately drains through San Francisquito Creek into San Francisco Bay. On Skyline the watershed extends from Page Mill Road on the south almost to Kings Mountain. "The hillside is just a sponge of creeks; it's an amazing network," says former Woodside Mayor Jeanne Dickey, who has one in her back yard. "When the kids were little, they used to fish in the creek in summer... Some think the steelhead should be named the Town Fish."

Now that many fish are gone and steelhead appear headed for the endangered list, fishing in the creeks is completely prohibited. "No fishing" signs appear in English and Spanish all along it.

During winter storms — always much heavier in the hills than on the flatlands — water rushes down those creeks and gullies to become a furious torrent that rises in the

(Continued on next page)



The watershed of San Francisquito Creek covers 40 square miles from Skyline to the Bay and from Page Mill Road almost to Kings Mountain. Map courtesy of the late Ira Bonde.

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Restoring our creeks

(Continued from previous page)

massive ditch that is San Francisco Creek most of the year. These waters also provide passage for returning steelhead. Some years the creek tops its banks, flooding homes, streets and businesses in Menlo Park and Palo Alto.

Flooding is just one of a multitude of problems being tackled by CRMP. Others include loss of habitat to farming and building; invasion by non-native plants like German ivy; the dumping of garden clippings and debris in the creek; erosion; polluted runoff from landscaping, city businesses and stables; and — in the lower reaches — encampments of homeless.

Turnaround?

Ever since he found two large dead steelhead in the creek under El Palo Alto in 1988, Mr. Johnson, a Redwood City resident who works as a restorer for Folk Art International, has made a personal crusade of restoring the creek and organizing CRMP.

"It's a gradual process," explains Jerry Hearn of Los Trancos Woods, a member of the San Mateo County Fish and Wildlife Committee and CRMP. "Everywhere you step, there are five or six different jurisdictions you have to deal with. It's a compromise situation."

CRMP, the ultimate bureaucratic process, has accomplished a lot since it was established in 1993. More is in the pipeline.

For two winters now, steelhead have plunged up a new fish ladder to spawn in the headwaters of Los Trancos Creek, which had been cut off for more than a century by a dam that diverted water to create Felt Lake.

Stanford spent \$350,000, including \$95,000 from a state grant, to install the fish ladder near Alpine Inn in Portola Valley.

"There are lots of reasons this is a really good stream," says Mr. Johnson. Not many homes abut Los Trancos Creek, which forms the boundary between San Mateo and Santa Clara counties in the area of Portola Valley. There is lots of natural vegetation and brushy cover that provide shade where fish can stay cool in summer. Bushes also protect trout from birds and predators, and they harbor air-borne insects — food for the fish.

Also, year-round water supports young fish for 2 miles above the fish ladder to a major spring on the Arillaga — formerly Lee — property. For another 3 miles, winter rains support spawning steelhead that — unlike salmon — return year after year to lay their eggs.

Among the other accomplishments of CRMP are:

■ Volunteers have tested water quality and prepared an inventory of plants, birds, amphibians, and fish at 500-foot intervals along San Francisco Creek. Coordinated by the Coyote Creek Riparian Station in San Jose, this project will provide information on a map and computerized database for use by public and private agencies. It is now being extended to upstream tributaries.

■ Other fish ladders and blockages in the stream have been repaired or removed.

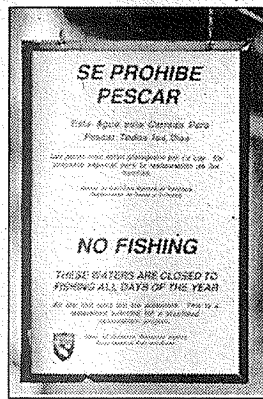
■ Volunteers organized by Bay Area Action have conducted numerous cleanups of the creek.

■ The Palo Alto police have removed most of the homeless encampments from the creek, except for the one under the El Camino bridge, which is on land belonging to Caltrans. Menlo Park police are also keeping an eye on the creek and dealing with problems, says Councilman Chuck Kinney.

In its first three years, CRMP has also been able to secure funds for a variety of new and ongoing projects.

Starting in August, Bay Area Action will have a state grant to hire a half-time coordinator to organize volunteers for creek cleanups and native plant restoration. "We want to get rid of invasive, non-native plants and plant the native species that belong in the creek and provide food and habitat for wildlife," says Peter Drekeimer of Bay Area Action. "There's going to be a new

COVER STORY



campaign to educate people that not all green is good."

Also, some of Marion Barksdale's sixth-graders at Flood School in Menlo Park will be able to monitor water quality in the creek next fall. A state grant allows the children to take samples of creek water and analyze them for pollutants.

Ms. Mytels, who has recently acquired four grants for creek restoration, says, "Nothing really happens unless you have a person in place."

Upstream/ downstream

Upstream problems differ considerably from those downstream, Mr. Johnson notes. In the foothills where the water originates, problems include illegal water diversions; highly erodible soils, particularly in Portola Valley; and runoff and dumping from stables.

Downstream in Menlo Park, Palo Alto and East Palo Alto, the problems are more likely to be flooding, and pollution and debris from homeless encampments. Dumping, erosion, and invading, non-native plants — in back yards and along creeks — are a problem everywhere.

Both upstream and downstream, much of the responsibility for nurturing and restoring the creek lies with property owners who back up to a creek or have a waterway traverse their lands. Cities can adopt plans and regulations, but the property owners are there every day.

In Woodside and Portola Valley, most of the streams run through back yards and private lands. In Menlo Park, 100 homes and four businesses back directly onto the

(Continued on Page 18)

When will we have Searsville Meadow?

Unless Stanford takes major measures, Searsville Lake will silt up and become Searsville Meadow in 15 to 50 years.

The lake has shrunk by well over two-thirds already, says Philippe Cohen, administrative director of Stanford's Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve. Major landslides, earthquakes or fires could loosen the highly erodible soils and speed the natural transition from lake to meadow, Dr. Cohen says.

Searsville Lake has been an important part of the Peninsula landscape ever since the Spring Valley Water Company built the dam in 1891. For many years it was a popular swimming hole and party spot. That ended in 1976, when Stanford bought the rights and included it in its Jasper Ridge Preserve. Even the horse riders had to leave.

Construction of the dam also blocked passage by steelhead

to the upper reaches of Sausal and Corte Madera creeks and their tributaries. The rainbow trout that live upstream stay and breed year-round; they can never get to the ocean to become steelhead.

Stanford is now studying the lake system to decide what to do with it, Dr. Cohen says. Options range from dredging mud out of the lake to letting it fill in. "We expect to have a plan by next March," he says.

Another problem is getting rid of the bass and other non-native fish that flourish in the lake and below.

Stanford is working with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) this summer to remove bass and other non-native fish from the stream below the dam. "They eat the native species like steelhead, red-legged frogs and resident rainbow trout," says Margaret Roper of DFG. "There are red-legged frogs in the creek."