

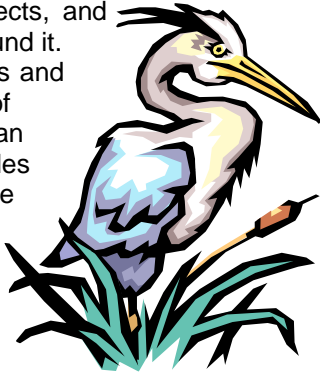
Preserving Our Creeks

Albany's five creeks, **Cerrito, Middle, Marin, Village,** and **Codornices** (see inside map), historically flowed within and along Albany's borders in their natural state. With development of streets and houses, sections of the five creeks were altered, channelized, or covered in pipes underground. Other creek sections remained open, some becoming victims of pollution and neglect—others thriving as healthy ecosystems.

Signs of a Healthy Creek

How do you know your creek is healthy? Here are some things to look for:

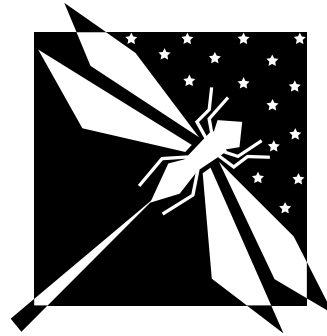
- Cool, clear water with no smells, foam, or excessive algae.
- Stable, gentle banks with deep-rooted plants to hold the soil.
- Shade provided by healthy trees and shrubs, preferably native, to keep the water cool and to protect against erosion.
- No litter, yard waste, or dumped material. Natural debris, such as logs, is okay.
- Healthy populations of insect larvae in the creek; birds, insects, and other wildlife around it.
- Natural meanders and a varied bottom of pools, riffles, clean gravel, and cobbles rather than fine sediment.



Maintenance Tips

As a creek-side resident, you share responsibility for maintaining the creek and its corridor. A healthy, well-maintained creek is a valuable amenity to your property.

- Don't clog your creek. City code prohibits the placement of yard trimmings or debris into the creek.
- Keep creek corridors free of trash, debris, pet waste, and excessive, impeding vegetation.
- However, don't "clean" the stream. Natural vegetation provides food and shelter for fish and aquatic organisms. Consider impacts on wildlife habitat, and possible erosion, before clearing or pruning along your creek.



- Plant or maintain native vegetation along the creek bank. Planting may be needed if the bank is bare or shade-less. Bare banks invite invasive "weed" species, increase water temperature, and decrease oxygen for aquatic life.
- Avoid using pesticides, herbicides or chemical fertilizers near a creek.

Plants Help In Many Ways

Plants provide food and habitat for wildlife and shade to keep the water cool—an essential for creek life. They also prevent erosion during the rainy season.

Native plants are good choices for many reasons. They generally have deep roots that minimize erosion, and provide the varied habitat needed by local butterflies, birds, and other species. Once established, they require little watering or pollution-causing chemicals. Invasive plants such as ivy, ice plant, pampas grass, non-native blackberries, vinca, or periwinkle plague creek-side areas and should be replaced with natives.



Protect Water Quality:

- Minimize or eliminate the use of pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizer.
- Wash vehicles at a car wash. Repair and clean oil or other leaks promptly.
- Plan remodeling projects for summer, when there is little rain.
- Cover piles of material and do not let dirt, paint, concrete, or other construction materials wash to the creek.
- Report illegal dumping to the City.
- Have your sewer laterals inspected and repaired as age, roots, and Bay Area frequent earth movements lead to breaks.
- Landscape so that water soaks into soil. Minimize paving and concrete—use other materials.

Permits are Required to:

- 1) modify the natural flow of the creek;
- 2) locate structures closer than twenty (20') feet from the top of the bank of the creek channel;
- 3) deposit material onto a creek bank;
- 4) place any loose material adjacent to the creek that could result in a diversion of the water flow or the inclusion of the material into the water; and
- 5) construct pipes or other structures that carry water or other runoff directly to the creek.

Contact the City Community Development Department at 528-5760 for information.

State and Federal Permits:

Alteration of creek banks **requires** a permit from the California Department of Fish and Game.

- You may also need permission from:
- * Regional Water Quality Control Board
 - * US Army Corps of Engineers
 - * National Marine Fisheries Service

Before beginning any construction, landscaping, or bank stabilization, talk with City staff at 510-528-5760.

If you suspect a problem:

If work or dumping in a streambed seems likely to cause erosion or harm wildlife, or if you suspect such work is being done without state or federal permits, you may call the California Dept. of Fish and Game Hotline: **(800) 952-5400.**

For More Information:

City of Albany

Community Development ...528-5760
 Spills/sewage leaks524-9543
 After hours/holidays (Fire)..528-5770
 Police Dispatch525-7300

Friends of Five Creeks.....848-9358
 f5creeks@aol.com, www.fivecreeks.org

Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program510-670-5543
 or888-BAYWISE
 www.cleanwaterprogram.com

Native Here Nursery549-0211

UC Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program..639-1371
 (advice on pest identification and control, garden challenges)

Bio-Integral Resource Center524-2567
 (less toxic pest management)
 www.birc.org

Alameda County Waste Management Authority 877-STOPWASTE
 (Bay Friendly Gardening Guidelines)
 www.stopwaste.org

Waterways Restoration Institute848-2211

ALBANY'S CREEKS



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