

New Culvert at Hal Brown Park at Creekside

by Sandy Guldman

2013

Work has started on designing the replacement of a worn out, undersized culvert connecting the downstream end of Creekside marsh to Corte Madera Creek. The new, larger culvert will help us meet two major goals for Creekside marsh: improving habitat for birds and other wildlife that use the marsh, and increasing the tidal prism (the volume of water flowing between mean high tide and mean low tide). The latter will maintain the capacity of the marsh's sloughs—and reduce the need for dredging Corte Madera Creek. The project is being funded through a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP), authorized by the Regional Water Quality Control Board as part of a fine assessed on Ross Valley Sanitary District for large sewage spills in December 2010. The team, including Friends, Stetson Engineers and WRA, is working with Marin County Parks and Marin County Flood Control District to design the project. Major issues are poor soils and their role in plant distribution, impacts of more water on vegetation and marsh morphology, and the potential for increasing the risk of flooding.

The area most impacted by the culvert is the narrow panhandle in the southeastern part of Hal Brown Park at Creekside, bounded by Bon Air Road and the multi-use path along Corte Madera Creek. The marsh was filled with dredge spoils when the Corte Madera Creek Flood Control Project was constructed in the late 1960s; when it was restored about 15 years later, some areas were left with compacted, gravelly soil unsuitable for marsh vegetation. Now, about 35 years later, these areas are still unvegetated. And the undersized culvert, which mutes tidal action in the marsh, has allowed some channels to fill. We will be including measures to replace the unsuitable soil and promote restoration of the original channels. A future project will replace a group of culverts that serves the upstream end of the marsh.



Left: Downstream end of the old culvert. Right: Former channel, now filled with sediment where Jaumea, saltgrass, and pickleweed grow. Photos by Sandy Guldman

Any use of text or photographs for other than personal purposes is prohibited without permission from Friends of Corte Madera Creek Watershed
Friends of Corte Madera Creek Watershed P.O. Box 415, Larkspur, California 94977
info@friendsofcortemaderacreek.org