

Good Neighbor Policy Helps Habitat and Reduces Flooding

by Sandy Guldman
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Verle and Marlene Sorgen, owners of 2501 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in the Manor area of Fairfax, welcomed the widening of Fairfax Creek on their property as a contribution to reducing local flooding along Olema Road.

The Town of Fairfax hired Maggiora & Ghilotti, with a financial contribution from the Department of Water Resources Urban Streams Restoration Program, to widen the creek and install erosion control cloth during late summer 2006. In January 2007, a Marin Conservation Corps (MCC) crew, hired by Friends of Corte Madera Creek Watershed with funding from the Ross Valley Sanitary District and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, installed almost 500 plants, drove in more than 100 willow stakes, built an impressive willow wall, and constructed a willow mattress as bank protection.

In late March and early April, the same MCC crew returned to weed and install a drip irrigation system that will help the plants survive their first three years.

Buckeyes, dogwoods, box elders, bigleaf maples, California black walnuts, red willows, yellow willows, arroyo willows, and coast live oaks will soon be forming a riparian canopy over the creek, with an understory of coyote-brush, elderberry, California rose, California blackberry, sedges, and rushes. These plants join bays and oaks plus several other pre-existing natives that are sprouting vigorously.

Next time you travel down Olema Road, stop for a look – the site is just downstream of 300 Olema Road, and above a waterfall.



These two photos were taken at the Olema Road site about three months apart. In the top photo, taken in January 2007, the Marin Conservation Corps crew is building the willow wall. In the bottom picture, taken in April 2007, the willow wall is beginning to sprout. Photos by Sandy Guldman.

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