



Friends of Sausal Creek

# **CULTIVATING ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS:**

## **Engaging Oakland Youth in Urban Watershed Restoration**

Elena Stenger



# SAUSAL CREEK WATERSHED

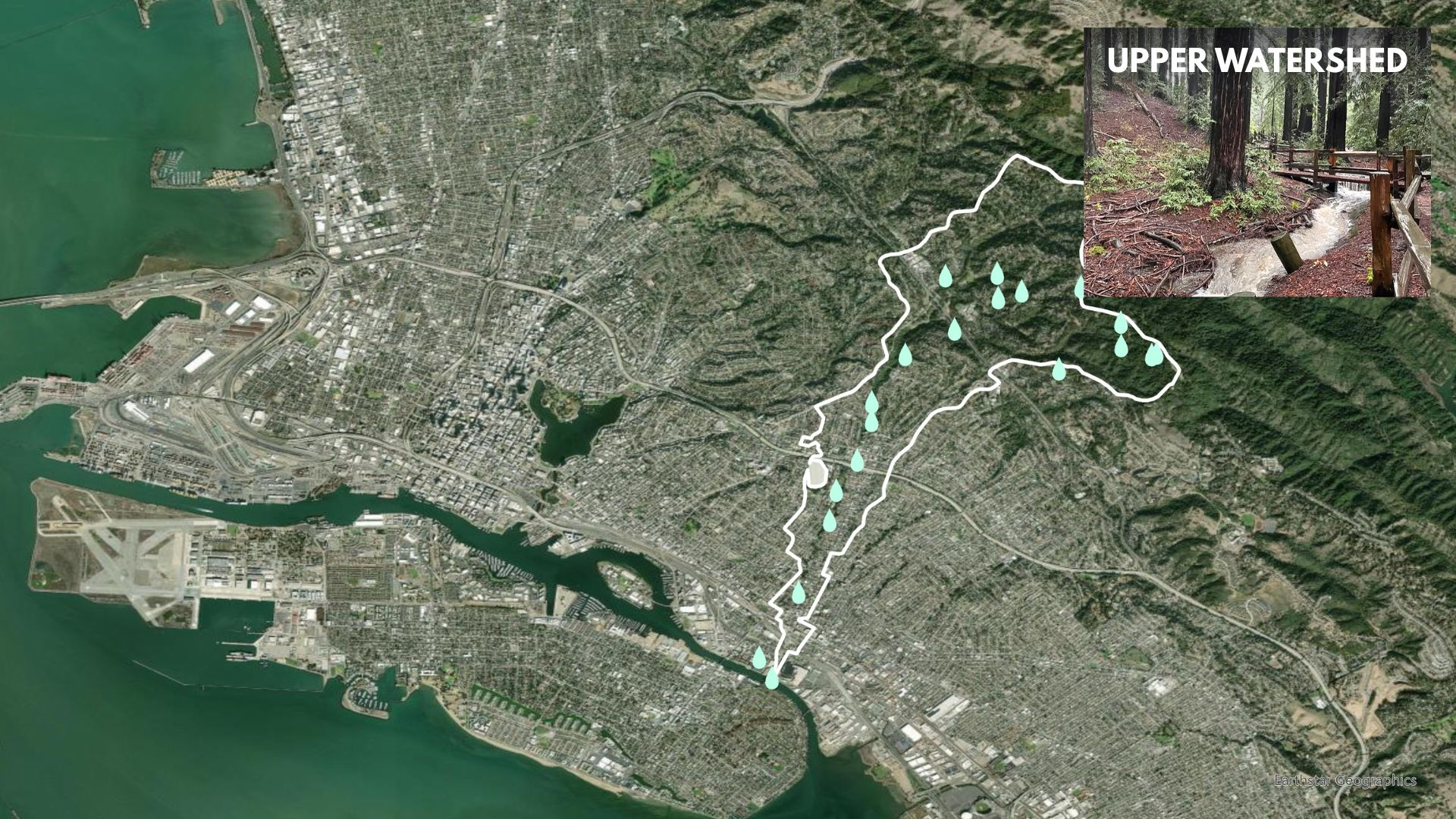
## Oakland, California

- Unceded ancestral land of the Ohlone people, known as Huchiun
- 2,600-acre watershed home to roughly 27,000 people





# UPPER WATERSHED





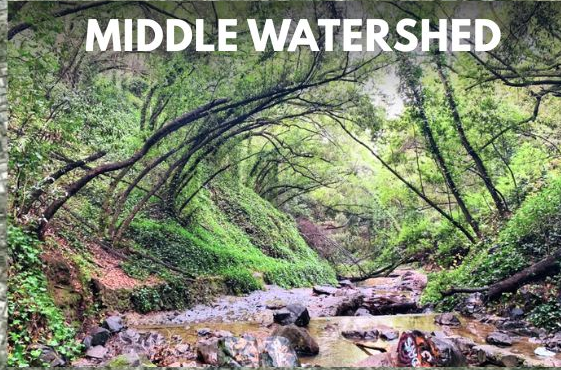




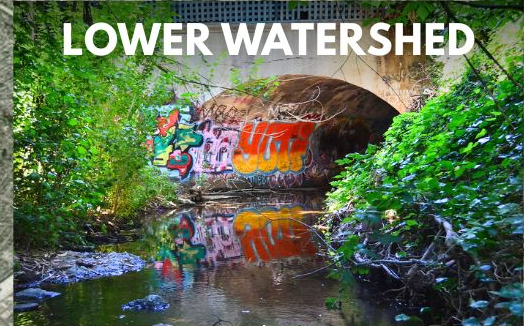
## UPPER WATERSHED



## MIDDLE WATERSHED



## LOWER WATERSHED





## UPPER WATERSHED



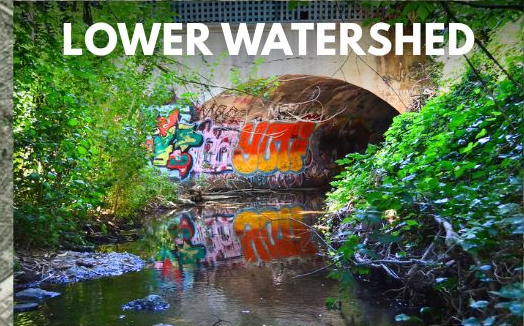
## MIDDLE WATERSHED



## OUTLET TO THE ALAMEDA/OAKLAND ESTUARY

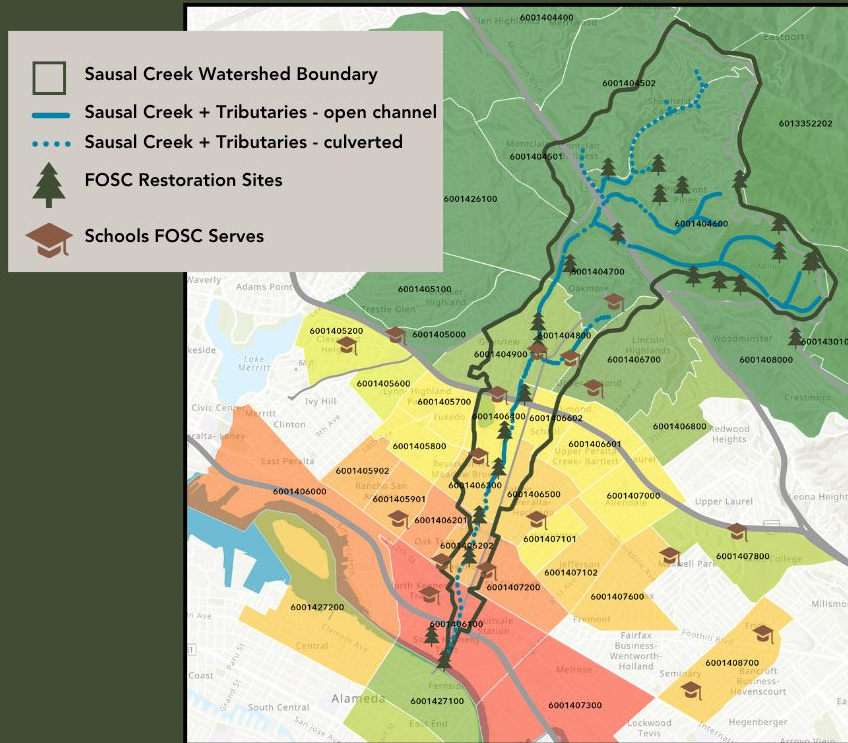


## LOWER WATERSHED





# CLIMATE RESILIENCE



This map displays CalEnviroScreen 4.0 scores showing **pollution burden** and **environmental exposures** across the Sausal Creek Watershed and surrounding area.

Habitat restoration and regular stewardship can improve air quality, water quality, and **climate resilience** for Oakland's most environmentally impacted residents.



# Oakland Unified School District looking to shed nearly \$90 million from budget

By [NBC Bay Area staff](#) • Published August 29, 2025 • Updated on August 29, 2025 at 6:24 pm

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August 29, 2025 at 6:24 pm

EDUCATION

## Oakland Unified prepares to make steep budget cuts

**CBS NEWS**  
BAY AREA

By Da Lin  
September 27, 2025 / 8:45 PM PDT / CBS San Francisco





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by: Bay City News  
Posted: Feb 18, 2025 / 03:18 PM PST  
Updated: Feb 18, 2025 / 03:19 PM PST



SOS Meals on Wheels director of advocacy Kim Olson (center) joins leaders and volunteers from charitable community organizations that serve Oakland who spoke out against the ...  
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## Cultural grants ‘wiped out’ by Oakland budget cuts

‘We haven’t figured out how we are going to pick up the slack yet.’

by Azucena Rasilla

Dec. 19, 2024, 5:13 p.m.





# 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

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**2,000 students**  
*field trips and classroom visits*





# 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

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**1,600 OAKLAND YOUTH**

*service-learning & workforce development  
initiatives*



**CIVICORPS**



**EAGLE SCOUTS**



**TEAM OAKLAND**



# SPRING STREAM TEAM

launched in 2024 in collaboration with Youth Employment Partnership 

A Spring Break internship for Oakland high schoolers focused on protecting biodiversity, restoring native plant habitats, monitoring water quality, and training in proper tool safety and usage.



53 paid internships so far



# SPRING STREAM TEAM

## PRE- / POST-PROGRAM ASSESSMENT DATA

### Question: What is a watershed?

"I don't know much about watersheds, i've been to Dimond Park before but never heard of Sausal Creek Watershed"



"The area around a creek/river/waterway that flows into it/effects it."

"I dont know what watersheds are"



"The land the water flows to. Water flows down through Dimond and later ends up in the ocean."

**Pre-Program**  
correct response

**20%**



**Post-Program**  
correct response

**80%**





# SPRING STREAM TEAM

## PRE- / POST-PROGRAM ASSESSMENT DATA

**Question:** What are native species? How do they compare to invasive species and why are they important?

"I dont know"



"Native species are plants that are from here and invasive plants are plants that are not from here which is a danger to the native species."

"Species that live in a natural way"



"Natives are species that are from a particular area and support the ecosystemic success of that area."

*Pre-Program*

40%

*Post-Program*

95%





# SPRING STREAM TEAM

## PRE- / POST-PROGRAM ASSESSMENT DATA

Question: What is one way you can protect the creek or your surrounding natural environment, other than not littering?

"Clean up." → "One way is to have native species and biodiversity."

"I dont know." → "Removing plants that are invasive like foxtails."

*Pre-Program*

20%

*Post-Program*

85%





Map of Alameda County showing school districts and boundaries. The map is color-coded by district: yellow for Fremont, orange for Newark, red for Union City, and green for other areas. Blue circles with graduation caps highlight specific locations. Blue lines represent major roads. Black lines represent district boundaries. Numerous ZIP codes are labeled across the map.

**By taking what they've learned through Spring Stream Team back to their homes and schools, our interns can effect real change and support their communities in building up climate resilience.**



# SPRING STREAM TEAM: **INTERN TESTEMONIALS**



**"The calm I feel when I do exercise like hiking or restoration is great because it wakes me up and makes me feel good. I will definately be coming back to these spots sometime in the future with friends."**

**-12<sup>th</sup> Grader, Cristo Rey De La Salle High School**

**"My favorite environment has to be the shoreline ecosystem at the Estuary ... Living in Oakland I didnt know Oakland had its own beaches ... Now knowing Oakland has a beach of its own I want to restore it."**

**-12th Grader, Oakland High School**



**"The past few weeks were a good experience as now I understand how work would feel like and have the experience I need ... I had a great time and would like to work in the future like this again."**

**-11th Grader, Fremont High School**





Friends of Sausal Creek is working hard to secure grants to continue funding this program - there is no guarantee we will be able to run Spring Stream Team every year.



A photograph of a small, clear stream flowing over a bed of smooth, grey rocks. A large, weathered log lies horizontally across the upper third of the frame, partially overhanging the water. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding green foliage and the sky. The scene is set in a lush, wooded area with various plants and trees visible in the background.

**QUESTIONS?**