



RESTORATION

Redwood Creek at Muir Beach



The Redwood Creek Watershed

- Starts high on Mt. Tamalpais and goes through the old-growth redwood forests of Muir Woods National Monument and the project site at Muir Beach before emptying into the Pacific Ocean (see attached map)
- Part of the UNESCO Golden Gate Biosphere Reserve and one of the 25 global biodiversity “hot spots” recognized by The Nature Conservancy
- Home to the southernmost continually-recurring population of Coho salmon in the United States. Despite currently low salmon numbers, this creek is one of the most productive and restorable watersheds in the area
- Also home to locally-threatened steelhead trout and threatened California red-legged frogs

The Current State of Muir Beach

- Once an expansive network of wetlands, dunes, and a 13-acre open water lagoon
- More than a century of ecological degradation from agriculture, recreation, and road construction has completely altered the creek’s alignment, flow, connection to the floodplain, and ability to support salmon
- Today, a large levee, the Muir Beach parking lot, and an undersized vehicular bridge on a Pacific Way constrict stream flow and cause large loads of sediment that would otherwise be carried to the ocean to be deposited in the creek
- Sedimentation is so severe that it causes frequent flooding on Pacific Way, has made portions of the creek bed higher than the adjacent pasture, and has buried fences from the 1960s all the way up the posts
- Dunes that naturally occur in the area are absent due to damage from human trampling

The Restoration Project

The Larger Vision

- A comprehensive restoration of natural function to the creek, wetlands, intermittent tidal lagoon, and dunes to create and maintain habitat for sustainable populations of endangered and threatened species
- Includes improvements to public access, resource interpretation, and increased opportunities for public education and community-based restoration
- Consulting with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (representing the Coast Miwok who historically occupied the site) to incorporate cultural values and indigenous archaeological resources

2009 Project Activities

- Restoration of a 1.4-acre area adjacent to the existing tidal lagoon—currently covered by artificial fill and non-native kikuyu grass—to a native brackish wetland
- Creation of an emergent wetland for California red-legged frog breeding habitat
- Reconfiguration of the southern end of the parking lot to increase natural creek function and reduce flooding.