

## **Critters celebrating ecology and collaboration with open house**

*Jenny Blaker*

Ecology is about the study of relationships, the dynamic interplay of living organisms with their physical environment. Think of rock, sun and air, and the diverse living beings between them forming systems and landscapes - from the tiniest cell to the vast oceans swirling around our watery planet. Nothing exists in isolation; everything exists in relation to everything else. Our bodies are made from stardust, from water, from the air we breathe, from the food we eat and the interactions between all of these in a constantly changing series of processes. From tiny cellular and molecular adjustments to the movements of our inner tides responding to the gravitational pull of the moon, we are constantly moving flows of energy. Recently I went to the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, an amazing facility offering a giddy kaleidoscope of experiences about life on this miraculous planet. The newly-renovated destination in Golden Gate Park offers exhibits about Charles Darwin and his observations in the Galapagos islands that led to his theory of evolution, hands-on interactive displays about global climate change and vivid ways to measure our own ecological footprint, a two-and-a-half acre living roof covered in plants and pollinating insects and much, much more. Wearing 3D goggles we saw a movie about the extraordinary world of bugs, with close-up views of gory encounters between prey and predator. Then to the planetarium for a glimpse of the mind-expanding vastness of the solar systems and universes. Our planet is like a mere grain of sand in an infinite ocean. What an aweinspiring and humbling experience - talk about getting things into perspective. So what does this have to do with creeks in Cotati? Well, everything, really. If you stretch your imagination a little way, you'll see everything we do to the land here in Cotati and Rohnert Park affects everything downstream. Our parking lots and backyards drain to the storm drains and wash into the creeks and from there into the Laguna de Santa Rosa, on to the Russian River and out to sea. There, the water evaporates and forms clouds that rain to earth and wash sediment down off Sonoma Mountain into the creeks that drain into the low-lying plains around towns and cities or to someone else's plains and towns and cities on this swirling Planet Water. As the tectonic plates of the Pacific Coast grind their way in both directions along the San Andreas fault pushing up the Sonoma Mountains, the hot molten core of the earth heats underground water that pushes its way up as steam to the geysers near Calistoga and other geysers and volcanoes erupting in other parts of the world. On Saturday, October 10, Cotati Creek Critters will host an open house on "Collaboration for Successful Urban Stream Restoration" to recognize and celebrate the essential partnerships. In attendance will be a wide range of organizations, groups and individuals which have made the restoration project possible. There will also be an unveiling of three new interpretive signs about the biology, history and restoration of the

Laguna. The day will begin at 9 a.m. with an overview of urban stream restoration, a tour of the native plant nursery and a look at restoration tools. Guest speakers scheduled to begin speaking at 10 a.m. include California

State Assemblyman Jared Huffman, Grant Davis of the Sonoma County Water Agency and David Bannister of

the Laguna Foundation.

At 11 a.m. there will be a tour of the project restoration site and an unveiling of the interpretive signs. For details

visit [www.CotatiCreekCritters.info](http://www.CotatiCreekCritters.info) or contact [jenny@creeks.cotati.info](mailto:jenny@creeks.cotati.info) or 792-4422.