

# LAMORINDA WEEKLY

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[printer friendly](#)

[download pdf](#)

Published February 18th, 2008

## Restoring the Creeks at Del Rey Elementary

By *Sophie Braccini*



Mrs. Brasch's 4th grade class plants Santa Barbara sedge given by the Friends of the Orinda Creeks  
Photo Sophie Braccini

Kids frolicking in the creeks can be a pleasant and playful sight to see. When they are doing it for restoration purposes it is called environmental science, and in addition to having fun students are learning the rules of the natural world. On Tuesday, February 10th, all 4th and 5th grade students from Orinda's Del Rey Elementary School participated in a hands-on restoration project on a section of Moraga Creek bordering their school.

The project is part of a larger effort by the Friends of Orinda Creeks (FOC) and The Restoration Trust, a non-profit organization dedicated to offering community groups assistance in creek and wetland restoration projects, to restore the natural environment of the Orinda creeks.

Class after class, the children came down to the creek with their teachers. They were assigned a part of the riverbank and the mission to remove invasive plants (such as ivy) and replace it with native sedge or willows.

The groups were having fun pulling on the strong roots, despite that morning's biting cold. Once most of the ivy was gone on their assigned patch, the team of biologists that came to assist dug small holes in the ground where children planted the new natives.

"This completely ties our 4th grade natural science curriculum," said 4th grade teacher Terri Brasch, "we study California land forms, rivers and creeks and we work on how to protect our environment." Brasch explained that in preparation for the workday they researched water shed and the importance of what is put in the

land.

The children were aware of the impact of their work: "We are removing the non-native plants and replacing it with native plants," said 4th grader Kylie. When asked about the purpose of doing so, she added that this would bring back the local critters and attract more trout to the stream.

"This is exactly the purpose," confirmed John Zentner, a member of both organizations. "The rainbow trout is the big predator of this ecosystem, it feeds on smaller fish, mosquito larva, and bugs. This fish is important for the restoration of a balanced and healthy eco-system," he explained. Following the physical activity in the creek, Zentner gave information to the children about local creek flora, fauna and animals that rely on the healthy homeostasis of this habitat.

"When you talk about wildlife to children they usually picture the rain forest or Africa," said Zentner, "but this is wildlife in their midst, like a micro rain forest."

The restoration at Del Rey is part of a large project in which the FOC and the Restoration Trust have been involved for years. They identify parts of the creek that need restoration and work with residents to gain access.

"Working with the Orinda School District and Del Rey was really easy," said Zentner, "they were really supportive." Del Rey Principal Kirsten Theurer, who came to the creek to see the work in progress, agrees: "Our school integrates as much as possible its natural environment to enrich the learning experience."

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[back to top](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA