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AGENDA

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE Environmental Quality Committee

Tuesday, June 9, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Hana Gardens
10870 San Pablo Avenue

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

7:00 p.m. CONVENE SPECIAL MEETING

- 1. ROLL CALL** – Chair Fred Bialy; Vice-Chair Pamela Austin; Members Howdy Goudey, Sean O'Connor, Eleanor Pilling Chapplelear (Youth Member), Mordecai Stayton, Sheila Tarbet
- 2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC** (5 min.)
Remarks are typically limited to three minutes per person, and may be on anything within the subject matter jurisdiction of the body. Remarks on non-agenda items will be heard first. Remarks on agenda items will be heard at the time the item is discussed.
- 3. COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS** (5 min.)
Staff and/or Council Liaison Carolyn Wysinger may report on policies, priorities, and actions taken by the City Council, and/or on matters of general interest to the EQC.
- 4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** (5 min.)
Consider a motion adopting the minutes of the EQC meeting held on May 12, 2026.
- 5. COLLABORATION WITH THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE** (5 min.)
Hear updates, participate in discussion and consider possible action items regarding collaborating with the City's Urban Forest Committee.
- 6. EQC MEMBER APPOINTMENT PROCESS** (20 min.)
Conduct an interview, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding recommending for appointment members to the EQC.
- 7. FY 25-26 WORK PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS** (40 min)
Hear updates, participate in discussion and consider possible action items regarding implementation of the FY 25-26 work plan and documentation of FY 25-26 accomplishments.
- 8. EQC BUDGET AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS** (30 min.)
Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding planning, logistics, and expenditures for the EQC calendar of events, including:

- Green Team 2026 Cleanups
 - Sat 6/27 – Northern Gateways (Meet at Northeast corner of Knott & Key)
 - Sun 8/2 Baxter Creek (w/ Baxter Volunteers)
 - Sat 9/19 Coastal Cleanup Day – Location TBD
 - Sun 10/11 – Northern Gateways (Meet at Southwest Potrero & San Pablo Ave, Del Norte Plaza parking lot)
 - Sun 12/6 – Baxter Creek (with Baxter volunteers)
- July 4th WorldOne Festival
 - Planning for tabling

9. ELECTRIFY MY BLOCK PROGRAM DISCUSSION ON HOW TO SUPPORT THIS PROGRAM IN EL CERRITO (5 min.)

Receive updates, participate in discussion and consider possible action items regarding support for [Electrify My Block](#).

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (5 min.)

Hear committee member announcements and suggestions for future EQC agenda items. Potentially engage in discussion and make decisions regarding logistics of EQC consideration of items including:

- Annual Member Recognition Event – Wednesday, June 10, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.
- BAAQMD Updates
- Foodware Ordinance Support

11. ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the Staff Liaison, Christina Leard, at (510) 215-4338. Notification 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the members regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at the El Cerrito Recycling + Environmental Resource Center (7501 Schmidt Lane) during normal business hours.



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DRAFT MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE Environmental Quality Committee

Tuesday, May 12, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers
10890 San Pablo Avenue

This Meeting Place is Wheelchair Accessible

CONVENE REGULAR MEETING Chair Bialy called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m

- 1. ROLL CALL** – Chair Fred Bialy; Vice-Chair Pamela Austin; Members Howdy Goudey, Sean O’Connor, Eleanor Pilling Chappellear (Youth Member), Mordecai Stayton **Absent:** Sheila Tarbet **Also Present:** Christina Leard, Staff Liaison
- 2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**
Public comment was received from Richmond resident Cordell Hindler.
- 3. COUNCIL/STAFF LIAISONS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS**
Staff Liaison Leard provided updates on the following items:
 - Countywide Survey
 - Community Wildfire Resilience Workshops
 - Biennial Budget process for FY 27 and FY 28
- 4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**
Consider a motion adopting the minutes of the EQC meeting held on and April 14, 2026.
Move/Second: Bialy/O’Connor **Action:** Passed a motion to adopt the minutes of the April 14, 2026 EQC meeting. **Ayes:** Austin, Bialy, Goudey, O’Connor, Pilling Chappellear (Youth Member), Stayton **Noes:** None
- 5. COLLABORATION WITH THE URBAN FOREST COMMITTEE**
Urban Forest Committee member Robin Mitchell provided updates from the most recent meeting of the Urban Forest Committee.
- 6. PRESENTATION FROM FRIENDS OF THE HILLSIDE**
Committee members received a presentation, participated in discussion and considered possible action items regarding collaborating with the Friends of the Hillside Natural Area.
- 7. FY 25-26 WORK PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
Committee members heard updates, participated in discussion and considered possible action items regarding implementation of the FY 25-26 work plan and documentation of FY 25-26 accomplishments.

Public comment was received from Richmond resident Cordell Hindler.

Ad Hoc subcommittee: Pam, Howdy, Fred, and Eleanor to plan an event.

8. EQC BUDGET AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Hear updates, participate in discussion, and consider possible action items regarding planning, logistics, and expenditures for the EQC calendar of events, including:

- Green Team 2026 Cleanups
 - Sat 4/25 Earth Day – Northern Gateways (*Debrief*)
 - Sat 6/27 – Northern Gateways (Meet at Northeast corner of Knott & Key)
 - Sun 8/2 Baxter Creek (w/ Baxter Volunteers)
 - Sat 9/19 Coastal Cleanup Day – Location TBD
 - Sun 10/11 – Northern Gateways (Meet at Southwest Potrero & San Pablo Ave, Del Norte Plaza parking lot)
 - Sun 12/6 – Baxter Creek (with Baxter volunteers)
- April 25, 2026 – [El Cerrito Earth Day](#) & Repair Workshop (*Debrief*)
- May 2-3, 2026 – El Cerrito 12th Annual [Hillside Festival](#) (*Debrief*)
- May 14, 2026 – [Bike to Wherever Day](#)
- May 16, 2026 – [Spring Citywide Garage Sale](#)
- July 4th WorldOne Festival
 - Planning for tabling (Ad Hoc subcommittee: Pam & Fred)

9. CANCEL OR RELOCATE JUNE 9 EQC MEETING

Committee members agreed to relocate the June 9, 2026 EQC meeting to Hana Gardens. Public comment was received from Richmond resident Cordell Hindler.

10. ELECTRIFY MY BLOCK PROGRAM DISCUSSION ON HOW TO SUPPORT THIS PROGRAM IN EL CERRITO

Committee members heard updates, participated in discussion and considered possible action items regarding support for Electrify My Block.

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Staff and Committee members provided updates on recent events the EQC has supported and discussed plans for future events in 2026, including:

- Annual Member Recognition Event – Wednesday, June 10, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.
- FY 25/26 Accomplishments (due 7/1/26)
- BAAQMD Updates
- Foodware Ordinance Support

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Fred Bialy, Chair

This is to clarify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Regular Environmental Quality Committee meeting of May 12, 2026 as approved by the Environmental Quality Committee.

Christina Leard, Staff Liaison

Volunteer efforts in the HNA Past, present, future

Updates on the progress made in the Hillside Natural Area
by Friends of the Hillside



Context

- **HNA Reality Check**
 - **Large: 100 acres** vs. 30 acres at Albany Hill — a local source of inspiration, where strong city support has enabled long-term, consistent, and effective stewardship.
 - Limited city funding: **< \$20,000/year**
 - **Understaffed: Limited dedicated staff capacity, with Stephen balancing multiple city responsibilities**
 - Reliance on temporary funding: **~\$900,000 Measure X over 4 years (exceptional, not recurring).**
 - **Thank you Fire Wise!**
- **Limits of Current Approach**
 - Restoration methods exist, but **not feasible without baseline funding**
 - **One-time grants ≠ long-term sustainability**
- **Moving Forward**
 - Estimated need: **~\$300,000/year**
 - Shift toward **predictable, stable, ongoing funding**
- **Community Strength:**
 - Volunteers and local groups are essential to current progress and long-term sustainability
 - Our year-round presence and knowledge of the land complement the bigger-picture plans created by consultants and people off-site.

About Friends of the Hillside

Officially since Spring 2024

Fall 2022: Community-led initiative in the “Hidden Valley” area

Part of the **Berkeley Partners for Parks umbrella non profit**

Like Friends of Five Creeks and Pacific Oak Community Garden

Our Motto: *Steward the land • Reduce fire risk • Build community*

Our Philosophy

- Small, consistent community actions, repeated over time
- Learning by listening to the land
- Seeing the HNA as a **hidden gem**, not just a high-risk WUI

What We Cultivate

- Biodiversity
- Education
- Community connection



Humans are part of the ecosystem.

- Our actions shape ecological outcomes, positively or negatively
- People can function as **caretakers**, not just users of the land. Sense of responsibility
- Long-term resilience depends on **active human participation**

Steward the Land (1/2)

- **Plant ID, phenology & monitoring**
 - Updated Native Plant List & Ongoing Population Monitoring
 - Habitat Identification: Soil, geology, hydrology, and site history analysis
 - In progress: a restoration-focused map of the HNA.
- **Restoration approach to date**
 - **Adaptive stewardship:** Learning from the land + Improving practices over time
 - **Foundational work: French Broom removal**
 - **Maintain legacy areas**
 - Builds on years of work by Friends of Five Creeks and Trail Trekkers - See appendix
 - Revisit annually to remove new French broom seedlings
 - Long-lived seed bank (>30 years) requires sustained follow-up
 - **Sustain efforts in newly opened areas**
 - First 3 years are critical
 - Ongoing management of disturbed soil and heavy seedling recruitment
 - **Maintain areas cleared by Measure X crews in upper Madera** (thistle and broom removal)
 - **Triage** (like an emergency room): prioritize early weed management, targeting species such as crofton weed, field calendula, and stinkwort before they spread.



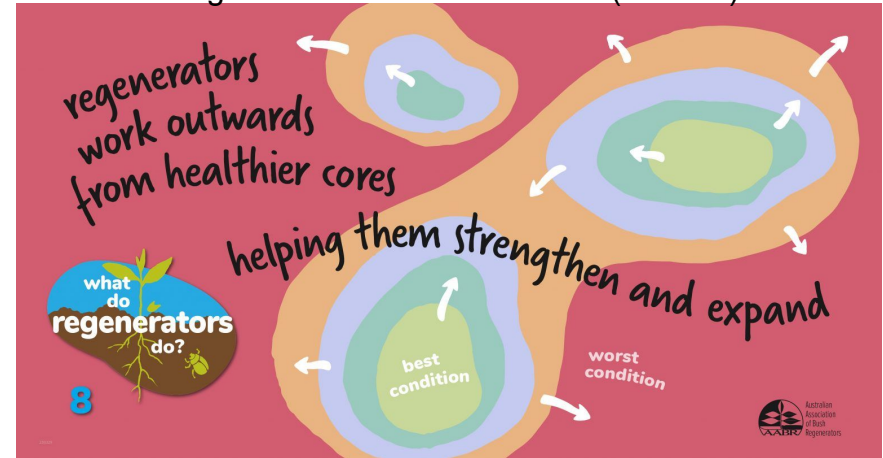
Steward the Land (2/2)

The Bradley Method (Passive Restoration)

- Developed by bush regenerators, the **Bradley** sisters, in Australia
- Focuses on working **with natural processes**, not against them

Core Principles

- Start with **healthy native “islands”**
- Understand their habitat conditions and ecological context
- Work **from best to most degraded areas**
- Use **minimal disturbance** (mainly hand weeding)
- Give native species a competitive advantage
- Allow natural seed set and dispersal
- Let native plants **regenerate naturally from the seed bank**



Outcome

Gradual, low-impact restoration that builds **resilient ecosystems over time**

Reduce Fire Risk (1/4)

The HNA is a Wildland–Urban Interface (WUI) site classified as a high fire risk zone with close proximity to homes and schools.

Top contributors to fire risk:

- Invasive grasses
- Dense, forest-like thickets of french broom
- Dessicated coyote brush branches
- Invasive fire prone trees

What have we done to reduce fire risk?

- Thatched dead grasses
- Trimmed dead branches from coyote brush
- Removed thousands of french broom stalks one-by-one

→ **Created ~100 piles of this flammable material** 🎉

To reduce the fuel load, we already filled dozens of dumpsters but at the lower Madera area, the site is steep and difficult to access, and the volume of material is significant, hauling it away is not a viable option.



4 volunteers removed this dense thicket of french broom

Reduce Fire Risk (2/4)

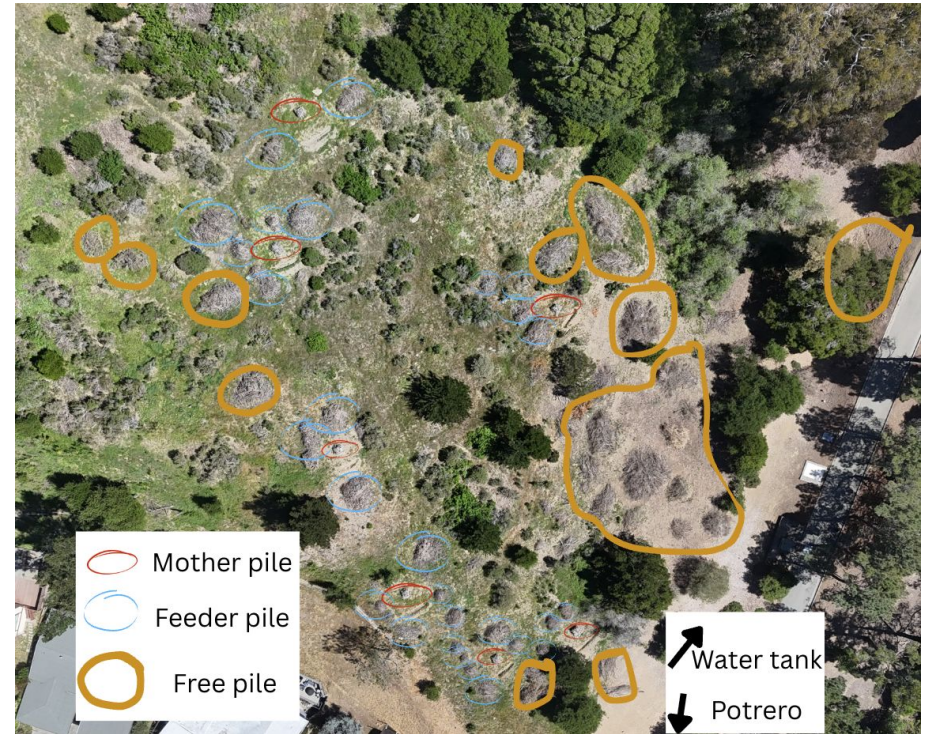
100 piles of dead vegetation 🌳 but...

What happens next?

- Partnered with El Cerrito Kensington Fire Department to strategize fuel removal - controlled burn method
 - Fire Chief Chase Beckman surveyed the site 2x to confirm that our piles were best-practice, and ready for a safe, controlled burn.
- Scheduled a prescribed burn of these piles, targeting **June 10th to 12th**
- 50% of the piles will be burned
 - Fire fuel has been building up for decades. While this is the first controlled burn in years, the Fire Dept is confident that they can arrange a yearly burn moving forward until fuel load is reduced.

Estimated impact: piling reduced fire risk by 30%*, and then burning will reduce risk by 81%*

*Estimates from nonlinear fuel model. see Appendix for methods



Reduce Fire Risk (3/4)

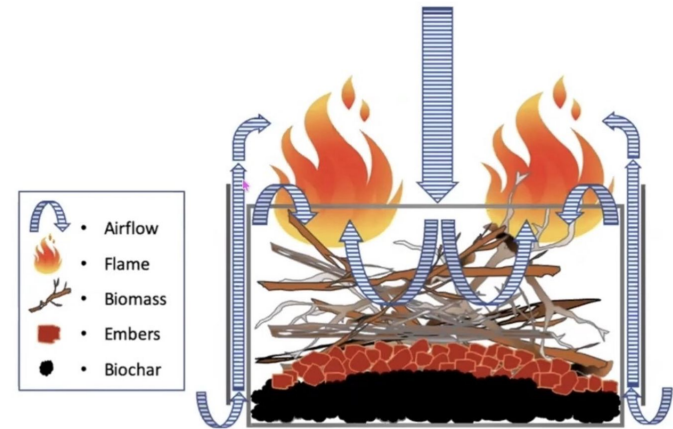
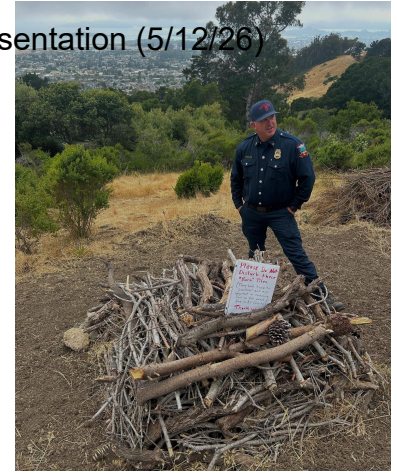
Public Safety

While Indigenous stewards have used controlled burns for centuries to manage vegetation, we recognize that they can raise public safety concerns.

- Contact with Madera Elementary school
- The El Cerrito Kensington Fire Dept. will issue public statements notifying residents of the upcoming burn.
- We are advocating for practices that reduce smoke and improve efficiency, including producing biochar.

Future methods to explore

- Flame-cap (ring-of-fire) kiln: an engineered, airflow-controlled system for producing biochar that burns cleanly and reduces emissions
- There are portable ones for \$2,000
<https://tarterparts.com/products/ring-of-fire>
- Already used by Sonoma Ecology Center + recent scientific studies
- Fundraising + biochar byproduct resale?



Ring of Fire Biochar Kiln

Airflow and Flames – Counter-flow air from the top keeps embers contained and flame lengths low.

Reduce Fire Risk = Climate Action (4/4)



Fire resilience, ecological restoration, and climate action are not separate goals.

They reinforce one another.

- Reducing wildfire risks helps prevent catastrophic carbon release from large fires
- Restoration leads to healthier landscapes, with less overcrowded and unhealthy vegetation, that can store more carbon over time
- Meadow restoration plays an important role as well. Native grasslands are powerful long-term carbon sinks and support resilient ecosystems.

[Video](#)

Our local champion is Purple Needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*), California's state grass:

- Deep root systems to store carbon in the soil
 - Its roots commonly extend **2–6 feet deep**, and can reportedly reach **up to 16 feet** in deep soils.
- The backbone of native annual wildflower communities and, in consequence, of the pollinators that depend on them.
- It is more resilient to drought and fire than invasive annual grasses
 - Commonly **50–100+ years**. Some documented individuals may live **150–200 years**

Build community

- Open to all ages and experience levels
- Creating a hands-on connection to nature
- Building a dedicated stewardship community
- Sharing knowledge about: Native plants, Fire ecology, Land stewardship

Since Spring 2024: 1,500 volunteer hours

- 2x work parties a week
- 1x per month with weed warriors from F5C
- Special events: UC Berkeley Project: 2x a year, 50 students

Notable community events:

- Collaboration with the city of El Cerrito: Arbor Event, Earth Day
- MLK Day of Service with 30+ Madera Elementary families, Easter Calendula Hunt



Looking Ahead (1/2)

Scope

- **Maintain legacy areas**
- **Sustain efforts in newly opened areas (lower Madera)**
- **Expand restoration footprint**
 - Explore new priority zones (e.g., Motorcycle Hill)
 - Grassland restoration
 - In the future, we are dreaming of a more active restoration:
 - i. Seed collection, plants propagation
 - ii. Reintroduction of nearby plants to increase the biodiversity and keep our local genotype alive



Looking Ahead (2/2)

- **Strengthen partnerships with**
 - City of El Cerrito
 - Schools (Madera, El Cerrito High School)
 - Friends of Five Creeks + Trail trekkers
 - CNPS (conjoint events + knowledgeable members help for plant ID)
 - Sister sites: Albany Hill, Urban Tilt (Richmond), EBP Wildcat Canyon
 - Mentors: Susan Schwartz, Jim McKissock, Glenn Schneider from Skyline Gardens, Pepperwood Preserve in Santa Rosa
- **Secure sustainable funding**
 - Support letters for the city to get grants
 - Grants
 - Fundraising for material and bigger actions the city does not have the funding for. ex: ring of fire
- **Continue growing the volunteer network**
 - Website, mailing list, social media, meetup...
 - Though the city: Green newsletter, Views and News...
 - Network, partnerships...



Grants

- [The Contra Costa Fish & Wildlife Propagation Fund](#)
 - small, annual county grant that supports projects improving local fish and wildlife habitat
 - typically applications opening in late spring and due around early August.
- Diablo Fire Safe Council's Partners in [Wildfire Prevention Fuel Reduction Grant Match](#)
 - small cost-share program (typically up to about \$3,500–\$5,000)
 - helps communities and property owners hire contractors or leverage volunteer work to reduce wildfire fuel loads and create defensible space.
- [State Urban Greening 2026 grant](#)
 - for climate-resilient
 - multi-benefit projects (restoration, fire risk reduction, community access)
 - Estimated amount per award: \$200,000 – \$5,000,000
 - Applications due June 4, 2026. Priority given to projects:
 - Providing direct and meaningful benefits to vulnerable populations, disadvantaged communities, or severely disadvantaged communities.
 - Using the services of the California Conservation Corps (CCC) or Certified Local Conservation Corps (LCCs)
 - Leverage private, federal, and local funding or produce the greatest public benefit

Immediate Needs & Concrete Actions with the Forest committee

Streamline the decision making process

- Can the **Forest Committee play a more active decision-making role for the HNA?** For example, by including a short (e.g., 15-minute) coordination segment at each Forest Committee meeting to align efforts, make timely collective decisions, and use staff time as efficiently as possible.
- Adopt an **official “pre-approved plant removal list”** to empower volunteers, improve efficiency, and ensure consistency in stewardship practices.

Support with fuel reduction and vegetation removal logistics

- Clarification on **dumpster access**: how many can be allocated annually, and whether we can coordinate directly with a specific department
- Usage of city carts for **hauling material** from more remote areas
- Coordination with the Fire Department and Stephen on **planning and scheduling regular burns**

Ongoing consultation with Friends of the Hillside

- Become an **official partner**
- **Support strategic prioritization of limited city resources**, clarifying what is best suited for volunteers versus contractors
- **Provide clear ecological guidance to contractors** to avoid unintended impacts (e.g., mowing timing, wood chip placement affecting habitat)
- Explore **partnership opportunities with Parks & Recreation** to leverage additional resources

Collaboration with the EQC: planting both literal and metaphorical seeds

Identify partnership opportunities around:

- Grants: for carbon sequestration, climate resilience projects, urban greening, and environmental education
- Consulting/brain storming : biochar, composting
- Communication: help us attract more volunteers to work parties

Use the HNA as a living model for climate resilience, biodiversity restoration, and community stewardship throughout El Cerrito.

- Inspire stewardship projects in other parks, neighborhoods, city buildings, private homes...
- Develop education/propagation events centered around our local carbon sequestration champion: purple needlegrass
- Many more ideas!!!



Appendix



Friends of Five Creeks Legacy

For 28 years, the all-volunteer F5C has restored many natural areas in the bay area, among them three large, neglected semi-natural areas in El Cerrito :Cerrito Creek at El Cerrito Plaza, Cerrito Creek from Adams Street to Pierce Street and the HNA

The goal has been to create projects that welcome people and wildlife, with reasonably sustainable and diverse vegetation, and a lightened, sustainable maintenance load for the agencies responsible.

Since 2004, F5C—alongside partners—helped transform the Hillside Natural Area from a **dense, fire-prone landscape** dominated by **broom and pampas grass** into a more accessible and managed space through sustained community effort and targeted grant-funded projects.

Volunteers removed a **wide range of invasive species**: Pampas grass, cotoneaster, fennel, cardoon, poison hemlock, wild radish, Himalayan blackberry, acacia and lower-growing invasives including Algerian and English ivy (*Hedera* spp.) and cape ivy (*Delairia odorata*).

Their interns' careful and thorough [survey of woodrat nests](#), important “ecosystem engineering” in the El Cerrito Hillside Natural Area, in 2024 with a call to action to protect and actively support their populations by managing their habitat and reducing key threats.

Friends of Five Creeks has systematically documented, tracked, and long-term monitored native plant communities, building a **valuable record of ecological change and restoration progress**. The Friends of Five Creeks ~70-species native plant list informed the consultants' work on the Hillside Natural Area Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan and remains a [reference on the City of El Cerrito's website](#).

Trail Trekkers: Legacy & Ongoing Action

Origin: Formed to successfully promote public **acquisition of the Madera property**, connecting the HNA to Motorcycle Hill — a foundational step in expanding public open space access.

Core Activities

1. Advocacy

Advocates for the expansion and protection of public open space in El Cerrito through collaboration with community groups, city leadership, and partner agencies, including recent involvement in fire prevention efforts.

2. Direct Action

- **Trail building** (created the Motorcycle Hill trail), **maintenance**, and **habitat restoration** (e.g., broom removal)
- Led successful efforts to install **trail signage** in the HNA (ongoing beyond HNA)

3. Community Engagement

- Organizes **events** that connect people to open spaces (Hillside Festival since 2014, hikes ...)

Wildfire Risk Model: calculations and assumptions

Model Formulation

Wildfire spread risk and suppression effort are modeled as nonlinear functions of relative fuel load, reflecting the disproportionate impact of fuel continuity and ladder fuel structure on fire behavior. Let (F) represent normalized fuel fraction (pre-removal $F_0=1$)

Inputs and Parameters

Parameter	Value	Description
F_0	1.0	Baseline fuel load (standing broom = 100%)
F_1	0.40	Post-removal fuel load (~60% broom removed)
α	1.8	Spread risk exponent
β	2.2	Suppression effort exponent

User inputs: 120 piles \times 60 plants/pile = 7,200 plants removed, representing ~60% of total broom biomass in El Cerrito Hillside Natural Area.

Calculations

text

Baseline (standing broom):

$$R_s(F_0) = 1.0^{1.8} = 1.00 \text{ (100\%)}$$

$$R_e(F_0) = 1.0^{2.2} = 1.00 \text{ (100\%)}$$

Post-removal (piles scenario):

$$R_s(F_1) = 0.40^{1.8} = 0.192 \text{ (19.2\%)}$$

$$R_e(F_1) = 0.40^{2.2} = 0.133 \text{ (13.3\%)}$$

Risk reduction:

$$\Delta R_s = 1 - 0.192 = 0.808 \text{ (80.8\%)}$$

$$\Delta R_e = 1 - 0.133 = 0.867 \text{ (86.7\%)}$$

Wildfire Risk Model: calculations and assumptions cont.

Model Formulation

Wildfire spread risk and suppression effort are modeled as nonlinear functions of relative fuel load, reflecting the disproportionate impact of fuel continuity and ladder fuel structure on fire behavior. Let (F) represent normalized fuel fraction (pre-removal $F_0=1$)

Model Results

Scenario	Fuel Fraction F	Spread Risk R_s	Suppression Effort R_e
Standing broom	1.00	100%	100%
Cut & piled (unburned)	0.40	19.2%	13.3%
Reduction	-60%	-80.8%	-86.7%

Sensitivity Analysis

Fuel Remaining	Spread Risk Remaining	Effort Remaining
0.30	12.1%	7.3%
0.40	19.2%	13.3%
0.50	28.2%	21.5%



**BIENNIAL WORK PLAN
FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026 - 2026/2027**

Environmental Quality Committee

Chair **Fred Bialy**; Vice-Chair **Pam Austin**; Members **Howdy Goudey**, **Sean O'Connor**, **Eleanor Pilling-Chappelear** (Youth Member), **Mordecai Stayton** (as of May, 2026) & **Sheila Tarbet**

Staff Liaison

Christina Leard | (510) 215-4338
cleard@elcerrito.gov
Public Works Department

MISSION STATEMENT: The Environmental Quality Committee's **mission**, as established by Resolution 2008-13, is the following:

- To serve in an advisory capacity to the City Council, staff, other boards, commissions, and committees, and the citizens of the City with regard to environmental quality issues within the City of El Cerrito;
- To recommend programs, policies, and ordinances to the City Council and promote the City's environmental quality efforts; and
- Promote and foster public awareness, education, interest and support for environmental quality efforts, foster volunteer opportunities, and educate El Cerrito citizens regarding environmental quality and issues relating to environmental impacts.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: Since the EQC's establishment in 2008, the committee's emphasis has cycled between public education, community volunteer organization, and environmental policy, but the general commitment to all forms of action envisioned for the EQC has remained consistent over time. The committee has also consistently maintained a high fraction of the 15-member capacity, with both long-serving members and a rotation of new members.

PRIOR FISCAL YEAR (FY 25-26) ACCOMPLISHMENTS DRAFT
Updated annually by July 1 and provided to City Council on Consent

Goal/Objective	Activities Supporting Goal	Status
Public Education and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tabled at the World One 4th of July festival to promote electrification of vehicles, home heating and cooking, including induction cooktop loaner programs. b) Promoted and hosted an April 25, 2026 Earth Day work party. c) Promoted the Annual Hillside Festival, May 2-3, co-sponsored with El Cerrito Trail Trekkers. d) Maintained steady coordination with the Urban Forest Committee. e) Received a presentation from Audrey Liese about the Friends of the Hillside and its efforts followed by discussion of possibilities for EQC participation/support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Recurring b) Complete c) Recurring d) Ongoing e) Complete
Volunteer Work Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Organized seven in-person Green Teams work parties and participated in Coastal Clean-up Day focusing on trash removal from streets, parks, and creeks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Recurring
Policy Development and Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Met as a committee (2025: September, October, December; 2026: January, February, March, April, May and June). b) Supported Youth Member Eleanor Pilling-Chappelear’s campaign for the WCCUSD to adopt a Climate Literacy Resolution; composed and presented a draft letter of support to City Council. c) Added new member to EQC in May, 2026 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ongoing b) Complete c) Complete
Implementation of City Environmental Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Supported City programs through public education, outreach, and work parties. b) Received at January 2026 meeting a presentation on PG&E Electrify My Block Program in EC and supported community outreach by drafting endorsement letter, thereby helping to further CAAP efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through electrification of buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ongoing b) Complete

Move/Second: _____ / _____ **Action:** Passed a motion to approve the FY 25-26 Accomplishments. **Ayes:** MEMBER NAMES
Youth Member Chappelear: Aye/Nay **Noes:** MEMBER NAMES

RE: PG&E Electrify My Block Program

Dear El Cerrito Residents,

In coming weeks, PG&E representatives (affiliated with The Switch Is On) will be contacting and educating El Cerrito residents who meet the requirements for participating in PG&E's Electrify My Block program. Through this program, PG&E will pay up to \$35,000 to qualifying homeowners to help them shut off the gas lines to their home and switch over to energy efficient electric appliances.

PG&E foresees the need to replace aging neighborhood gas pipelines in the near future. For some neighborhoods, the cost of this infrastructure replacement exceeds the cost of paying for the conversion of these buildings over to fully electric appliances. PG&E initiated the Electrify My Block program to help qualifying owners make this conversion financially possible.

Electrification, or choosing electric-powered options over gas-powered, has many health and environmental benefits. Additionally, it can make a home more energy efficient, allowing residents to save energy during peak periods, which can result in cost savings.

The program supports the goals of the El Cerrito Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP), adopted in July 2024. The CAAP aims to help the City and residents reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions so that the City is carbon neutral by 2045. Energy use (especially when using gas) in buildings is the second highest contributor to citywide GHG emissions. By going all-electric in new construction and when renovating existing buildings, the City will be better able to lower its annual GHG emissions and attain the goal of carbon neutrality by 2045. For more information on the CAAP, please visit www.elcerrito.gov/CAAP

For more information on the program, please visit:

- Presentation to the El Cerrito Environmental Quality Committee (January 2026)
- www.switchison.org/electrify-my-block
- www.pge.com/en/clean-energy/building-electrification.html

The Electrify My Block team will be able to determine your eligibility for the Electrify My Block Program and answer your questions. You can also contact the Electrify My Block program by email at outreach@switchison.org or by phone at 510-391-4553.

For more information on other programs from BayREN and MCE, please visit <https://mcecleanenergy.org/home-electrification/>

The City of El Cerrito