


Epilogue: Earth Day 2008

March and April 2008, were two of the driest of those months on record in the East Bay. The flow season on Potemkin Creek usually starts in May, when most of the rain has passed and the mini-culverts and channels can be cleaned out without fear of getting obstructed again until the autumn storms start. This year, Earth Day was set as the anticipated date to start the pump that controls the flow on Potemkin Creek. The intention was for the City of Oakland to fulfill its obligation to prepare the surface features before the Alameda County Flood Control District prepared the underground components. On April 19th, the City of Oakland celebrated Earth Day with creek and park cleanups throughout the city. Dozens of volunteers, including from the FROG Park group, Friends of Temescal Creek, the DMV neighborhood association, as well as a troop of Boy Scouts, converged on Potemkin Creek to clear back brush, rake detritus from the channel, and do weeding. They were joined by firefighters from the local stationhouse and Oakland Parks and Recreation workers. The posters announcing the cleanup offered, as an added attraction, the possibility that the creek would flow that day (see Figures 40, 41, and 42).

Coming **Saturday April 19th**:
 9am 'til NOON


Meet at Temescal Creek - Claremont DMV,
 the corner of Cavour and Redondo



Earth Day 2008!
 (the neighborhood participatory event)

An opportunity to get to know neighbors while pruning, cleaning
 and weeding the creek area!

Special added attraction:
The Creek to Flow Again!



We need to clear the debris out of the creek bed before
 the pump is turned on for the summer.
 Come help fill the dumpster.
 Tools supplied by the City of Oakland Public Works. But if you can, bring an
 extra rake or a wheelbarrow.

Mark Your Calendars!

Figure 40: Earth Day Flyer.



Figure 41: Earth Day cleanup of Potemkin Creek. Photo by Jon Bauer.



Figure 42: Oakland Earth Day cleanup of Potemkin Creek. Photo by Jon Bauer.

The following Tuesday, April 22, Earth Day, Alameda County Flood Control District workers opened up the access gate to the culvert itself and the access hatch to the pump and pump controls. They had to clear silt from the channel and move the weirs in the culvert so water from Temescal Creek would be diverted into the pump station (see Figure 43). Potemkin Creek was to begin its 2008 dry-season flow.



Figure 43: Getting the Pump ready for Potemkin Creek's summer flow. Photo by Jon Bauer.

However, the actual mechanics did not work out quite as planned. According to Gene Mazza of the Flood Control District, as the first water was sent from the pump to the pond, it backed up onto the adjacent pavement via a drain that no one had realized

was connected; he requested the City to flush the line and inspect the pipes (Gene Mazza, personal communication). After this was done some days later, the pond filled (see Figure 44 and 45) and on May 1, 2008, Potemkin Creek flowed again, perhaps no-one the wiser (see Figure 46), the hidden infrastructure of flood control and property values safely tucked away below (see Figure 47).



Figure 44: Potemkin Creek's first flow of 2008 - April 22, Earth Day. Photo by Jon Bauer.



Figure 45: The pond filled on May 1, 2008. Photo by Jon Bauer



Figure 46: Guarding Potemkin Creek's pump. Photo by Jon Bauer.

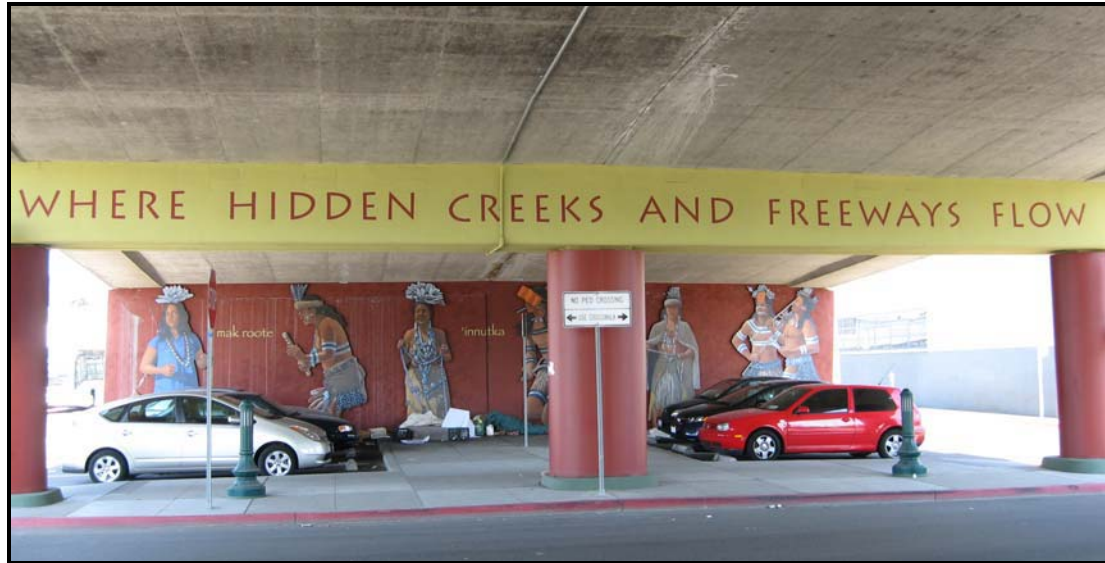


Figure 47: The truth finally told, under a freeway overpass in Berkeley. Photo by Jon Bauer.