**Strawberry Creek Watershed**

**Geology**

Strawberry Creek originates from a series of springs at the head of Strawberry Canyon. It flows west through the city of Berkeley, and empties into the San Francisco Bay. The stream flows year-round, even during prolonged droughts, due to the abundance of water emerging from the springs. Its flow shapes and is shaped by the steep hills of Strawberry Canyon. Bedrock sediment from the hills is carried down to the flatter, slower portion of the creek, which creates an ideal spawning habitat for fish.

Strawberry Creek watershed also rests along the Hayward fault zone, making the area highly susceptible to landslides and soil erosion. The creek’s route has shifted over the years, both through natural movements in the earth and human intervention. It enters the bay directly across from where the bay opens to the ocean. The creek’s geology had special significance to the native peoples who lived here.

**The Ohlone**

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, the Huichin Ohlone tribe lived peacefully along Strawberry Creek for thousands of years. Their villages were made up of dome-shaped thatched huts arranged around a central clearing. Scattered among them were smaller structures on stilts used for storing supplies of acorns. Off to one side of the villages there were often cleared areas used as ball field. Their villages near Strawberry Creek would have had sweat lodges where ceremonies for spiritual and physical purification could be held. The tribe had a spiritual connection with the body of water. They would pray and sing to the water, which would in turn provide for them.

The Ohlone used the creek for bathing, and as a food and water source. They lived off steelhead trout, salmon, and shellfish from the creek, as well as acorns, berries, and seeds that grew on its banks. They threw the empty shells into a pile, which eventually formed a shellmound. It signified a sacred place where the Ohlone would bury their ancestors. There are several shellmounds at the mouth of Strawberry Creek, where it flows into San Francisco Bay.

---

**WILDLIFE**

Strawberry Creek was once abundant with native steelhead trout, salmon, and shellfish. Trout finally disappeared from the creek around 1920, when the contamination and pollution grew too hazardous. In 1990, fish were reintroduced to the creek. Today, it is populated by Sacramento suckers, Californiaroach minnows and hitch minnows. Three-spined stickleback fish flourish in the Berkeley Marina near the mouth of the creek.

The creek is surrounded by oak, redwood, and eucalyptus trees, and lined with both native and non-native flowering plants. There are blackberry bushes, other shrubs, and mushrooms that provide food and shelter for birds, squirrels, and insects.

**Restoration**

In the 1990s, Strawberry Creek was culverted at Oxford Street and remained underground until it reached the Bay. To “daylight” a creek means to liberate a creek from a culvert or tunnel and allow the water to flow as it once did. Strawberry Creek is known as the first creek with a successful daylighting project.

Strawberry Creek Park was established in 1968 and continues to be used by children and community members to this day. It has inspired many similar projects throughout the country and the world. There are proposals to daylight more portions of Strawberry Creek. Other restoration efforts include reintroducing fish, and a 2014 project that rebuilt part of the creek to create step-pools and fortify the bank.

**DID YOU KNOW**

You are standing near the banks of Strawberry Creek! Only a few hundred years ago, this area was meadows and woodland. A creek flowed just to the north of where you are standing. Flocks of geese, ducks, and seabirds filled the air. Bold eagles and grizzly bears thrived here, eating berries and feeding on salmon and trout that swam in Strawberry Creek.

---

**STRAWBERRY CREEK PROJECT**

This is part of the Strawberry Creek Project sponsored by the Foundation of the Sacred Stream. Graphics and design by BAEI Landscape Architecture.