

Redwood Grove Restoration Program

Los Altos Parks and Recreation Commission
Valerie Lee, Project Lead

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About Grassroots Ecology



Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization

Mission

To engage and educate the public to restore local ecosystems

Programs

- Habitat Restoration
- Community Science
- Youth and Adult Environmental Education
- Urban Ecology
- Native Plant Nursery

Annual participation

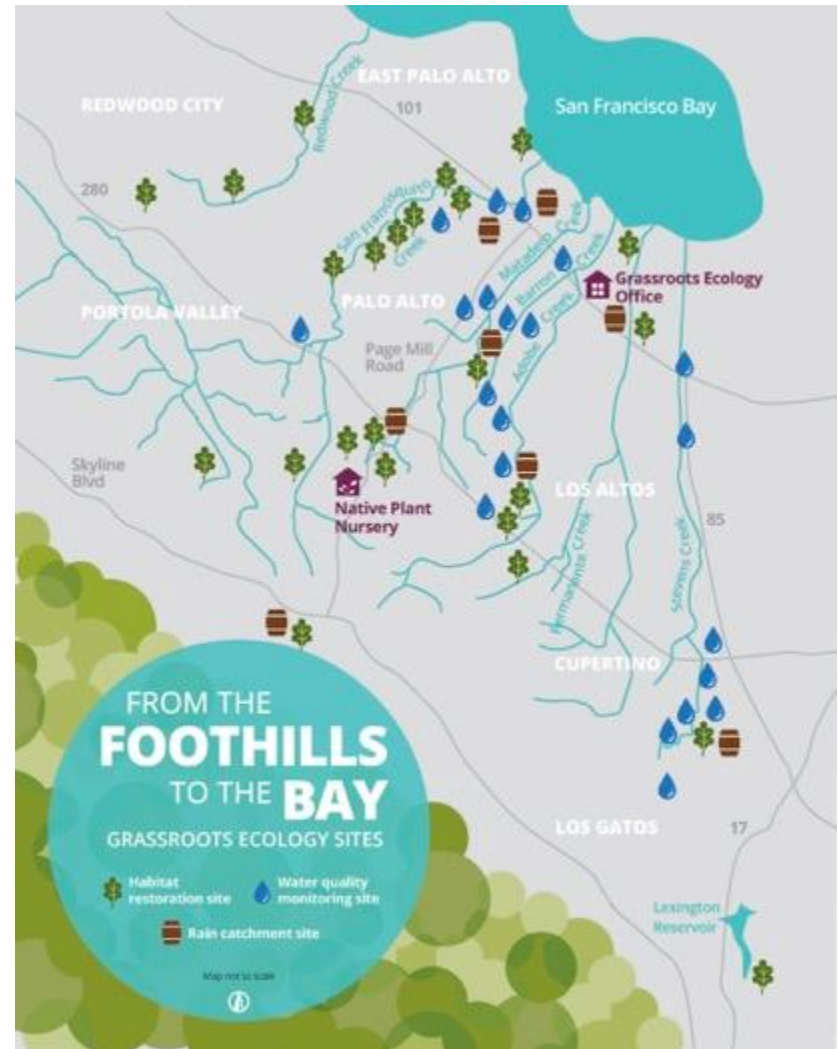
- 12,000 people
- 80% are youth and young adults



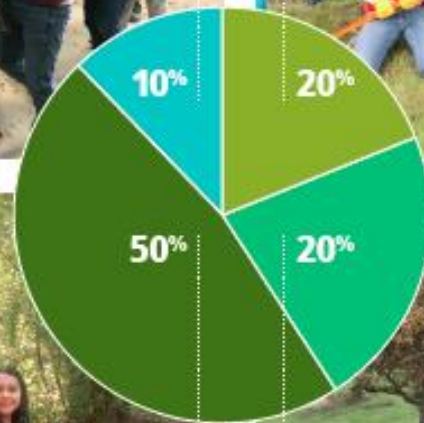
Geographic Reach



- 20+ restoration sites across 9 cities within Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties
- 2,600 acres of parks and open space owned by cities, agencies, and open space organizations taken care of
- 7 watersheds monitored and stewarded
- Expertise in different types of ecosystems, including:
 - Baylands
 - Grasslands
 - Riparian areas
 - Redwood forest



Education and Action for all Ages



A Decade at Redwood Grove



Grassroots Ecology began partnering with the City of Los Altos to be the steward of Redwood Grove in 2009

The forest floor, once covered in invasive Algerian ivy, is now a vibrant patchwork of native biodiversity

Thousands of community members have come together to improve the ecological function of this beloved Los Altos gem

Over the summer, teenage volunteers gather to care for the land during the youth-only workday series, "Grove Guardians"

Grassroots Ecology has convened additional partners to fund and implement improvements to Adobe Creek



Partnership Goals

1. Improve the ecological function and natural quality of Redwood Grove

Strategies:

- Control invasive plants using mechanical methods
- Plant and encourage natural recruitment of native plants
- Creek bank stabilization using bioengineering techniques to control erosion and clean stormwater runoff as it enters Adobe Creek

Outcomes:

- Improved habitat and increased biodiversity for insects and wildlife
- Improved water quality
- Reduced fire fuel load due to reduction in biomass of annual plants



Partnership Goals

2. Engage, educate, and empower the community to be stewards of their local lands

Strategies:

- Coordinate volunteer and service learning opportunities to care for Redwood Grove
- Lead field trips and interpretive hikes that connect local land management to global issues, such as climate change
- Provide interpretive panels, plant ID signs, articles on projects and life in the preserve

Outcomes:

- Community ownership
- Richer community relationships
- Environmental knowledge
- Professional career development for youth and young adults
- Local service opportunities for youth



Activities



Ongoing

- Volunteer workdays
- Redwood stewardship and watering
- Expanded redwood understory restoration
- Creek bank stabilization and revegetation
- Pollinator meadow
- Quarterly interpretive updates in kiosk
- Plant identification signs
- Interpretive panels
- Grove Guardians summer program
- Field trips for schools, community groups



Special Projects with Community Partners

- Shoup connection - natural trail experience to Shoup Park
- Willow sculpture in partnership with artists O'Brien and McCormick
- Creek bank stabilization and boardwalk update in partnership with Restoration Design Group
- Manresa Trail and Adobe Creek restoration
- Split-rail fences in partnership with Eagle Scouts

Funding Partners Over the Years



Grassroots Ecology has leveraged the city's annual contribution to raise over \$330,000 to steward the park and provide hands-on environmental education

Funder	Project	Amount	Years
Valley Water (formerly Santa Clara Valley Water District)	Adobe Creek Restoration Plan at Redwood Grove	\$45,571	2011-2012
	Adobe Creek Restoration: Redwood Grove to Shoup	\$46,365	2012-2015
	Adobe Creek Corridor Extension along Manresa Trail	\$150,752	2019-2023
David and Lucile Packard Foundation	Environmental Education	\$50,000	2010-2020
Los Altos Community Foundation	Grove Guardians	\$10,000	2017-2020
Passerelle Fund	Environmental Education	\$10,000	2013
Individual donations, including neighbors of Redwood Grove	Park Stewardship and Youth Engagement	\$20,000	2010-2020

Outcome: Healthy Lands



- Improved water quality and creek bank stabilization through revegetation using native plant species
- Reduced fire fuel load by removing annual invasive plant species
- Richer wildlife habitat through reintroduction of natural biodiversity which provides food and shelter for local critters



Outcome: Healthy Lands



- Established native pollinator meadow that provides critical food and habitat for bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects
- Stewardship of the 100 year old redwood grove by watering regularly and reducing soil compaction



Outcome: Community Engagement

Since 2009, Grassroots Ecology has

- Held over 365 volunteer and educational events (approx. 3 events/month)
- Worked with 4,269 participants (avg. 10 participants/event)
- 70% of participants were youth
- 40% of participants were residents of Los Altos and Los Altos Hills



Widened Perspectives



“[My experience volunteering with Grassroots Ecology] opened my eyes to a whole world of human interaction with nature where some wrongs need to be rectified and where we need to protect the plant life that's given so much to our planet. Before Grassroots Ecology, I didn't really give too much thought to that.”

Archer, high-school-aged volunteer



Strengthened Communities



“Having Grassroots Ecology as part of my high school experience was priceless. I formed friendships, learned so much about the environment in a way that I couldn't sitting in a classroom, and I had mentors who helped me, and continue to help me, navigate college, internships, and my future.”

Olivia, high-school-aged volunteer



Career Development



“Personally, working with Grassroots Ecology has helped me develop a deeper appreciation for the environment and the work that is needed to preserve it. The years I've volunteered here have translated to work experience. These accomplishments have helped me build my resume and land interviews for internships.”

Elizabeth, high-school-aged volunteer

Personal Development



“I derive great personal satisfaction in doing the little bit I can to improve our environment, and I love continuing to learn more about the natural world and our place in it.”

Freda, community volunteer

Environmental Education



“I've always learned a lot from [Grassroots Ecology] staff. That has helped me perform my job better. [Grassroots Ecology's] work has also had a huge impact on improving and restoring our preserves, which benefits not just the preserve but the visitors to the preserve and volunteers who work under [Grassroots Ecology.]”

Kathleen, City of Palo Alto - Head Ranger

Environmental Education



“Every trip we take to the preserve with [Grassroots Ecology] is an eye-opener for the students and for me as I get to see them in a different light and a different setting outside of the classroom. The [students] are always so excited, [eager to be involved,] and in awe of what is in their backyard.”

Robin, Bullis Charter Public School - 4th Grade Teacher



Shared Responsibility



“[Our organization remains engaged with Grassroots Ecology because] we believe that engaging youth, families and communities in activities to better understand and be connected to the natural environment contributes to preservation and stewardship.”

David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Summary

- Open space stewardship is a transformative experience for individuals
- Environmental education is integral to healthy lands and healthy communities
- The Redwood Grove restoration program ensures that this beloved natural asset and cherished community meeting space continues to thrive

