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## Lafayette Creeks Committee celebrates opening of First Street Rain Garden

By Elaine Borden Chandler



Mayor Carl Anduri and Will Elder, Chair of the Lafayette Creeks Committee, cut the ribbon at the First Street Rain Garden Dedication. Photos courtesy city of Lafayette

A crowd of families and friends gathered on the morning of April 15 for the Lafayette Creeks Committee's dedication event for the newly finished First Street Rain Garden. The garden, located on the corner of First Street and Golden Gate Way near the Lafayette Library, is designed to naturally clean urban runoff water before it joins Lafayette's groundwater and creeks. While small, unobtrusive rain gardens already exist in Lafayette, with one located near the Coop Restaurant, this dedication celebrated a significant step forward in Lafayette's green water management.

The event started with Committee Chair Will Elder welcoming the guests and making a Land Acknowledgement statement to the Saklan people. He then introduced the nine speakers, including Mayor Carl Anduri and State Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan. Don Tatzin, a former Lafayette mayor and City Council member, recalled when the city first purchased the plot of land to make a parking lot and left 25% as a weedy corner, contrasting with its new beauty and

functionality. Stanley Middle School seventh-graders Evelyn Hollenberg with Zoe Freese talked about how their science class's experiments indicated increased pollution in the creeks and the importance of caring for them.

Engineering Services Manager Matt Luttrupp gave a quick summary of how water from storm drains is piped into a depression in the middle of the garden, where it filters through three layers of mulch, biosoil, and pea gravel before entering the soil and groundwater. Lisa Damerel, Watershed Conservation Manager for the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District, described how the plants are all native and arranged by moisture preference on the garden slope. They help to clean the water and certain plants with rhizomes, such as the Douglas iris, create a bacterial interchange in the soil that removes pollutants.

Afterward, a photo was taken of the speakers and Anduri and Elder cut the ribbon so the public could enter. The 75 attendees walked through the garden, taking photos of the blooming Red-flowering Currant and Creeping Blueblossom, remarking on the surprising location and stimulating details from the speeches, and reading the educational panel. Several people mentioned they loved hearing from Hollenberg and Freese. Tracy Farrell, a board member of the Park Theater Trust, commented the rain garden was the kind of inspiration needed for Lafayette's future.

The garden is the first significant project to be completed from Lafayette's 2017 Downtown Creeks Preservation, Restoration and Development Plan. Luttrupp officially announced in his speech that Lafayette will develop more rain gardens. "That was something the Creeks Committee was very happy to hear, and we're going to follow up on that," said Committee Member MaryJo Cass. The Committee hopes that more people will come to see the garden and be inspired to take action for themselves. Elder noted that rain gardens are probably too advanced for the average homeowner, but that rain barrels, permeable pavers, and pervious pavement are excellent ways to help. Residents can also volunteer with the Creeks Committee on Lafayette Community Day, June 3, and support their future actions.

To learn more about the First Street Rain Garden, go to [www.lovelafayette.org/city-hall/city-departments/engineering/city-construction-projects/first-street-rain-garden](http://www.lovelafayette.org/city-hall/city-departments/engineering/city-construction-projects/first-street-rain-garden) or visit the garden at the corner of First Street and Golden Gate Way.



Crowd at the First Street Rain Garden Dedication

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