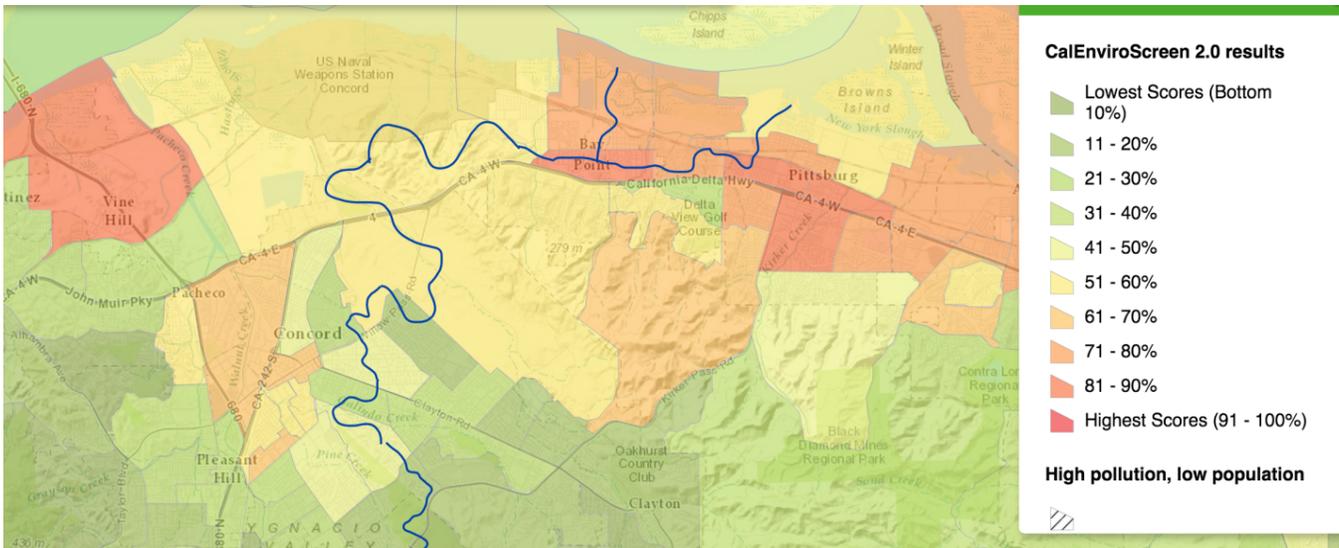


Disadvantage Communities - Essential Participation

The Real California Landscapes Project will progress through a process of several phases. The primary phase is the development of this pilot project that will build the foundation necessary to help us perfect our methods and community outreach efforts for expanding this initiative throughout the Bay Area, and eventually, all of California.

The pilot project region is shown in the map below. Pine Creek (blue line) flows through Pine Canyon and is within the eastern portion of the Walnut Creek Watershed, which drains 146 square miles of central Contra Costa County into San Francisco Bay. This creek winds its way to the DAC areas of Bay Point and Pittsburg.



The Real California Landscapes Project will reach a broad variety and diversity of audiences throughout the community included but not limited to, minority, low income, and disadvantaged business communities. According to the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water, "Topographic location is also important: in California, many of the most economically disadvantaged communities are located in flatlands, where creeks and rivers empty into larger waterbodies." Throughout history, cities have developed along transportation routes, such as rivers. These original communities have remained in place as cities have grown around them, evolving into a group of older residential neighborhoods, the central business district, and ringed by newer suburbs. Over time, corporate business parks popped up in the near suburbs and light manufacturing prevailed, with its attendant air and water quality issues. Older neighborhoods in the flatlands became conduits for industrial pollution from urban water runoff.

This can be seen in the Walnut Creek area. While Walnut Creek is considered to be fairly affluent, a quick scan of the statistics shows us that along the Bay, there are large swaths of disadvantaged communities like Bay Point and Pittsburg in the flatlands area. The above map traces Pine Creek, which takes runoff from the Shadelands Business Park area in Walnut Creek, out to the Bay, running right through the DACs of Bay Point and Pittsburg.

In our Real California Landscapes Project, we will invite members of the public from the Pine Creek watershed area to participate with employees of the Shadelands Business Park in an inventive display of hands-on self-help.

Shadelands Business Park has been designated as a business improvement district (BID), which is a defined area where members and residents have opted to pay increased taxes in order to support projects to improve the area. A BID is the business equivalent of a Disadvantaged Community - both are looking for ways to improve their physical surroundings. This area of disadvantaged communities in the downstream path of an aging business park makes for an ideal showcase for not only environmental justice but a substantial aesthetic and recreational improvement.

This pilot project at Shadelands Business Park will help perfect the design of the Real California Landscapes Project so that it can be easily duplicated and expanded throughout the Pine Creek and the Walnut Creek watershed, ultimately connecting more partnering businesses to the DACs where they reside; beautifying these communities with ecologically superior, locally appropriate, native plant landscaping; improving environmental benefits to watershed health, water usage

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rates, and air quality; and enabling economically disadvantaged residents with the tools that will make them eligible to receive local water district incentives and rebates. An important component of this pilot project will also be communicating with the local Contra Costa Water District to better identify additional disadvantaged neighborhoods in order to promote early, targeted outreach to these neighborhoods most in need of improvements.

Public Outreach to the DAC will include:

Publicity through traditional media and social media outreach, as well as through sponsor company outlets, CNPS Chapter outreach, and local water district communications, to inform community residents of these projects and opportunities to participate, as well as disseminate why these projects are so vital to environmental health, and how they can help individual home and business owners decrease water and chemical usage in their landscape.

Open calls to volunteer: in addition to local CNPS Chapter volunteers, sponsor company and maintenance company employees, a goal of the pilot Real California Landscapes Project will be a minimum of 25% resident volunteer participation in community landscaping projects.

Targeted outreach to businesses and other community groups within the DAC: The Real California Landscapes Project will provide the mechanisms necessary to encourage the development of alliances between businesses and community groups in order to provide durable, permanent cooperative partnerships within the communities where they reside and encourage long-term environmental stewardship in these areas.

Benefits to residents of the DAC will include:

Subsidized symposia and hands-on education targeting community residents: Classroom education and hands-on educational experiences will be offered to DAC residents free of charge. These symposia and workshops are typically offered to the general public at prices ranging from \$35-175 per person, per event. Lessons learned from these educational events will enable homeowners and business owners within the DAC to make landscaping changes at home and work that have an increased benefit potential for local water district rebates and incentives.

Aesthetic improvement of the community through these target pilot landscaping projects partnering with local businesses, as well as targeted education aimed at community residents, will help beautify neighborhoods. Demonstration landscapes and gardens have the added benefit of providing residents with a “sense of place” by promoting the widespread use of landscaping with plants native to their local watershed and region of California.

Environmental improvements – the incorporation of smart, water-wise, non-toxic, locally appropriate native plant choices into residential and business districts will support local biodiversity, promote watershed health, reduce pollution-laden stormwater runoff, cut water usage rates, curb soil erosion, and contribute to air quality by reducing particulates and gaseous air pollutants, as well as by eliminating the need to operate gas-powered lawn mowers and leaf blowers used in conventional landscaping.

Access by public transportation- Shadelands Business Park is serviced by a new direct bus line in Walnut Creek, connecting it to the nearby Pleasant Hill Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station just 2.7 miles away. Residents in the DACs of Pittsburg and Bay Point are directly connected through this BART line, and residents in other nearby communities will be able to easily travel to the pilot project location via this high speed transit option as well.

DAC measurements will include:

Number of targeted outreach communications by local CNPS Chapter, media, Contra Costa Water District, and business partners to disadvantaged neighborhoods and DACs; number of volunteers from these communities who engage in community landscaping projects; number of subsidized symposia and workshop registrations granted; number of public landscaping projects introduced within DAC areas in business parks and open spaces; participant reporting- number of participants who pledge to incorporate lessons learned from classroom learning and hands-on events at home, and self reporting of participants who receive water district rebates and incentives.

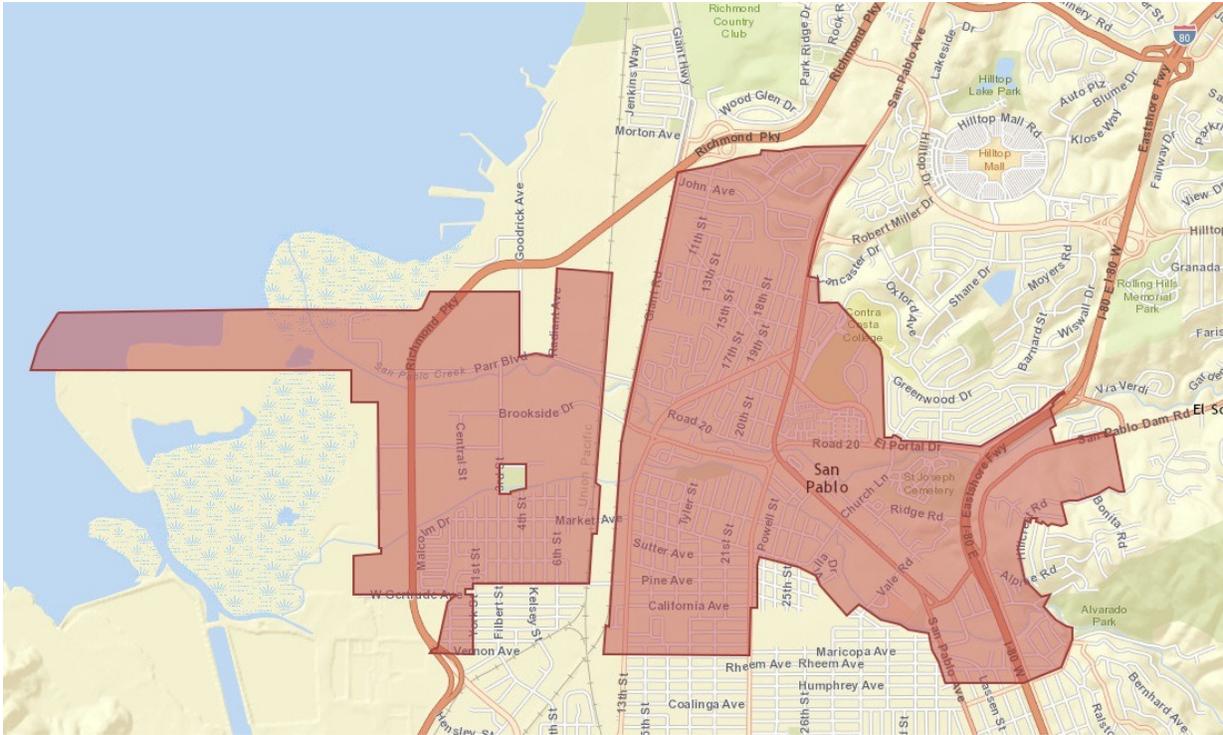
Next Step: Follow-up Project

After the primary pilot project in Walnut Creek is underway, CNPS will be seeking an additional high profile demonstration landscape in the East Bay Area following the same criteria. One promising area proposed is delineated by the DACs of San Pablo and North Richmond shown in the map below. San Pablo is in the substantial San Pablo Creek Watershed, which supplies 10% of the water to East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) customers. San Pablo Creek and a large

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tributary, Wildcat Creek, both travel through these communities before passing through marshlands and draining into San Pablo Bay.

This area is especially favorable as CNPS East Bay Chapter volunteers already engage in restoration and monitoring activities nearby at Point Isabel in south Richmond and Point Molate just to the north of this map area, and have a good working relationship with EBMUD. Residents here are eligible for water rate incentives through EBMUD, including lawn conversion and irrigation upgrade rebates for both homeowners and businesses. Additionally, both Wildcat and San Pablo Creeks have active grassroots creek groups that engage in community stewardship, making this location particularly advantageous for community volunteer participation. This area is easily accessed by public transportation, with the Richmond BART station and bus routes nearby.



At the conclusion of these two proposed pilot projects, CNPS will have perfected the materials necessary to deliver The Real California Landscapes Project to communities throughout the state.