

CREATIVE CONSERVATION

Out with the old...

The City of San Luis Obispo has merged the dream of a beautiful natural habitat with stormwater management. Instead of relying on chemicals and machinery to purify stormwater runoff, this wetland uses "biofiltration" and natural processes to clean our water.



Field mustard, milk thistle, and other invasive weeds have been removed to make way for native wetland plants.

Biofiltration is the use of microorganisms and plants to capture and break down pollution.

...in with the native

Several thousand native plants have been reintroduced to this area, thanks to the hard work of the California Conservation Corps. The plants' roots function as natural stormwater filters, recharging our groundwater and creek with cleaner water.



Pacific Tree Frog



Garter Snake



California Newt

By constructing this wetland, we are creating a home for native species such as pond turtles, red-legged frogs, garter snakes, newts, swifts, mallards, western bluebirds, red-winged blackbirds, swallows, muskrats, and other wildlife.



Horse Tail



Leather Root



Goldenrod



Seaside Goldeneye



Monkeyflower



Hedge Nettle



The City of San Luis Obispo would like to thank you for using an emission-free mode of transportation.

Thanks to our community's support for alternative transportation and a healthy environment, bike paths like the Bob Jones Trail will continue to serve the citizens of our active City. Biking and walking paths encourage fun, healthy family activities - another reason San Luis Obispo is a wonderful place to live.

 city of
san luis obispo

Photos by Mark Rimes, Library Collections, and Steve Dierker at City of San Luis Obispo

HABITAT HARMONY

At home in the ecosystem

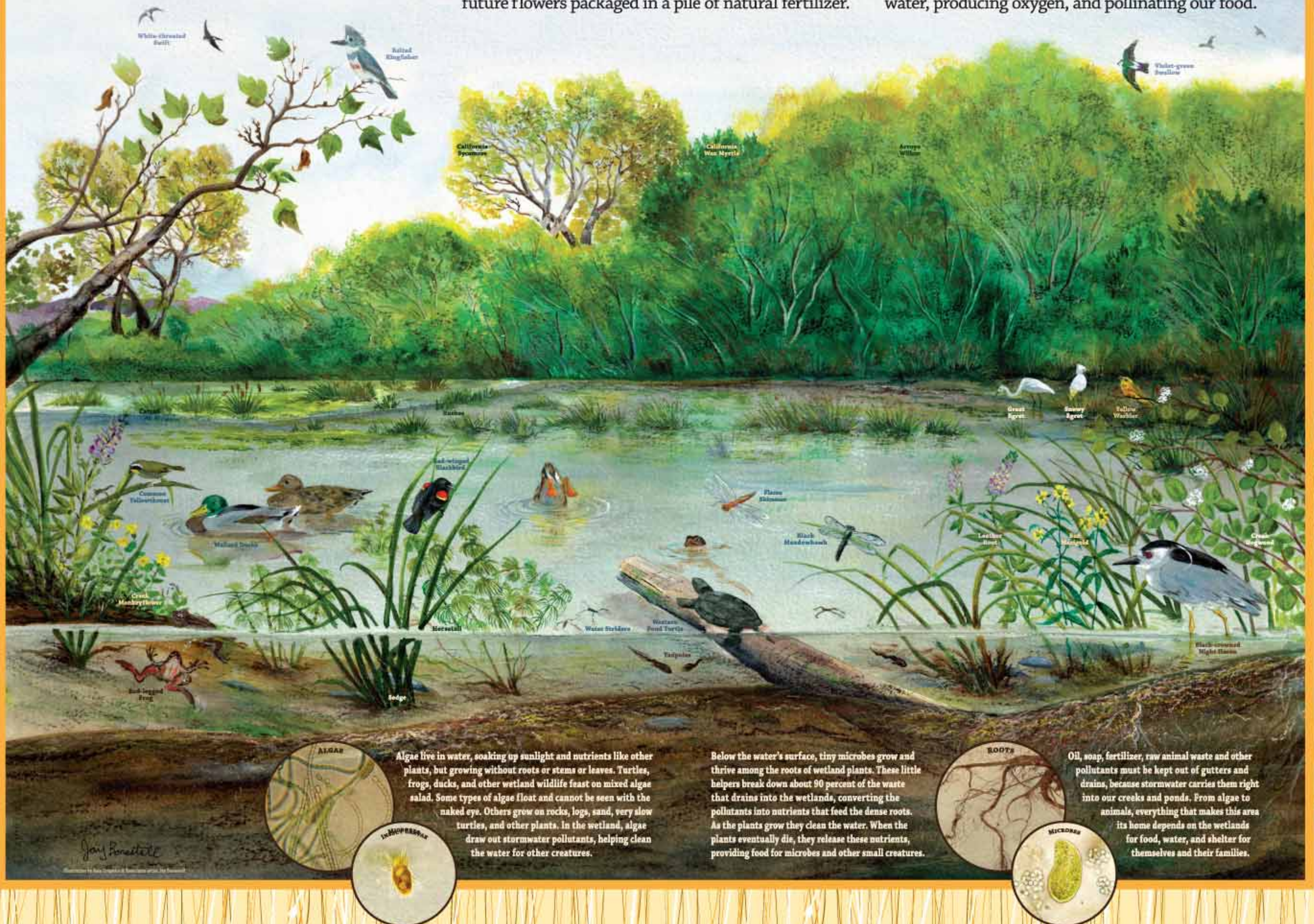
A wetland ecosystem includes all the animals, plants, insects, and microbes living in and around the water. A third of all threatened and endangered species in the US live *only* in wetlands. Migrating birds fly hundreds or thousands of miles, stopping here to eat, rest, and breed or raise their young.

Every part is connected

Trees make shade from water and sunlight, roots that hold soil in place, branches that offer food and shelter to other living things. Wildflowers pull nutrients from the wet soil, making blooms and seeds that feed bees, birds, and mice. Seeds end up in the bellies of mice and finches, whose droppings contain future flowers packaged in a pile of natural fertilizer.

Spinning a stronger web

The web of life connects all living things through small energy exchanges, where every creature plays an important role. We preserve and protect natural ecosystems because a healthy habitat is vital to our own health and well-being. Functioning ecosystems provide essential environmental services, such as cleaning water, producing oxygen, and pollinating our food.



ALGAE
Algae live in water, soaking up sunlight and nutrients like other plants, but growing without roots or stems or leaves. Turtles, frogs, ducks, and other wetland wildlife feast on mixed algae salad. Some types of algae float and cannot be seen with the naked eye. Others grow on rocks, logs, sand, very slow turtles, and other plants. In the wetland, algae draw out stormwater pollutants, helping clean the water for other creatures.



MICROBES
Below the water's surface, tiny microbes grow and thrive among the roots of wetland plants. These little helpers break down about 90 percent of the waste that drains into the wetlands, converting the pollutants into nutrients that feed the dense roots. As the plants grow they clean the water. When the plants eventually die, they release these nutrients, providing food for microbes and other small creatures.



ROOTS
Oil, soap, fertilizer, raw animal waste and other pollutants must be kept out of gutters and drains, because stormwater carries them right into our creeks and ponds. From algae to animals, everything that makes this area its home depends on the wetlands for food, water, and shelter for themselves and their families.



Jay Bonsett



CLEAN & HEALTHY HOME

The stormwater story

When it rains, stormwater runs off our roofs and driveways, flows down gutters into drains, and pours directly into our creek. As it travels, the water picks up soap, oil, fertilizer, pesticides, animal feces, and trash. These pollute our water and harm delicate wetland habitats.

Little changes have BIG results!

The City is making our stormwater cleaner by filtering some of it through this constructed wetland. Be mindful of what goes down your storm drain. By working together we can keep our creeks and oceans clean and healthy, because a healthy habitat is a happy home!



Eating like a bird

Bills and beaks are different sizes and shapes depending on what a bird eats. Guess which bird eats what!

1. Who has a long beak like a spear to seize snakes and frogs and mice?
2. Who has a long, thin bill to sip sweet nectar from flowers?
3. Who has a small, delicate bill for snatching insects from the air?
4. Who has a sharp, hooked beak for ripping and tearing meat?
5. Who has a flat, shovel-shaped bill to sift plants and snails out of the mud?
6. Who has a thick, triangular bill for cracking seeds? Especially thistle!
7. Who has a multipurpose bill so they can eat bugs, eggs, seeds and grains?
8. Who has a stout, powerful beak to grab fish and small animals?



Cinnamon Teal



Red-winged Blackbird



Belted Kingfisher



American Goldfinch



Tree Swallow



Anna's Hummingbird



Great Egret



Red-tailed Hawk

ANSWERS: 1. Egrets 2. Hummingbirds 3. Swallows 4. Hawks 5. Teals and Ducks 6. Finches 7. Blackbirds 8. Kingfishers