

## **Revitalization of El Polín Spring**

El Polín Spring sits at the heart of the Presidio's largest watershed, Tennessee Hollow. It is the only named spring in the Presidio and is the headwaters for the Central Tributary of the creek system which drains to Crissy Field Marsh. The Spring and its surroundings support some of the most significant bird habitat in the Presidio, and the availability of year-round freshwater also played a role in its exceptional cultural history. Archaeological discoveries have confirmed that this is the first known colonial homestead site occurring outside of the walled fortification of El Presidio or the Mission, and the home of the Briones and Miramontes families. The revitalization of El Polín is a cornerstone in the plan for restoring the entire watershed – from springs to bay – and is a focal point for outdoor education in Tennessee Hollow.

The site underwent a significant transformation last year to make a focal point and outdoor classroom in the watershed. It is now positioned to welcome and serve thousands of school children each year. The transformation included closure of the site to vehicle traffic and the removal of 20,000 square feet of asphalt, as well as thousands of cubic yards of artificial fill materials. The road was replaced with an accessible trail and boardwalk, 300 feet of new (daylighted creek) and 7,000 square feet of new or enhanced wetlands. In addition to wetlands, acres of upland native plant communities are also being restored – all with the generous support of community volunteers. When fully restored, the site will support a rich mosaic of native plant communities (six different communities will be present), and will provide a contiguous habitat corridor connecting to the upland areas of the watershed which include rare serpentine grasslands. Archaeological sites were brought to life through exposure or interpretation. A community picnic area and BBQ were established, and other features designed to welcome visitors and school children including bilingual interpretative panels, accessible parking, composting toilets, bike racks, drinking fountain, etc.

The revitalization effort was a partnership project by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and the Presidio Trust, with generous financial support from the California Department of Conservation/CALFED, Matthew and Janice Barger, The Irvine Foundation, and The Kingfisher Foundation.

## El Polín Spring Photographs



View down MacArthur Avenue – before and after



View of El Polín Loop – before and after





Children enjoying the newly created habitat and exploring a reconstructed foundation of an 1810s homestead site.



Anna's Hummingbird nest near the spring; Ohlone volunteers helping with planting





Site entrance (turnaround, bus drop-off and visitor parking) and seating area



Picnic and BBQ area



Terra cotta tile basin (circa 1810s) discovered during project construction, pond in background