

California Biodiversity Council Children in Nature Conference Visit to East Palo Alto Charter School and the Collective Roots Garden Center, October 8, 2008. Walk through the **Garden**: hear about **K-5** Garden Based Learning and how we teach environmental education (Bryden); and, hear about **Middle School** and **High School** activities in the garden and environment (Eron Sandler & Bryden Johnston). See the **EPACS backfield** and hear about our hopes for developing it into an **Ecological Playfield**.

Some of the highest level concerns we have about the environment in East Palo Alto and the actions that we propose:

1. **Concern:** Youth, families, everyone in East Palo Alto are disconnected from the natural environment, and experience profound health and environmental disparities, including an acute lack of open space. For the most part, environmental education is an unfunded priority in East Palo Alto schools.

Action proposed: Identify resources and partners for environmental programs in East Palo Alto to become established. Establish collaborative approach involving key stakeholders. Initiate a conservation biology program for youth at EPACS, including restoration projects in the Baylands.

2. **Concern:** The largest and nearest natural habitat to East Palo Alto is under multiple jurisdictional authorities – stewardship, responsibility and leadership are not established or readily apparent.

Action proposed: Urge that authorities clarify jurisdiction and responsibilities for the EPA Bay Lands.

3. **Concern:** The education, health, environment, social service, and government sectors in EPA are not collaborating to address critical issues that involve public health and the environment.

Action proposed: Formally request that the aforementioned institutions/sectors assume a proactive and coordinated role in the public and environmental health of East Palo Alto. Initiate a collaborative framework for these organizations to work together.

4. **Concern:** The lack of public policy and infrastructure to support the natural resources in East Palo Alto is undermining progress and public health. Natural resources that do exist appear to lack protection (policy, resources, code enforcement, etc.)

Action proposed: Develop effective public policy and identify possible revenue sources that can support and enhance the natural resources in EPA (in-lieu open space fees, park districts, etc.).

5. **Concern:** There is a lack of reliable, consistent, accurate data about environmental conditions in East Palo Alto, and these conditions degrade the environment and have a negative impact on human health.

Action proposed: Develop participatory action research mechanisms (Health Impact Assessments, community mapping, etc.) for consistently collecting and distributing actionable data about the environment to decision makers and the general public.

See detailed PowerPoint at http://www.collectiveroots.org/ca_biodiversity_council

For more information, please contact Wolfram Alderson at wolfram@collectiveroots.org.