# San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Alameda Creek Watershed Center in Sunol Overview of Interpretative Elements & Preliminary Concepts for the Facilities & Grounds

### Introduction

Over the last few months, the vision for the Alameda Creek Watershed Center in Sunol (Center) has started to come into focus as the result of outreach to the surrounding community and interested organizations.

This document provides an overview of the interpretive elements and preliminary concepts for the facilities and grounds that are under consideration. This is a working document and we expect it to undergo several iterations as site plans and floor plans are created and refined. At that time, we will begin to define specific interpretive media for the Center, its surrounding grounds.

### I. Design Philosophy

The Sunol Water Temple is a powerful icon and the Center should serve as a portal to its "spirit of place." Because of its proximity to the creeks, woodlands, and other natural features, the Center should also serve as a sanctuary that helps define the visitor's "sense of place." One paradigm focuses on the importance of the land and water. The other focuses on the *nature* of the watershed from both an ecological and cultural perspective.

In response to these dual perspectives, we developed two interpretive themes:

Here at the Sunol Water Temple, we honor the watershed and the water that flows through it.

At this unique confluence of waterways, we also see the confluence of people and nature, and we are reminded of the significance of water in sustaining both.

We also developed five subthemes to support these overarching themes:

- C3 Throughout time, water from Alameda Creek and Arroyo de la Laguna has sustained the lives and cultures of Sunol Valley people.
- C3 The Sunol Water Temple is a powerful icon that symbolizes the importance of water in nature and human culture.
- Human activities, including ranching, farming, mining, urban/suburban development, and individual behavior, can affect the health of the Alameda Creek watershed and its creeks.
- S The quality and quantity of water affects the lives of humans and other species.
- C3 The Spring Valley Water Company and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's early water conveyance system along this waterway is a testament to human ingenuity. More recent action by the SFPUC is a testament to an evolving land and water ethic.

## **II. Sunol Water Temple**

#### **Arrival at the Sunol Water Temple**

- Re-landscape the road from the entry monument to the Temple
- Replace asphalt at Temple and re-landscape surrounding area
- Provide ample parking for private vehicles and school busses
- Provide overflow and handicapped parking

## **Interpretation at the Sunol Water Temple**

• Low-profile interpretive kiosk

#### **III. The Center's Grounds**

- Alameda Creek Watershed Native Vegetation
- Play Area
- Picnic Area Upgrade
- Outdoor Amphitheater
- Eventual Trail Connection to East Bay Regional Park District Vargas Plateau

### **IV. The Center's Buildings**

While the building layout has not been finalized, we do know that space will be allocated for interior exhibits and displays (interpretive wing), staff offices and restrooms (administrative wing), and an event gathering space with kitchen (main hall).

#### **Building Program Goals**

- To respect the importance of the Sunol Water Temple site
- To create an innovative green building with a platinum Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating
- To design for a net zero building energy system
- To design for a highly-efficient water system using innovative green design features

## **Interpretive Wing**

The Interpretive Wing will include a variety of interactive, hands-on exhibits which will relate to the overarching themes and five sub-themes listed above.

### **Administrative Wing**

- Staff Offices
- Small Conference Room
- Storage
- Public Restrooms

#### **Main Hall**

- Vestibule Lobby
- Multi-Purpose Room with a capacity of approximately 100
- Kitchen
- Storage Space

#### **Outdoor Maintenance Yard**

- Mechanical and electrical equipment
- Photovoltaic
- Greywater system

# V. Architecture and Green Design

The following is a preliminary list of innovative green building features that have been discussed for possible inclusion in the design of the Center. Additional green building features items will be fleshed out during design development.

- Passive Solar Design
- Photovoltaic Solar Panel System
- Green Roof
- Rammed Earth Wall Construction
- Greywater System
- Compost Toilet
- Hydronic Solar Heating in a High-Mass Thermal Sand Bed
- Night Misting System for Cooling