

Feb 24

Clement Tsang <ctsang1@go.pasadena.edu>

To the Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee,

My name is Clement Tsang, 22 years old. I was born in the San Gabriel Valley and have lived in a number of its foothill-lying communities: Lincoln Heights, South Pasadena, Alhambra and most recently Altadena. All these communities are connected by the Arroyo.

I am a transfer student from Pasadena City College currently finishing up my Creative Writing BA at San Francisco State University. I have been volunteering at the Nursery since its beginning and have been astounded by the growth of its operations, of its service to the community (not just the human one), and the importance to that community on the educational, spiritual, and existential level. Its growth can only be likened to the fecundity of nature itself. We need to stop separating ourselves from nature, and not "nature" in an abstract sense, but the very real sensations of its permeating presence in the everyday whether we are aware of it or not.

March 23rd, 2016 is an arbitrary date. The watershed does not exist according to your time. It is that anthropocentric time that has devastated our habitat and our homes for ourselves and our neighbors.

There are many pragmatic reasons for continuing the Nursery, such as natural resource preservation, beautification, habitat restoration, betterment of air and water quality, conservation of native plant species, which of course includes animal, insect, bacterial, fungal species; our own species, but these reasons also are a product of our time, yet this ecosystem is timeless. How would these reasons change over time for future generations? For at least seven generations?

We do not think so far into the future because it is beyond our current time comprehension. Will it be less about conservation for a thriving ecosystem as it is now? Will it no longer be for pleasure of community with the ease of comfortable and privileged lives? Already, we are using the rhetoric of surviving, especially concerned with water resources. I don't want to just survive. I don't want my kids to try and survive, I'd like any child of the future to thrive. But we must first decenter the anthropocentric problem of time that initiated this absurd situation, I don't want anyone or anything to just eek out an existence, because of our time. Let's change this conception of time for sustainability's sake. An unconventional method of beginning this change is to envision utopia. Utopia for everyone is different, but for me, the Nursery is critical to that vision as I envision Nurseries all across the country cultivating medicine, habitat, and community.

So I ask you, the members of the Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee, to think about this arbitrary date and its source of intent. I challenge you to envision your own Utopias without restriction to anthropocentric time, and to then bring attention to yourself and to your position so as to see what you can do for your Utopic good.

Best,
Clem