



Sacramento Urban Creeks Council

# Creek Watch

*Creeks connecting communities*

[www.sacto-ucc.org](http://www.sacto-ucc.org)

Winter 2008

## A Watershed Model for Future Developments

*by Jeanette Watson*



Sacramento County is home to many precious creeks. They can provide great recreational resources for families and serve as important habitats for wildlife. However, over the years, urban development and growth have spread throughout the Sacramento area, significantly altering the health of our creeks.

While many watersheds in the Sacramento area have been largely developed, urbanization of the upper part of the Laguna Creek Watershed has just begun. The Upper Laguna Creek Collaborative (ULCC) is planning ahead by developing a watershed master plan for Upper Laguna Creek. The ULCC is a diverse group of government agencies, landowners, developers, and local environmental and conservancy groups. The master plan will include new design approaches, which will conserve the stream and its surrounding habitat from the typical impacts of urban growth.

The ULCC's goal is to design a multi-functional corridor to serve the needs of people and nature. It would provide a safe passage for wildlife by linking existing and proposed preserves along Upper Laguna Creek. The

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## The Most Littered Item

*by Bill Templin*

Do you know what the most littered item is across the U.S.? Despite some people's perceptions, the most littered items are cigarette butts. If you have participated in many clean up events you probably are aware of this, but because they are so small they often are left behind as we rush to pick up the larger litter. The problems with cigarette butts (besides being ugly to look at) is that they contain contaminants that are remnants from the burning of tobacco, not to mention the left-over nicotine and cigarette filters that can also be bad for the fish and other critters in our creeks and rivers.

Some of our local partnership organizations participated in the 2007 Keep America Beautiful Cigarette Litter Prevention Program. Christine Flowers-Ewing, Executive Director of Keep California Beautiful, is shown (photo below) standing along the American River by one of the 20 cigarette collection receptacles that she helped get granted to our area as part of this cigarette reduction campaign last fall.



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Winter 2008



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The purpose of the Urban Creeks Council of California is to encourage the preservation, protection, restoration, and maintenance of natural streams in urban environments. The goals are to educate the general public on the aesthetic, recreational, and ecological values of natural streams.

As a chapter of the statewide organization, Sacramento UCC assumes the same purpose and goals. The chapter holds regular meetings, develops educational materials, participates in neighborhood fairs and public events. It works with schools, neighborhoods, and youth groups to encourage creek clean ups and streambank restoration. It cooperates with city and county efforts to reduce pollution from stormwater runoff. It cooperates with other organizations to monitor developments along stream corridors. Membership is open to anyone who wishes to share in these activities.

Chapter meetings are generally held the fourth Monday of each month at the Arcade Creek Recreation and Park District office.

Please call (916) 482-8377 for specific meeting dates and times.

## Sacramento Weed Warriors is Expanding its Scope of Work

by Frank Wallace

Sacramento Weed Warriors (SWW) is now involved in 3 invasive plant control projects and an oak mitigation project. In 2008, SWW leaders and American River Parkway Foundation staff are assuming responsibility for controlling invasive plant species that infest 800 acres throughout the Parkway. To manage this expanded area, we are recruiting individuals and groups to serve as "Invasive Plant Patrols". Each IPP, assigned to a designated area, will be trained to recognize target weeds, remove weed seedlings, and provide quarterly reports. Serving as an IPP is a great way to be involved in maintaining the rich biological diversity of the Parkway.

Next, SWW and ARPF are in the second year of an Oak Mitigation Project, planting oak acorns and caging "volunteer" seedlings along the Parkway. This winter's planting season is now complete, but we are recruiting volunteer teams to "adopt" a new oak grove as well as install protective cages around seedlings throughout the summer. Our goal is to have 2400 young trees reach about 4 feet in height by mid-2010!

SWW is also working to eradicate arundo (giant reed) along Arcade Creek and other creeks in the Sacramento region. This plant resembles bamboo, and stems can reach 25 feet in height in one season. Along narrow riparian corridors, arundo clusters can cause flooding, consume huge amounts of water and pose significant fire hazards to nearby homes. In partnership with the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council and the Sacramento City Utilities Department, SWW is one of nine "arundo partners" throughout northern California. Our goal is to eradicate approximately 80 clusters of this nasty streamside invader by early 2009.

Finally, SWW has just received a grant from the California Department of Food and Agriculture to control red sesbania along Robla and Magpie Creeks, 2 feeder creeks to Steelhead Creek in northern Sacramento. Sesbania, a poisonous plant, is severely impacting Robla Creek wetlands that support hundreds of mallards and other bird species. Our goal is to remove all mature plants and their seed pods during the next 9 months. We will also be organizing teams to monitor and remove thousands of seedlings that will reappear next year. Since the seed bank already has millions of seeds, it likely will require 6-8 years of monitoring to control and hopefully eradicate this highly invasive plant species.

For more information about volunteering for any of these projects, please contact Frank Wallace, SWW Director, at 213-4682 or email him at [frnkw2@pacbell.net](mailto:frnkw2@pacbell.net).

## A Watershed Model

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corridor is an ideal location for residents to enjoy recreational opportunities through open space, bikeways, and a series of natural trails. By accommodating new “green” stormwater treatment measures, the corridor can protect the creek from urban runoff pollution. In addition, the corridor provides an easement for future sewer infrastructure. The ultimate vision is to connect the Upper Laguna Creek corridor to the existing corridor along Lower Laguna Creek to establish the Laguna Creek Regional Parkway, which would connect to other regional parkways, creating a continuous conduit for habitat and people to co-exist. According to ULCC Facilitator Eva Butler, “This community-wide effort is a model for how future development can be planned on a watershed scale. This search for ways to preserve the creek might lead us to create better communities.”

Current funding for the collaborative is provided by a Proposition 50 watershed planning grant received by the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council from the California State Department of Water Resources. The draft of the Upper Laguna Creek Master Plan is expected to be completed by December 2008.

For more information, visit [www.upperlagunacreek.org](http://www.upperlagunacreek.org)

## It's That Time of Year Again

**Creek Week 2008** - Join the Celebration! Become a part of this volunteer effort to celebrate and enhance many of Sacramento County's creeks by participating in docent led activities centered around urban creeks. The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Creek Week begins on Friday April 18, and ends Saturday, April 26, with a county-wide creek clean up. Teams cleaning creeks from all over the county will celebrate at the Discovery Museum afterward with a barbecue lunch, live music, contests, and games. In addition, many environmentally related city, county, and non-profit organizations will have booths providing all sorts of free, useful information and fun activities. To see how you can help or find out about the many activities scheduled during the week, check out the enclosed brochure. You can also call the Urban Creeks Council at 454-4544 or visit [www.creekweek.net](http://www.creekweek.net)

## The Most Littered Item

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These receptacles were part of a nationwide effort to reduce cigarette litter. The Keep America Beautiful Cigarette Litter Prevention Program reports that cigarette litter can be greatly reduced with installation of receptacles, increased public education and more vigorous law enforcement. This program has been actively growing nationwide for the past 5 years, and some communities reported as much as a 65 percent reduction in cigarette butts in their areas. These numbers result from scientific data collected by volunteers who conduct “scans” of the areas before and after the installations and education programs are initiated.



Part of the 1,500 cigarette butts that were collected one morning during a “scan” are being displayed by Bill Templin, Urban Creeks Council of Sacramento Board Member, in the photo above. This program seeks to educate smokers about the issue while offering access to pocket ashtrays and ash receptacles as a way to combat one of our most overlooked environmental problems. Public education is a major component of this initiative since it has been learned that individuals who would never litter such items as beverage cans or paper packaging typically do not consider tossing cigarette butts on the ground as littering. Most cigarette butts seem to be littered at transition points where people must stop smoking before proceeding into another area. These include bus stops, entrances to public buildings and other government facilities. If you know of a place needing some help or possible partners for these educational activities, please contact us and help us continue to reduce this environmental problem in our area.



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Urban Creeks Council  
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Sacramento, CA 95841

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**CREEK WEEK 2008**  
*A World of Discovery*  
*Your activity guide is enclosed*  
**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**



The Urban Creeks Council of Sacramento is dedicated to protecting and sharing the abundant natural treasures that make up the extensive creek systems of our region.

As a member, you will receive many benefits, including our newsletter *Creek Watch*.

To become a member or renew your membership, please fill out and mail the form below to: Sacramento Urban Creeks Council, 4855 Hamilton Street, Sacramento, CA, 95841

**YES!** I want to help Sacramento's creeks. Enclosed is my tax deductible gift of:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10/Students   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25/Regular membership | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40/Family Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to be a member of the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council. |  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm already a member; please accept my donation and renewal.        |  |   |

Make check payable to: Sacramento Urban Creeks Council.

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**Questions?** Call: (916) 482-8377 Email: [ucc@arcadecreekrecreation.com](mailto:ucc@arcadecreekrecreation.com)