



Sacramento Urban Creeks Council

Creeks connecting communities

Creek Watch

www.sacto-ucc.org

Summer 2008

Another Successful Creek Week

by Alta Tura, Sacramento U.C.C. President

This year's Splash Off was at North Laguna Creek Park. Keynote speaker Sue Sims, Acting Chief Deputy Director of California Department of Water Resources, welcomed sponsors and the Creek Week Stewards. The students of Barbara Comstock Morse Elementary were chosen as this year's Creek Week Stewards. They were recognized for their study and stewardship of Laguna Creek, and the school was presented with a check for \$1,000 to help continue that work.



More than 1,800 volunteers helped clean a creek this year. Moderate water flows this spring again made the creeks more accessible, but with less debris washed up on the banks. About 20 tons of garbage were removed from creeks in Sacramento, Citrus Heights, Folsom, Rancho Cordova and unincorporated Sacramento County. Volunteers also removed invasive red sesbania plants from 2,500 feet along both sides of Steelhead Creek and Robla Creek near Dry Creek.

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First in a New Series: Exploring Our Creeks

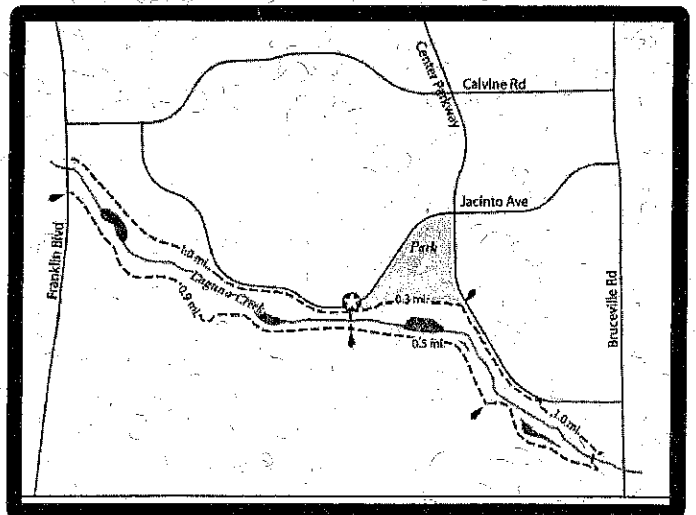
by Scott Crosier

This regular section will highlight some of our local creeks and how we can enjoy them.

North Laguna Creek Wildlife Area
6400 Jacinto Ave, Sacramento, CA
NAD 83: -121° 25.85', 38° 26.49'
UTM 11: 636938, 4255978

Immediately adjacent the park sharing its same name, the North Laguna Creek Wildlife Area provides a variety of trail options to explore this portion of Laguna Creek, nestled among housing developments in South Sacramento. Please remain on the trail when walking in the wildlife area.

To the trailhead: from Hwy 99, exit Cosumnes River Blvd. and head west, towards Cosumnes River College. Turn left on Bruceville Road. Travel south on Bruceville for about .75 miles. Turn right on Jacinto Ave. The park is located on the corner of Center parkway and Jacinto Ave. Park on the street.



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Creek Watch

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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.

New Name, Same Goals

by Alta Tura, SACC President

We are excited to announce the formation of our new nonprofit corporation – the Sacramento Area Creeks Council. After many years as a chapter of the Urban Creeks Council, we are becoming a stand-alone organization. Both Councils have evolved over the years. The state organization has narrowed its focus to the Bay Area and shed its chapters. We are the last to leave. We appreciate the guidance and support we have received from the Urban Creeks Council, and recognize that it is past time to officially recognize that we are independent. At the same time, we retain the goals and purposes that we inherited from the state group.

Sacramento Area Creeks Council will carry on much of the same work begun by the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council. The Sacramento Urban Creeks Council will continue to exist indefinitely as a fiscal agent for the Upper Laguna Creek Collaborative grant and the Sacramento Area Creeks Arundo Eradication and Control Project grant.

Over the next year you might notice changes in the Creek Watch masthead, our letterhead and other group labels as changes are phased in. The most likely impact of the change may be a little confusion. We will also be occupied with all the legal and procedural work involved in setting up a nonprofit. Be assured that we will continue Creek Week and all of our other programs. Also be assured that we will strive to improve the organization to better serve our many volunteers and supporters.

Dorothy Harvey Remembered

We were saddened by the recent death of Dorothy Harvey, a long-time Sacramento Urban Creeks Council member. Over the years, Dorothy served as our Treasurer, Secretary, representative to Environmental Council of Sacramento and representative to Habitat 2020. Organization co-founder Jo Smith remembers Dorothy as an “exceptionally generous volunteer of her time and a loyal supporter of Sacramento UCC.”

The Sacramento Urban Creeks Council was forming at about the same time that Dorothy retired as a reference librarian.

(When environmental documents began being produced as a result of the California Environmental Quality Act and before the internet, she initiated the system that made those documents available to the Sacramento public at local libraries.)

Dorothy loved more than books. She was an avid bird watcher, Lewis and Clark Trail traveler, world traveler and photographer. Dorothy didn't just enjoy nature. She advocated for it. She contributed to the local avian data bank by identifying and tracking nesting bird territories. She wrote letters to local, state and national policy makers about conservation issues. She would also bring up her concerns at our board meetings and with other local conservation groups. Her knowledge and experiences made for well-informed, often passionate, opinions that were shared in the hope of making a difference.

We will miss Dorothy.



Creek Week Volunteer Steps Up

by Alta Tura

Wyatt noticed something disgusting when he was cleaning Willow Creek with his Webelo pack in Folsom. Hundreds of cigarette butts littered the creek trail behind two large businesses. It didn't take much sleuthing to figure out that employees taking their cigarette breaks outside were flipping the butts onto the trail. If he picked all of them up, he was discouraged by the thought that they would be replaced in no time by these inconsiderate smokers.

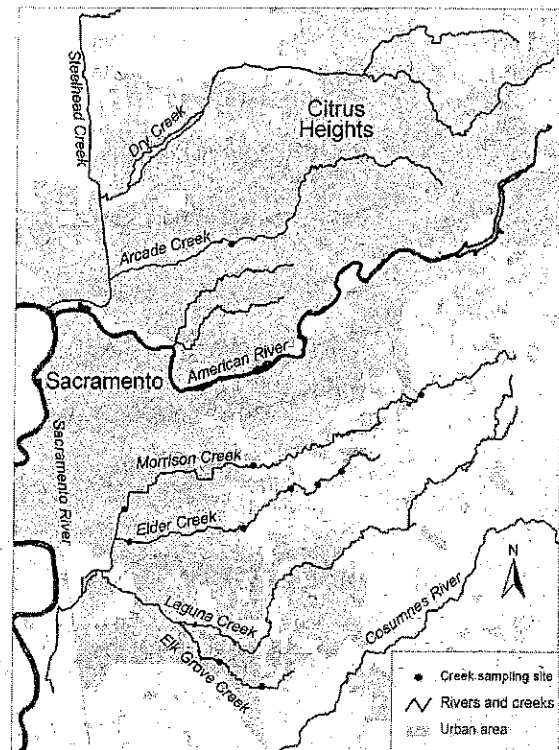
Wyatt and his mom returned to the creek in June and, sure enough, there were even more cigarette butts littering the trail! He stewed about this and had a few conversations with his mom. He could write a letter informing the businesses of the problem and requesting a change in behavior. But because Wyatt is "just a kid" he felt that a letter from him would be ignored. He finally decided to give it a try and wrote the letters. Would there be a response to the letters? The requests seemed reasonable. "Please stop throwing the cigarette butts over the railing, and clean up the mess you made. I suggest after you put the cigarettes in the ash tray, you put them in the garbage the next day." Wyatt has been rewarded with one response so far. The letter from MAXIMUS thanks him for bringing the problem to their attention and for providing guidance on an important issue. This business goes on to promise cleaning up the mess and stopping the litter. Thank you, MAXIMUS, for demonstrating that you value the environment and the wildlife at Willow Creek. Thank you to Wyatt and to all the other Creek Week volunteers who helped with the clean up and beyond. It takes all of us finding ways and working together to help creeks and the environment throughout the year.

FALL CREEK CLEANUP IN CITRUS HEIGHTS AND NATOMAS

In partnership with the American River Parkway Foundation, a few creeks will be cleaned on the same day as the annual Great American River Cleanup. The cleanup will be on the morning of Saturday, September 20. Volunteers will remove garbage and invasive plants. You may register to volunteer by going to the ARPF website. <http://www.arpf.org/> For more information, call Alta at 454-4544.

Arcade Creek

by Bill Templin



Arcade Creek has one of the largest drainage basins of all the local streams, and spanning from 30 to 40 square miles (depending on the reference source you rely on). With elevations ranging from 20 to 270 feet above sea level, it is the most extensively studied watershed in Sacramento County. It flows from Orangevale, northeast of Greenback Lane and Kenneth Avenue to the American River via the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal. Nearly the entire Arcade Creek watershed (98 percent) lies within urbanized parts of Sacramento County. From the headwaters of Arcade Creek to upstream of one large golf course, Arcade Creek is not channelized and contains riparian woodland along its banks. Downstream of the golf course, Arcade Creek has both natural segments, with varying amounts of vegetation, and concrete-lined channel segments, with few trees along its banks. Typical dry weather flows in Arcade Creek are less than 1 cubic foot per second (cfs), but, during rainfall events, storm runoff into Arcade Creek can create flows of over 2,200 cfs, as measured at the USGS gage station located at Watt Avenue. Arcade Creek traverses low and high-density residential developments, commercial developments, three large golf courses and three cemeteries, and is adjacent to

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Exploring Our Creeks: Upper Laguna Creek *(continued from page one)*

The Big Loop (3.7 miles): Beginning at the bridge on the southwest corner of North Laguna Creek Park, you can follow a series of sidewalks, trails, and pathways to explore this stretch of Laguna Creek.

Section 1 (0.3 Miles): This portion of the trail is literally, a walk in the park. The trail skirts along the south side of the park, yet still provides a view of the riparian habitat.

Section 2 (1.0 miles): Leaving the southeastern corner of the park, you can travel along the sidewalk running adjacent to Center Parkway. Occasional openings in the thick vegetation allow views of the creek and the sidewalk is bordered by a lovely greenbelt.

Just before you approach the orange condominiums on the corner of Center and Bruceville, you will find a small parking lot and bike path that travels along the south side of the condos. This path is nicely landscaped and is the home to several humming birds. Before you reach Bruceville Road you will find a gravel road that heads down and to your right that is blocked by a low-laying chain across the road. Stepping over this chain, you will follow the road over a large cement area that crosses the creek bed and rises again on the other side. Once to the other side, follow the road to the right; this will take you to one more small stream crossing, back to the trails designed for the wildlife area. *(Some portions of this section are inaccessible during times of high water flow.*

Section 3 (0.5 miles): Returning to the traditional trail, you will skirt along the south side of Laguna Creek. This might be the best stretch to view some of the pools along the creek as well as the birds that live there. As you approach the bridge, you have the option to cut short your hike (1.8 miles) or continue straight on the south side of the creek.

Section 4 (1.0 Miles): This is a lovely stretch of trail that provides the view of the creek on one side and some oak grassland restoration on the other side. The latter portion of this section is bordered on one side by housing. Following the pathway will lead you to Franklin Blvd. Turn right to cross the bridge and join another trail on the north side of the creek.

Section 5 (0.9 miles): This section begins as a fitness trail running parallel with the creek. After about 0.5 miles, you will begin walking on a sidewalk through a

very wide greenbelt that resembles a portion of the park. You will soon return to the bridge. *(This portion of the trail has been under recent construction. Detours through the adjacent neighborhood can provide alternative routes.)*

Arcade Creek *(cont. from page 3)*

two major branches of Highway 80. A major mall (Sunrise Mall) is also located in the Arcade Creek watershed. Arcade Creek discharges into the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal, which discharges into the Sacramento River.

We're used to the annual flooding of Arcade Creek at Winding Way and Walnut Ave. at the south end of American River College, but this past Feb. 13, 2008 an unusual sewer main line break (possibly caused by erosion from wet weather) resulted in 700,000 gallons of raw sewage being dumped into the creek just upstream above Garfield Avenue and a fine of \$201,000. Christof Dobson from Sacramento County Sanitation said as far as they know there is no environmental damage stemming from the spill but signs were posted along the creek, telling people to stay away. However, students from Mira Loma High School (who have been monitoring Arcade Creek for years as part of their International Baccalaureate Program) noticed aquatic life was absent and thought it might have been related to the chlorine that had been used to "sanitize" the reach of the creek that had been contaminated with the raw sewage.

As of 2002, no salmon or steelhead had been reported in Arcade Creek for over 20 years and it's not likely that they would return due to the lack of suitable habitat and summer low flows (Mike Healy, CA Fish & Game, 2002). However, during the 1997/1998 flood season, an adult salmon was seen in Arcade Creek (Sarah Ross, Board Member, UCC Sacramento), and the Dry Creek example shows restoration can happen. The lack of suitable upstream habitat, intermittent flows and urban runoff inputs suggests that our efforts might best focus on improving rearing habitat in lower Arcade Creek. As the map shows, anadromous fish must pass Arcade Creek on their way to Dry Creek, and these fish could benefit from the enhanced habitat.

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Public Library • Keep California Beautiful

Another Successful Creek Week

(cont. from page 1)

Thousands of seedlings were pulled, and an estimated 7 million seeds were disposed of.

Volunteers came to the Celebration at the Discovery Museum Science to celebrate their accomplishments. We were honored to have Representative Doris Matsui present the Junk and Gunk awards. Great family entertainment from Radio Disney, fun activities, barbeque, free museum admission and earth-friendly exhibits were enjoyed by all.

This year, donor generosity put the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council in a position to initiate a mini-grant program to empower teachers to teach students about their local creeks and the many benefits they provide. The grants of up to \$500 also provide incentive to give students an outdoors, hands-on experience that takes their learning to a more concrete and meaningful level. We were pleased to support creek and wetland education programs that will be delivered to over 1,000 Sacramento County students from kindergarten through high school.

The continued success of Creek Week is credited to our loyal volunteers and sponsors. The direct benefits of the clean-up and the numerous benefits that result from Creek Week's student and general public education all help to preserve and protect our urban creeks.

Unusual (and the usual) Junk Found

Toy gun made out of wood and duct tape; counterfeit money – the ink ran; garage door; ballet slipper; broken mirror; TV console; dentures; sink; toy rocket; tires, hub caps, garbage can lids, shopping carts





Sacramento Chapter
 Urban Creeks Council
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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:

- \$10/Students
- \$100
- \$25/Regular membership
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- Other _____

I would like to be a member of the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council.

I'm already a member; please accept my donation and renewal.

Make check payable to: Sacramento Urban Creeks Council.

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City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

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