



Creek Currents

**Sacramento Area
Creeks Council**

www.saccreeks.org

Summer 2012

Creek Week 2012

2,000 volunteers collected 15 tons of garbage along 32 miles of waterways.



The 22nd annual Creek Week cleanup landed on a beautiful spring day. The preceding week of rain storms created some interesting conditions for volunteers. High flows made it too risky to get in or even close to the water in many locations. That meant some garbage was left on steep banks in the interest of safety. The high flows also washed much of the season's garbage accumulation out of the creeks and into the rivers. The storms improved water quality, so fewer volunteers needed to change their clothes before coming to the Celebration.

There are many people to thank. Loyal sponsors, the planning committee, trip leaders, and the cleanup site leaders all provided vital support to the event. Thank you to the 2,000 volunteers who gathered at 62 different locations to work along a total of 32 miles of waterways and helped clean a creek in 2012.

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Creek Week 2012 Highlights

- Close to 15 tons of garbage were removed from creeks in Sacramento, Citrus Heights, Folsom, Rancho Cordova, Galt, Rio Linda and unincorporated Sacramento County.
- 2,600 pounds of electronic waste was brought to the Celebration for our first-ever E-Waste recycling.
- Volunteers also removed 115 cubic yards of invasive plants. Himalayan blackberry, French broom and invasive trees were removed to make room for native plants.
- For the third year, water quality testing was conducted at selected sites.

Sacramento Area Creeks Council

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The Sacramento Area Creeks Council provides information, educational resources, and stewardship opportunities that encourage the protection, restoration, and maintenance of natural streams in Sacramento County. Its goals are to educate the general public on the aesthetic, recreational, and ecological values of natural streams.

The Sacramento Area Creeks Council holds regular meetings, develops educational materials, and participates in neighborhood fairs and public events. It works with schools, neighborhoods, and youth groups to encourage creek cleanups 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.

Creeks Council meetings are generally held the third Monday of each month at the Arcade Creek Recreation and Park District office. Please call (916) 454-4544 for specific meeting dates.



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Art Contest for Creek Week

Students learned while they contributed to this year's T-shirt design

One thing many Creek Week volunteers look forward to is the Creek Week T-shirt. A different art piece, reflecting the Creek Week theme, is featured on the T-shirt each year. People proudly wear their shirts throughout the year. More than once, I've been out and about wearing a Creek Week T-shirt, and I have spotted someone else wearing theirs. We are instant buddies!

A fun change for 2012 was to have children design the Creek Week art. An art contest was their motivation. The contest packet included information about our local creeks and some activities to help inform and inspire the art. The artwork was done by San Juan Unified School District fourth through sixth grade students during art class with an art teacher.

Citrus Heights art teachers taught lessons, and some students visited a creek before getting busy on their art piece. Karina, a fifth grader at Skycrest Elementary was the first-place winner. Elements from some of the other finalist entries were used in the brochure, bookmark, button, and other Creek Week promotional items. Creek Week, of course, was the big winner. The art is engaging and communicates very well the theme of "Why We Care for Creeks".

But wait. There's more! The art entries were displayed at the ninth annual Kids Art Festival held in Fair Oaks on April 28, attended by 3,500 arts enthusiasts. Creek Week had a table at the event, so more people now know about Creek Week! In May, the Creek Week student



Adults loved Creek Week kid's art!

art exhibit was moved to Citrus Heights Civic Center Complex so others could enjoy the works of art and learn about Creek Week.

Thank you to everyone in San Juan Unified School District—curriculum coordinators, art teachers, and students—who worked to make the Creek Week art contest a winner. ■

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Water Scavenger Beetles

Important and fascinating beetles living in our local creeks

Water scavenger beetles (*Hydrophilus triangularis*) belong to the Order Coleoptera (Beetle). Like most organisms on Earth they have unique adaptations; in this case for swimming. They are usually found in ponds, shallow lakes, and along the shoreline of flowing water. Adults are general feeders or feed on decaying organic matter (omnivorous or detritus feeding), but a few are predaceous. Most larvae are predaceous, although some feed on plants.

The name *water scavenger* applies more to the adults which, in addition to scavenging, may be vegetarians or predators. The adult is a glossy black, smooth-bodied beetle that may range in size up to 1 1/2 inch (40 mm) in length. The wing covers may appear greenish or purplish under water, and the hind legs are “feathered” and appear oar-like, enabling them to move quickly through water. Their upper bodies are usually higher, more rounded, and not as flattened as predaceous diving beetles (Coleoptera: Dytiscidae) with which they can be sometimes confused. Adults surface for air and trap air to breath under the wing covers. They swim (“row”) by alternating the hind legs, producing a wiggle from side to side.

Egg-laying sites vary, although females of a few species carry eggs on their bodies. Some species of males chirp to locate mates. Pupation is generally terrestrial.

Larvae are entirely aquatic and have elongate bodies that may be up to 2 3/8 inches (60 mm) in length. Their heads are very large and support enormous, curved jaws. The abdomen has a wrinkled appearance and often has long filaments extending from the sides. The tail filaments are usually short. The larvae are usually predators. Spiracles, through which they acquire oxygen, arise from the end of the abdomen. When larvae need to replenish their air supply, they float to the water surface and expose the end of the “tail” to “inhale”. Water scavenger beetles, which may be found around lights in large numbers, are not pests. They are beneficial insects whose larvae consume a myriad of pest species, such as biting midges and gnats and mosquitoes, that not only annoy us but may also pass along contagious diseases such as the West Nile virus. Next time you see one think of how lucky we are to have them around! ■



Top: Larval water scavenger beetle; note the LARGE mandibles. Middle: Adult water scavenger beetle. Bottom: Water scavenger beetles have been around for a very long time. Let's keep it that way. Protect our streams and their inhabitants.

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The afternoon Celebration at Carmichael Park featured great family entertainment from Radio Disney, fun activities, barbecue, the Junk & Gunk contest, and earth-friendly exhibits. Volunteers also played an important

role in the Celebration. Thank you to students from Mira Loma High School, members of Kiwanis and Lions service organizations, the exhibitors, and the other volunteers who worked so hard to make the Celebration a

success!

We hope everyone enjoyed Creek Week. You all deserve credit for improving the health of Sacramento's creek systems and for enhancing the quality of creek experiences for human visitors. ■



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