



# Creek Currents

Sacramento Area  
Creeks Council

www.saccreeks.org

Fall/Winter 2012

## Cruising Laguna Creek—By Bike

*Participants enjoyed an educational tour along the Laguna Creek Trail.*



Two of the more than 20 people who enjoyed an animal and plant-filled tour.

More than 20 people showed up on October 21 to Cruise Laguna Creek. The group, ranging in age from seven to 70-something, bicycled five miles on the Laguna Creek trail. The group stopped now and then, and leaders pointed out various features.

Present features included stream gages; oak, cottonwood, and willow trees; egrets; wood ducks; mallards; water quality test wells; and a groundwater pump. Evidence of past land uses were a hill capping an old landfill, pistachio trees reminding us of the old pistachio orchard, pipes from the old fish hatchery, and bumps that were once levees.

We gained an appreciation of the native trees that provide food and shelter for the wild animals that live along the Creek. Trees also provide shade for people on the trail and help cool the creek water in the summer. We learned about the “bad” trees like

privet, catalpa, and tallow that are displacing the “good” native plants.

A pedestrian bridge and trail extension downstream of Camden Lake will be built in the near future. Another future project should be a volunteer effort to remove the invasive plants. May should be a fine time for Cruise the Creek II. ■

## Exploring Part of Laguna Creek

*By Bonnie Ross, SACC Board Member*

I volunteered for the Laguna Creek Watershed Council’s Cruise the Creek. My contribution involved collecting aquatic organisms living in the creek and sharing information with attendees.



Cruise the Creek participants learn about aquatic organisms.

attendees.

The general health of any body of water can be determined by evaluating the diversity, abundance, and health of the fish, insects, algae, plants, and other organisms in and around, in this case, the creek. The process is called a Biological Assessment (or BA). In gen-

*see “Creek,” page 3*

## Don’t Miss Our E-News!

As we continue to phase out our paper newsletter, we encourage you to join our E-Newsletter Mailing List at [www.saccreeks.org](http://www.saccreeks.org). You will get color photos, more frequent updates and the good feeling that you are helping us go greener.

**Sacramento Area  
Creeks Council**

P.O. Box 162774  
Sacramento, California 95816  
Phone (916) 454 - 4544  
www.saccreeks.org

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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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## Mira Loma Students Restore Norris Swale



**Students remove invasive plants.**

plant a variety of native flowers, grasses, vines, and shrubs.

Last April, students began by removing over eight cubic yards of invasive plants. That process was continued on this October morning as weed wrenches, saws, and hand pulling were employed to remove escaped landscape plants such as catalpa, tallow, Chinese privet, and liquid amber. These plants grow like weeds, crowding out the native plants that once provided food and shelter for native species. They can also obstruct water flow, which means drainage maintenance crews may come through with equipment or herbicides to keep them under control. The bad plants regrow, and the maintenance crews return, but native plants have mostly disappeared in the process. The system is unhealthy and out of balance.

The planting phase will be in late fall. Motorists on Auburn Boulevard, bicyclists, trail users, and neighbors should enjoy the return of nature to this special spot. ■

Fifty Mira Loma High School students spent an October Sunday morning preparing Norris Swale, an area near Arcade Creek at Del Paso Regional Park, for restoration to its native habitat. A grant from the San Juan Stars foundation is providing the funds. Students and adult mentors are providing the labor. The plan is to

## Volunteers Clean Up Natomas Creek

At our annual Creek Week each April, we often hear, “So when can we do this again?” To which we usually answer, “Not until next year...” Well, one of our site leaders, Tanja, with the help of her neighbors, went the extra mile and organized a summer cleanup. One of our Board Members, Bill Templin, was able to attend and take some photos of their well-coordinated efforts.

The channel is owned by Reclamation District 1000, and they were there to haul stuff away that volunteers pulled from the creek. They had also kindly mowed down the tall weeds so people could find the trash more easily.

Many visitors were noticed walking the area and berry picking while viewing the scenic beauty of the area. ■



**Part of a special summer cleanup, volunteers prepare to remove trash from a Natomas creek.**

## Planting Hope for the Future

*Antelope High School students plant seedlings and acorns.*

On Friday, November 2, about 60 oak seedlings and more than 100 acorns were planted along Sierra Creek by Antelope High School students and their mentors. The planting on this Dry Creek tributary continued a project begun by Stephani Smith when she won first place at the regional Caring for Our Watersheds environmental proposal contest as a junior. It will increase shade and beautify the two acres while providing habitat for native birds and improving stream water quality.

Stephani's teacher, Katie Cantrell, and fellow students worked to find additional funding and technical assistance from the US Fish & Wildlife Service and local non-profit organizations. Project partners are Dry Creek Conservancy, Sacramento Area Creeks Council, and Sacramento Tree Foundation. The project will serve as an outdoor learning project and be maintained by the students.

Supervisor Roberta MacGlashan helped get the morning started by delivering a short address to the tree planters.

After a tree-planting demonstration, the students fanned out into groups to plant under the guidance of adult volunteers. Seedlings were planted in two areas where irrigation methods will differ. All seedlings and acorns were mulched to suppress weeds and help retain moisture. Plastic tubes were installed to protect the trees from critters like rabbits and mice.

Antelope High students will return to do mulching, weeding, watering, and other maintenance chores. Ed Clark, a Sacramento Area Creeks Council volunteer, will monitor the project regularly as it transforms into an area of community pride and healthy wildlife habitat along Sierra Creek. ■



**Students and their families prepare a hole for an oak sapling.**



**Students place one of the 60 oak saplings planted near Sierra Creek**

*"Creek," from Page 1*

eral, the more diverse the biological community is, the healthier the body of water. Scientists and volunteers can use indicators of water quality to assess the health of a body of water. While collecting specimens, I made the most wonderful discovery; Laguna Creek is alive and well and supporting a diverse community of aquatic invertebrates!

I used a fine mesh net and dragged it through the amazingly clear water. Small plants were clearly visible on the creek bed. The organisms were then placed in gallon jars and identified. The only two vertebrates I saw were a mosquito fish and a bullfrog; both non-natives. The invertebrates, on the other hand, included a wide variety of natives such as: Copepods (at least 4 species), Amphipods (scuds), water mites (tiny animals related to spiders), Daphnia (water fleas), and Ostracods (seed shrimp).

Larger invertebrates included snails (mollusks), midge fly larvae, dragonfly and damselfly nymphs, diving beetle larvae, and two insects in the true bug family: water boatmen and back swimmers.

The vegetation was varied but included many non-native invasive species. There were many native plants, however, including tule, cattails, sedges, and rushes as well as many native trees, among them Valley and live oaks, cottonwood, and several species of willows.

In a word, the experience was "incredible." ■

**A Big Thank You  
To Our Recent Donors!**

**Randall Everson  
Roger Jones  
Susan and Lyman King**



Sacramento Area Creeks Council  
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### Mark Your Calendars for **CREEK WEEK 2013** Cleanup: Saturday, April 13



The Sacramento Area Creeks Council 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 Currents*. To become a member or renew your membership, you may use PayPal at [www.saccreeks.org](http://www.saccreeks.org) or fill out and mail the form below to: Sacramento Area Creeks Council, P.O. Box 162774 Street, Sacramento, CA, 95816.

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