



Mission Accomplished!

by Alta Tura

In the weeks and days leading up to the yearly clean-up of Sacramento County's creeks, planners worried a bit about the weather. Nothing can squelch a creek clean-up more thoroughly than a heavy rainstorm. So the sunny and mild spring conditions on the day of the clean-up were very welcome. Not too hot, not too cold and, most important, not too wet.

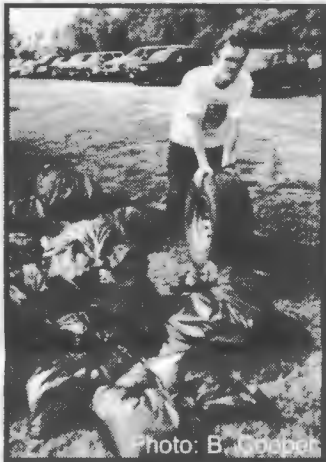


Photo: B. Cooper

Volunteers reported to more than fifty different sites at 9 a.m. on Saturday, April

9th. Some groups numbered as few as three workers while the largest group was a whopping 61 strong. Their collective labors resulted in the removal of about 20 tons of man-made debris from creeks in the unincorporated County and in the cities of Sacramento, Citrus Heights, Rancho Cordova and Folsom. The red sesbania plant, another creek villain, was delivered a set back by the 100 volunteers who toiled to remove the invasive plants from 1,200 feet of creek banks.

Thanks to the effective work of Creek Week volunteers, Sacramento County's creeks will have fewer obstructions during high water events, our rivers and even the ocean will be cleaner and native willows will have an opportunity to make a comeback along the banks of Dry Creek.



Photo: B. Cooper

Walking the Creeks

by Abigail Stocking

As a naturalist with the Effie Yeaw Nature Center I had the privilege of celebrating Creek Week 2005 by sharing the importance of creeks through two interpretative programs. On Saturday, April 2, I led a walk along Arcade Creek. To start off, we looked at various artifacts from critters that make creeks their home. Participants viewed a beaver skull and fur, raccoon fur and a freeze-dried rattlesnake. Also, to get our ears warmed up for the hike, we listened to bird calls on a portable player. One of our young participants was a birding star as he often was the first to call out the name of the bird whose song we were listening to. Then we headed out to walk along Arcade Creek. We forded the creek at a low area and were able to continue along the creek following the beautiful trail. Although there were houses visible along the way, this trail



Photo: P. Tucker

offered a pleasant escape from the sights and sounds of our modern world. During our walk we identified many different types of native vegetation supported by the creek. Willows, cottonwoods and oaks abounded. We saw how the trees were keeping the banks of the creek intact because of their roots that hold the soil in place. In one clearing along the creek, a Great egret delighted us as it diligently hunted for food from the water.

The following Saturday, I led a hike with a different purpose. On this day, we walked along the Carmichael Creek in Ancil Hoffman Park searching for the little critters that make creeks their home. We started off at

(continued on page 5)



2004 - 2005 Officers

President

Alta Tura

Vice President - Education

Beth Etgen

Secretary

Peter Tucker

Treasurer

Jane Steele

Directors

Jamie Cameron-Harley

Dorothy Harvey

Steve Mayer

Bonnie Ross

Bruce Swinehart

Dave Tamayo

Bill Templin

Frank Wallace

Advisors

Rick Bettis, P.E.

William Yeates, Esq.

Creek Watch Editor - Betty Cooper

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 second Tuesday of each month at the Arcade Creek Recreation and Park District.

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

Horsing Around Ueda Parkway During Creek Week 2005

Story and photos by Bill Templin

Creek Week offered a new activity this year, a horseback tour of the Ueda Parkway! The idea was Barbara Eggleston's and it was a good one. What a great way to spend a beautiful Sacramento Saturday morning in spring. It had been quite awhile since I had last ridden a horse, but as they say "It's just like riding a bike, it comes right back to you." This ride was held on an absolutely beautiful spring day and was well timed between all of those rainstorms. The scenery in the Ueda Parkway and Hansen Ranch was beautifully pastoral and the view from horseback was much better than on foot.



Barb borrowed this cute little pony to ride, as her horse was under the weather on this day. Thanks to Barbara Longo for loaning me a horse to ride and to all of the attendees who provided so much encouragement and guidance.



The wild flowers and waterfowl were in abundance but only about ten horse persons enjoyed this first year's ride. Hopefully next year many more people will be able to enjoy the experience, and I highly recommend that they do!

For more information on Ueda Parkway you can visit the following websites: <http://www.natomasjournal.com/ueda-bigmap.html> and <http://www.natomasjournal.com/APlaceInTheCity.html>

Mark Your Calendar: Creek Week 2006 Clean-Up is April 29

Creek Critters and Plants

Red-shouldered Hawk *by Bruce Swinehart*

Wow! What is that noise? This is a comment often made by people hearing the shriek of the Red-shouldered Hawk. This bird is often heard long before it is seen sitting inside the branches of a tall tree rather than out near the edge. The shrill call is often described as "kee-yoo". It is perhaps not quite as easily distinguished as the Red-tailed Hawk with its very red tail. It is quite easily identified, however, not by its red shoulders, but by its strikingly black and white banded tail edged in white at the end. The striped wings often show translucent crescent shaped "windows" (an ornithologist's term) underneath.

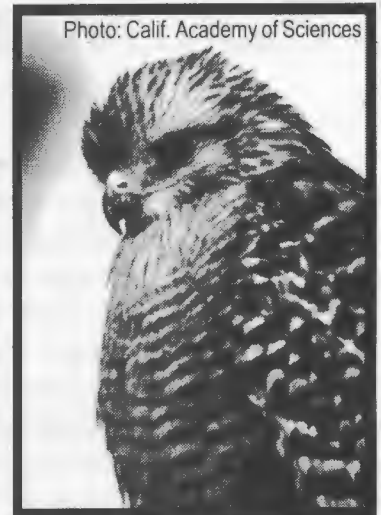
While the Red-tailed Hawk will glide for long periods without flapping its wings, the Red-shouldered Hawk will glide and flap, glide and flap. It is very characteristic. Its 16-

inch body and 40-inch wingspan is a little smaller than the Red-tailed. A pair typically stays together all year.

When you find one, there is most likely another. Some think they pair for life. They like to nest in taller trees

along our creeks. The young have the banded tail but lack the buffy color of the breast and wing linings.

The Red-shouldered Hawk is found in the eastern United States and along the western edge of California, but is conspicuously missing from middle America. In days of yore when all hawks were considered bad, they were called by the derogatory name "chicken hawks." The Red-shouldered Hawk helped give hawks a good name. They seem to eat mostly small animals often found near water and along our creeks. Chickens are not much of its diet but mice, rats and squirrels are. Farmers could often observe this and recognize its value. Watch for this hawk; it is a species you can positively identify on your own.



Ithuriel's Spear (*Tritelaiia laxa*) *Story and photos, by Frank Wallace*

Ithuriel's spear grows 1-2 feet in height and produces 8-20 lovely funnel-shaped violet-blue flowers on its leafless stem. This plant blooms in profuse clusters in early spring along many of Sacramento's urban creeks and along the bluffs overlooking Lake Natoma. Ithuriel, from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, was one of the angels appointed to guard Paradise and anything false was revealed as its true self when touched by his heavenly spear. Also known as Grass Nut, its short bulb-like underground stem was consumed by California Indians.



California National Guard Cleans Arcade Creek!

by Alta Tura

Wayne Lorentzen of the California National Guard was looking for a worthy Earth Day service project when he called me in March. I had just the place that needed a tough, well-organized group with experience in tackling hazards safely. This very needy section of Arcade Creek had not been cleaned for the last few years. Steep banks, lots of poison oak, illegal dumping and homeless encampments make this one of the most challenging of our creek clean-up spots. Because Wayne's group wanted to clean on Earth Day, they were not officially part of Creek Week. However, we were able to help them by providing advice and equipment such as garbage bags, ropes with hooks, litter getters and t-shirts.

Fifteen soldier and staff volunteers from the California National Guard worked from 9 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. on Friday, April 22. They made good use of the ropes and hooks to pull out an engine, a refrigerator, tires, shopping carts and furniture. Enough debris was removed from the creek and nearby businesses to fill a rented 40-yard roller box. The box of collected debris was taken away that afternoon before vandals could get a chance to raid it and dump trash back into the creek. Hazardous waste was separated out and properly disposed. In all, about 1,250 feet of Arcade Creek were cleaned. The volunteers celebrated with pizza donated by Mountain Mike's Pizza. On behalf of Arcade Creek, we want to thank the California National Guard volunteers for their initiative and hard work.



Promoting Environmental Stewardship

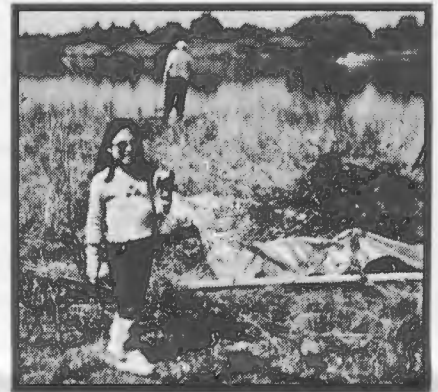
Story and photos by Frank Wallace

For the past 15 years, the Urban Creeks Council-Sacramento has conducted the popular Creek Week program. Young people, their families, local businesses, government agencies, environmental organizations, neighborhood groups – and many more – have all been enthusiastic supporters of this event. While cleaning creeks is our immediate objective, the Creek Week program also strives to promote broad-based environmental awareness and a life-long appreciation of the values provided by our natural resource areas and urban creek corridors.

We also know that many other organizations in the Sacramento region offer stewardship opportunities

throughout the year, some that are organized especially for young people, some for adults, and some that encourage participation among all ages. We are aware that it is not always easy to find out what (and where) events are scheduled that might be of interest for volunteers who want to contribute.

To make it easier to find this information, the Urban Creeks Council Board is initiating a project to develop a central web site service that will provide links and/or actual listings of upcoming environmental stewardship events. We want to be sure that interested individuals or groups, such as students of all ages, classroom teachers, community groups, church entities, volunteer agencies, and senior centers, will be able to easily locate opportunities for service throughout the year. We will be collaborating with other groups (such as the California Native Plant Society, the American River Parkway Foundation, etc.) and resource area managers (such as the Bufferlands, Cosumnes River Preserve, Effie Yeaw Nature Center, etc.) to make sure the web content is designed in the most effective, attractive manner possible. For more information or if you would like to help us with this project, contact Frank Wallace at 427-5694 or <frankw2@pacbell.net>.



Creek Walkers *(continued from page 1)*

the Nature Center looking at examples of aquatic invertebrates from aquariums that we keep at the Nature Center just for this purpose. Then we went down to the creek to see what we could find. Children and adults worked together using nets and viewing trays to look at samples of creek life. As collecting is not allowed in Sacramento County parks, this was a special privilege to do this activity on this day. People found small critters like scuds, freshwater clams and water fleas. Everyone seemed to enjoy the hands-on approach to discovery of creek life.

Through the two activities that I was involved in for Creek Week 2005, I got to help people directly experience creek life and why it's important to keep our creeks healthy. From tiny invertebrates to lofty trees, all these organisms depend on creeks for their survival. Even just a few short hours admiring the beauty of these places helped illustrate to the participants just how important our creeks are.



**Many Thanks to ALL
the Creek Clean-up Volunteers!**



Do you know of a class or youth group that would like to participate in hands-on creek discovery activities? Check out Sacramento Urban Creek Council's ***Dipping Into Creeks*** program curriculum and materials. See information on the website at www.sacto-ucc.org



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.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

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



Sacramento Chapter
 Urban Creeks Council
 4855 Hamilton Street
 Sacramento, CA 95841

NONPROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT NO. 619
 SACRAMENTO, CA

**What creek critter
 is usually heard
 before it is seen?
 See page 3 to
 find out!**

Address Correction Requested

In This Issue

Mission Accomplished, p.1
 Walking the Creeks, p.1
 Horsing Around Ueda
 Parkway, p.2
 Creek Critter and Plant
 Column, p.3
 California National Guard
 Cleans Arcade Creek, p.4
 Promoting Stewardship, p.4

Many Thanks to These Creek Week 2005 Sponsors

PLATINUM SPONSORS

California Dept. of Water Resources
 Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency
 Arcade Creek Recreation & Park Dist.
 County of Sacramento
 Jones & Stokes
 Sacramento Regional Co. Sanitation Dist.
 Bureau of Reclamation
 City of Folsom
 A. Teichert & Son, Inc.
 Sacramento Local Conservation Corps
 Raines, Melton & Carella
 Signature Press

GOLD SPONSORS

City of Sacramento
 City of Citrus Heights
 Water Forum
 West, Yost and Associates
 EIP Associates
 Intel
 Cal American Water

GOLD SPONSORS (cont.)

State Water Resources Control Board
 Mission Oaks Recreation & Park Dist.
 Sunrise Recreation & Park District
 Northwest Hydraulic Consultants
 URS
 CDM
 CH2MHill
 HDR Engineering
 The HLA Group
 MWH-Montgomery Watson Harza
 Herzog Surgical
 Restoration Resources

SILVER SPONSORS

CALFED Bay-Delta Program
 Granite Construction Company
 EDAW
 Carmichael Recreation & Park Dist.
 Nehemiah Corporation
 Ayres Associates
 Sara Lee Bakery Group

BRONZE SPONSORS

California Native Plant Society
 Quadriga Landscape Architecture &
 Planning, Inc.
 MBK Engineers
 Raley's and Bel Air
 Rio Linda/Elyerta Community
 Water Dist.
 Regional Water Authority

PRICELESS SUPPORT FROM:

Discovery Museum Science Center
 Effie Yeaw Nature Center
 Rio Linda/Elyerta Rec & Park Dist.
 Southgate Rec & Park District
 Elk Grove Community Services Dist.
 Maharlika Lions
 CSUS American Criminal Justice Assn.

The Bands:

Slapback Echo
 One-Eyed Rhino