



Creek Watch

Sacramento Urban Creeks Council

Creeks connecting communities

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www.sacto-ucc.org

Winter 2007

Winter Doesn't Stop Students Dipping Into Creeks

by Beth Etgen, UCCS Vice President - Education

"Wow! I never knew that creeks could be homes for so many kinds of animals."

"I get it, a creek food web sticks everything together."

"Water bugs look like monsters."

"I've seen junk in the creek near our house and it looks ugly."

These were some of the comments made by Jeannie Courters' third grade students as they were happily engaged in learning more about the importance of creek life and habitats.

On January 16th, 2007, Beth Etgen of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center (EYNC) and assistant Susan Atkinson presented the first "Dipping Into Creeks in the Classroom" program at Carriage Elementary School in Citrus Heights. One of the highlights of the program is a wonderful creek



costume made by EYNC staff member, Libby Harmor. On this day, Jasmine was the lucky volunteer chosen to wear the creek cape as the group discussed what makes a healthy creek. Realistic fabric models of plants, fish, insects, amphibians and mammals were added to the cape while discussion reinforced the concepts of interdependence and food webs.

Colorful slides brought the outdoors into the classroom by showing sites along several Sacramento
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Time is Ripe for "Scoop the Poop" Pilot Program

Courtesy of Sacramento County Stormwater Quality



The Sacramento County Stormwater Quality Program has partnered with Arcade Creek Recreation and Park District and local volunteer groups to develop a cost-effective pilot program called "Scoop the Poop." The program aims to reduce the bacteria found in local waterways caused by the improper disposal of pet waste in our parks and trails.

The "Scoop the Poop" Program offers park-goers a convenient, earth-friendly way to pick up after their pets at four parks within the Arcade Creek Recreation and Park District: Hamilton Street, Oakdale, and Arcade Creek Park, as well as Holyoke Trail.

What is the problem?

The Unincorporated County has more than 254 parks that span over 23,000 acres, and provide numerous social and recreational opportunities for residents. Studies show that animal waste is a major source of bacteria (fecal coliform) found in Sacramento area urban runoff. When dog waste is left on park grass and along trails, runoff from rain and sprinklers carries it into storm drains and waterways. In addition, dog waste is unsightly and generates many public complaints.

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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.

Pyrethroids in Creeks

by Dave Tamayo, Pesticide Control Program Manager,
Sacramento County Stormwater Program

Way back at the end of the last century (the 1990s), the Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership (or SSQP, which includes Sacramento County and the cities of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Folsom, Galt, Rancho Cordova, and Sacramento) found that the water in local creeks was contaminated with the insecticides diazinon and chlorpyrifos, at levels toxic to the water flea *Ceriodaphnia*. Since then, most urban uses of these chemicals have been phased out, only to be largely replaced in the urban marketplace with pyrethroids. In our area, pyrethroids are widely used for ant control around buildings, in most aerosol bug sprays, and even in combination with lawn fertilizers (even though the target insects rarely cause problems in Sacramento lawns).

Recent studies by Professor Donald Weston of U.C. Berkeley frequently found pyrethroids at toxic levels in urban creek sediments of the Sacramento region and the Bay Area. Weston's studies also indicate that urban areas, not upstream agriculture, are the source of these chemicals in the creeks. Pyrethroids bind strongly to sediments, so that the vast majority of them will be found in the stream bottom. This is better for animals like *Ceriodaphnia* that swim and don't interact much directly with the sediment. However, animals that dwell on or in the stream bottom are at risk, since they are more likely to contact the pyrethroids. Weston's study animal, *Hyallela azteca*, is a sediment-dwelling amphipod crustacean found naturally in this area, and is an important component of the aquatic food web.

To help prevent harm to creek life, SSQP actively encourages residents and professionals to reduce pesticide use wherever possible. In addition, the SSQP is a leader in the effort to prod State and Federal pesticide regulators to re-evaluate pyrethroids, and to improve the overall process for pesticide regulation. A key goal is to evaluate pesticides more effectively so future water quality problems are avoided before pesticides are allowed on the market. Visit us at www.sacramentostormwater.org/riverfriendly for resources on avoiding pesticide use.

Our Water Our World and **WaterWise** are two programs supported by the Sacramento Stormwater Partnership that provide useful information for managing pests in Sacramento area landscapes. These programs distribute information through retail outlets and the internet. Water Wise also provides help through the Sacramento Master Gardeners who can answer specific questions during business hours at (916) 875-6913. Our Water Our World provides individual assistance on pest management issues through Ask the Expert (http://www.ourwaterourworld.org/ask_the_expert.cfm), which links to the Bio-Integral Resource Center (www.birc.org). The **University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program** has abundant information on IPM for landscapes, especially in its Pest Notes, and Turf sections.

Dry Creek Salmon Count

by Bill Templin, Board Member,
Sacramento Urban Creeks Council and
Upper American River Foundation

Once again, a good volunteer turnout of over 30 people participated in walking 16 reaches of Dry Creek and its tributaries including Secret Ravine, Miner's Ravine, Antelope Creek, Linda Creek, and Cirby Creek. The intrepid volunteers were documenting the number of live salmon, carcasses and redds in the salmon's spawning beds in the stream gravels. Volunteers included individuals and groups such as the Granite Bay Flycasters as well as federal, state, and local governments.



Greg Bates addresses volunteers

been doing the count. Numbers are apparently low all along the coast and may be related to ocean currents."

The total number of live fish counted dropped again this year to 21, as compared with 127 in 2005 and 390 in 2004. The first year that I participated in this count (2004) we counted 68 live fish in the same quarter-mile reach of Dry Creek where we counted 15 last year and only 6 this year! Declines also have been observed in the number of carcasses and redds counted, with totals dropping from 87 carcasses in 2004 to only 20 in 2006, and redds dropping from 84 in 2004 to 43 in 2006.

More information about the Dry Creek Conservancy, its salmon surveys, and other activities can be attained by visiting their website and reading their quarterly newsletter at:



www.drycreekconservancy.org/

News and Events

Wildflower Weekend, an annual event held by the Sacramento Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, will take place this year on April 21st and 22nd from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.. With a Discovery Zone, wildflower exhibit, native plant sale and more, this free event is fun for all ages. It's happening at Crawford's Barn, 2715 Tiber Drive, Sacramento. For more information, visit www.SacValleyCNPS.org

The Sacramento River Restoration Science Conference will be held April 9th and 10th at California State University, Chico, in the BMU Bidwell Park Room. The two-day event will highlight original research conducted to design, implement, and evaluate conservation actions and better understand Sacramento River Ecosystem dynamics. For more information, contact Beverly Anderson, Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum: banderso@water.ca.gov

The American River Watershed Conference will be held Thursday April 12 through Friday April 13, 2007 at the University Union building on the campus of California State University, Sacramento (CSUS). The American River is a unique resource of the Sacramento Region, making important contributions to the economy, environment and recreation. It is the most heavily used recreational river in California, and many public and private agencies are concerned with its welfare. Factors affecting the health of the river include increased flood control requirements, population growth, climate change, rising pressure on water use, changing recreation patterns and new understanding of aquatic ecosystems and resources. For more information and updates, visit: www.csus.edu/CREST/American_River_Watershed_Conference.html

The Institute for Culture and Ecology is pleased to announce the new publication, **Broadening Participation in Biological Monitoring: Handbook for Scientists and Managers**. It is **broadly applicable to many types of collaborative, multiparty, citizen, or volunteer projects and many types of resource monitoring**. A PDF file of the entire publication may be downloaded from the publications web site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/publications/>

What We Do

The Urban Creeks Council of Sacramento (UCCS) chapter was formed in 1988 to support the growing creek preservation efforts of its parent organization, the Urban Creeks Council of California. From the beginning, UCCS goals have been to promote public and private care of natural streams through education, advocacy and hands-on activity.



UCCS president Alta Tura (left) and Jane Steele, treasurer and former UCCS president, at Creek Week 2006.

Using educational programs and annual events open to all age groups, UCCS continually brings young and old ever closer to the more than fifty intricate and fascinating creek ecosystems that weave in and out of our neighborhoods, towns and cities. UCCS has joined with individuals, park districts, civic organizations, businesses and local government to educate the general public about the abundant aesthetic, recreational and ecological values that natural streams offer. In addition to the well-known Creek Week celebration, UCCS takes their educational show on the road to outreach exhibit opportunities like the Salmon Festival and Walk on the Wild Side. The Dipping Into Creeks program is now going out to schools with trained presenters, and UCCS makes this curriculum and other materials available to encourage the teaching of science concepts. UCCS partnered with the Mira Loma High School Arcade Creek Project and created a chemistry guide for the group. Outstanding creek stewardship by student groups is rewarded by UCCS each year in an effort to encourage science education and on-going volunteer water monitoring efforts.

UCCS stays involved in the decision-making processes that affect the health of area creeks by participating in workshops, focus groups, public comment opportunities and letter-writing. Members attend meetings of city councils, county boards, commissions and

organizations such as Habitat 2020 and the Laguna Creek Watershed Council. In this way UCCS can advocate for land use planning that promotes creek preservation, sound flood control project design, habitat restoration and effective stream bank stabilization methods.

Last year UCCS worked with others to obtain a grant to continue the Upper Laguna Creek Collaborative. This broad-based group is working on the design of a 13-mile-long multi-use corridor from the creek's headwaters to Waterman Road. The entire Laguna Creek Regional Parkway will extend from the Sacramento River to Rancho Cordova.

The planning and coordination for Creek Week is a huge effort, and no one questions that it is worthwhile. Dedicated committee volunteers begin their meetings six months before the event and spend hundreds of hours working toward this week-long celebration of community-wide volunteer action and education that inspires more participation each year.

UCCS membership is open to anyone who wishes to take part in the effort to preserve our region's fragile and vulnerable creeks. Please join us.

**SACRAMENTO URBAN
CREEKS COUNCIL**
presents the 17th Annual

2007
CREEK WEEK



a Kaleidoscope of Wonder
A Sacramento Urban Creeks Council Event

April 20-28 • 2007

Time is Ripe...

(continued from page 1)

How it works

The "Scoop the Poop" program is a community stewardship program. Individuals can either leave their plastic grocery bags at the pet waste bag stations for others or take a bag to use for picking up and disposing of pet waste.

Working with the park districts, volunteer groups install the stations at designated areas. Not only is this program good for the environment and cost effective, it will also build connections within the community.

The effectiveness of the pilot project will be evaluated over the next several months. If the stations are being used and there are signs of a decrease in pet waste at the parks, it is likely that the program will be offered to other park districts within unincorporated Sacramento County.

For more information, check out the Scoop the Poop Program Fact Sheet at:

<http://www.sactostormwater.org/outreach/PetWaste-FactSheet.pdf>

If you are interested in installing Scoop the Poop signs, please call 874-5733 or email parrisj@saccounty.net

We would like to thank the following groups for supporting the Scoop the Poop Program:

Junior Girl Scout Troop 1308

Bel Air Supermarket, 4005 Manzanita Ave.,
Carmichael

Albertsons, 4708 Manzanita Ave., Carmichael

Albertsons, 5445 Auburn Blvd., Sacramento

Safeway, 4040 Manzanita Ave., Carmichael

An exciting new science program is now available for presentation to classes and youth groups:

Dipping Into Creeks in the Classroom

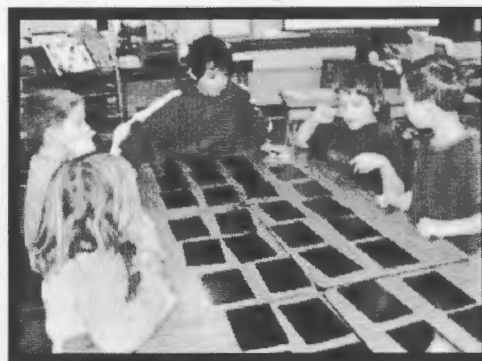
A trained presenter brings this environmental education program with hands-on activities based on the State of California Science Standards to your school. A guided field trip to a local creek may also be an option. For more information, call Beth Etgen at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, (916) 489-4918, ext. 237.

Students Dip Into Creeks.

(continued from page 1)

County creeks, both healthy and in need of restoration. Students saw examples of erosion, trash and flooding while discussing simple ways to restore creeks as beneficial components of the community. The students also saw aerial view slides of local creeks flowing into the larger watershed system.

The kids loved the group stations. They were excited to work in smaller groups while continuing to focus on



creek ecology. Favorites were "Creek Life Bingo," "Invertebrate Concentration," the "I Care For Creeks" game and making a take-home

creek food chain. One enthusiastic girl thanked us for bringing all the "cool stuff" to her classroom and asked when we would be back.

A grant from the Sacramento Chapter of Urban Creeks Council allowed the Effie Yeaw Nature Center to develop the "Dipping Into Creeks in the Classroom" program for students in 2nd through 4th grades. This program uses local creeks as an ideal focus for learning through experiential environment-based education. Research and classroom-based studies show that students learn better, are better citizens at school, and transfer their learning to new situations better in environment-based education programs.

For more information about scheduling a classroom presentation at your school, please call the Effie Yeaw Nature Center at 489-4918 ext. 237.

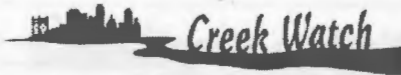
Contributions to Sacramento UCC in memory of Frank Cruzen

Irene Beard

Mrs. Lois Briggs

Kitty Laubacher

The Al and Marion Rossi Family



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**Mark Your
 Calendars for
 Creek Week
 April 20th - 28th**



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
- I would like to be a member of the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council.
- I'm already a member; please accept my donation and renewal.
- \$25/Regular membership
- \$250
- \$40/Family Membership
- Other _____

Make check payable to: Sacramento Urban Creeks Council.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

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