



# CURRENTS

Citizen Monitoring Program Newsletter of the California State Water Resources Control Board

Winter 2005



## Watershed Groups Assist State Water Board Scientists

By Dominic Gregorio and Linda O'Connell, State Water Board, Division of Water Quality

During the summer of 2000, the California State Department of Parks and Recreation began a monitoring program to look at impacts that recreational users might have on the South Yuba River. A second monitoring effort began in September 2000, when the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) initiated a community-based river monitoring program on the river. The following summer, some of the samples collected by these two groups began showing levels of *Enterococcus* bacteria above the Department of Health Services recommended freshwater single sample guideline. None of the samples showed elevated levels of *E. coli*, another indicator bacteria that should have also been high if there was fecal contamination to the river. The State Water Resources Control



Heal the Bay's Stream Team prepares for the first sampling run at Malibu Lagoon. (photo by Dominic Gregorio)

Board got involved at this point. An advisory group was formed; the group identified two factors that might be contributing to the confusing results. One of the factors involved the analytical methods used. The majority of the samples collected during the 2001 monitoring efforts were analyzed using techniques that were not fully U.S. EPA-approved at the time of the study (these methods are all fully approved now). Would the results of the monitoring still be higher than guideline values if the samples had been analyzed using an approved standard method?

A second factor could be the unusually high levels of algae present in the South Yuba River during the study. Since the analytical method used during 2001 was dependent on a color change, could the greenish-brown algal exudate cause a false positive test result? The State Water Board scientists designed a three-year study to investigate



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these factors. Three sites were selected to represent various water quality conditions throughout California: the South Yuba River, the Eel River, and Malibu Creek.

The study would not be possible without the assistance of watershed organizations. During the 2002 sampling period the staff and volunteers from South Yuba River Citizens League were instrumental in collecting samples at nine locations along the South Yuba River over a six week period.

In 2004 the study shifted its focus to the Malibu Creek watershed in coastal Southern California. While the upper portion of the Malibu Creek watershed is urbanized, the lower watershed contains some of the last undeveloped areas draining into Santa Monica Bay, including Malibu Creek State Park. Santa Monica Bay and many of its beaches and tributaries are on the State's 303(d) list for a variety of pollutants. Malibu Creek is no exception, being listed for a variety of impairments including high coliform

bacteria counts. Heal the Bay's monitoring program "The Stream Team" has been involved in monitoring Malibu Creek since 1998 and has been instrumental in supplying quality data to the California Water Boards. Their data is available at <http://www.healthebay.org/streamteam/>.

Staff and volunteers from Heal the Bay, working with State Board scientists, collected samples from eight water locations in the Malibu Creek watershed over a six week period. Samples were collected from five freshwater sites, one brackish water site (Malibu Lagoon) and two seawater sites (Surfrider Beach). For results of the study, please contact Darcy Jones, State Water Board, at (916) 323-9689 or email: [dgjones@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:dgjones@waterboards.ca.gov).



## Former Cal/EPA Secretary Terry Tamminen participated in World Water Monitoring Day

*Adapted from an original article from the Inland Paper by Rudy Yniguez*



Due to the importance of water monitoring, then Cal/EPA Secretary Terry Tamminen, who now is the governor's chief of staff, took time to visit the Imperial Valley to participate in World Water Monitoring Day. "I see people being transformed when they understand how river systems and ocean systems work," Tamminen said before the event. He said when citizens volunteer to collect water samples, they become involved in their communities and help obtain reliable water quality data.



*Then Cal-EPA Secretary Terry Tamminen monitors water quality at the New River. (photo by Alex Rodarte)*

The New River was the focus of Tamminen's testing, since there has been pollution associated

with the area. It is the intent of the Colorado River Basin Water Board to further develop and meet long-range quantitative water quality standards for the New River. Such standards are anticipated to include more reductions of fecal coliform organisms, as well as pesticide and other toxic discharges.

Tamminen's participation was important to the World Water Monitoring Day event, promoters of World Water Monitoring Day have been trying to increase its familiarity to citizens since the first celebration in 2002.

For more information on the New River, see the California Water Board's Basin Plan and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) information at: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/documents/RB7Plan.pdf> <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver/tmdl.html>

# Why Should We Collaborate?

By Rebecca Shawver, Assistant Director of Grant Development-Ivy Tech State College

Edited by Lisa Montanez

If you've ever caught yourself (or a grant team member) questioning why your organization **must** collaborate with other community agencies, perhaps it is time to review the many reasons why we should all enthusiastically embrace collaborative partnerships.

## 1. Opportunities for organizational growth --

Collaborations provide community organizations the opportunity to meet compelling human needs through the expansion and enhancement of ongoing programs. By combining work efforts, agencies augment services with complementary components that build social capital. Working relationships with other professionals strengthen a community's ability to jointly address the wide ranging needs of area residents while more optimally using limited financial resources.



## 2. Holistic services better address client needs --

Complementary services provided through collaborative community partnerships enable an agency to provide individual programs in conjunction with ancillary services that work together for greater net benefits and outcomes for participants.

## 3. Economies of scale --

Whether the collaboration involves the sharing of facilities, program materials, or professional staff members, collaborations invariably save financial resources by reducing the costs associated with providing broader program services. Reduced costs typically net greater economies of scale benefits and allow for more cost efficient program



enhancements and expansions. Funders have limited financial resources to distribute throughout the community; they want to realize the greatest impact possible from the allocation of their funds. By avoiding duplication of services and enhancing programs through collaboration, grant applicants increase the likelihood of winning a grant award.

## 4. Funding opportunities --

Federal, national and local funding agencies recognize the increased effectiveness of holistic program approaches. Therefore, oftentimes organizations find that funding opportunities require the provision of a range of services, some of which are outside their area of expertise. Through collaborative partnerships, an applicant can propose a comprehensive initiative that meets a funder's guidelines and nets synergistic benefits for program participants.

## 5. Client comfort levels --

By nature, people are more comfortable working with individuals that are familiar to them; and typically, people in need turn to other people (not programs) for help.

Collaborative partnerships allow an organization's clients to access other needed services through the people that they already know and trust. ☞



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# Volunteer Roles in A "Big" Restoration

By Susan Schwartz, Friends of Five Creeks

Edited by Lisa Montanez

In late summer 2004, contractors broke ground on the first phase of a multi-million-dollar restoration of almost a half mile of Codornices Creek. This small urban stream drains only about 1.5 square miles between the Berkeley Hills and the east shore of San Francisco Bay. Why so much attention and money for one little creek? One reason is that despite culverts, artificial concrete walls, and pollution, Codornices Creek is home to hundreds of rainbow trout. Other reasons include a need for a wider creek right-of-way, with a more natural meander, and removal of culvert bottlenecks that should reduce flood risk. The hope is to create a model for urban creek restoration.

Governments and professionals generally carry out projects like this. So what is the role of citizen volunteers in this kind of restoration? Friends of Five Creeks, an all-volunteer watershed group, has played a surprising variety of role in the eight-year process leading to this restoration.

This watershed group was founded in 1996, just after the establishment of the Urban Creeks Council and Ecocity Builders. Two years later, the group "discovered" the trout in the Codornices Creek. Caring neighbors had known the trout were there, of course, but government and professionals generally didn't believe them. Todd Jersey, a Friends of Five Creeks member, spotted the fish. Friends of Five Creeks persuaded a University of California biologist with an electro fishing permit to briefly stun one of the trout so it could be photographed.

Using monthly monitoring of parameters such as temperature and dissolved oxygen, volunteers established that the creek had the basic conditions needed for cold-water salmonids, and that there were no obvious severe pollutants. Years later, this monitoring was briefly repeated by professionals seeking big grants. Volunteers had a pioneer role, to

show what resources were there, and what water quality was like, which helped to get things started. The volunteer group served to popularize the idea of restoration. Through four projects, from the creek mouth to its upper reaches, hundreds of volunteers and neighbors learned more about the creek and became enthusiasts.

In late 2003, the group persuaded the California Fish and Game Commission to close Codornices Creek to trout fishing. The fear was that this small creek in a densely populated city could not withstand fishing pressure, as the existence of trout became better known. Similarly, when it appeared that the restoration professionals were not planning to provide rocks or large woody debris in the new channel, as respite from strong storm currents, the group wrote the permitting agencies asking that these be required.

Friends of Five Creeks' involvement is not ending. One group project built a temporary trail and removed a tangle of invasives along part of the future restoration area. Until larger projects are complete, years from now, the group maintains this area. Friends of Five Creeks is likely to seek small grants to provide signage, litter cans, and other needed items. The group hopes to gradually add biodiversity to the initial, rather narrow "palette" of native plants in the restored area.

The groups volunteer role has been in many ways minor compared to that of others. The Urban Creeks Council and the related Waterways Restoration Institute pushed hard for the project for years. The City of Albany has been a major proponent and source of funds as well as the University of California at Berkeley. However, volunteers have played essential parts in this project, and look forward to participating in others. ♪



*First trout identified in Codornices Creek.*



*Friends of Five Creeks work party at Codornices Creek. (photos by Susan Schwartz)*

# Sacramento County students participate in the Salmon Festival & World Water Monitoring Day

Adapted from an original by Bobbie Winn, Department of Fish and Game

Edited by Lisa Montanez

World Water Monitoring Day celebrations were among the many educational activities this year at the Department of Fish and Game's annual American River Salmon Festival Schools Day. Some of the 800 Sacramento County students at the festival participated in World Water Monitoring Day activities. Several agencies sent out volunteers to aid in the Salmon Festival Schools day, which included California's Department of Fish and Game, the Sacramento City Parks Department, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service. Thanks to the State Water Board's Citizen



Children discover the importance of water monitoring. (photo by Bobbie Winn)

Monitoring Program, some Sacramento County students were able to obtain the appropriate equipment necessary for World Water Monitoring Day activities. The program provided water monitoring kits as well as fact sheets, so students could properly participate in monitoring activities. The students observed World Water Monitoring Day by conducting water tests at various locations along the American River. Dissolved Oxygen, pH, turbidity, and temperature were the focus of the students testing. The important data was then later submitted to the World Water Monitoring Day Web site at [www.worldwatermonitoringday.org](http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.org).

A summary report will be available on the State Water Board's Web site at [www.waterboards.ca.gov](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov) in May 2005

## Non-Profit Organizations Must Step Up to Prevent Lawsuits

provided by Citizen Monitoring Program Student Intern, Anita Sandoval

Fortunately, non-profits don't often face lawsuits. However, today some non-profit organizations are experiencing suits similar to what other organizations have dealt with for years. Those potential problems within an organization which could generate a law suit include:

1. Discrimination ( age, race, sex, employment, membership)
2. Harassment
3. Wrongful termination of employees
4. Inefficient administrative or supervision
5. Waste of assets
6. Misleading reports or other misrepresentations
7. Libel and slander
8. Failure to deliver services
9. Acts beyond granted authority

Provided below is an additional list that identifies some **liability** issues that may arise and the insurance coverage available for such issues:

### ◆General Liability Exposures

1. Bodily Injury
2. Property Damage
3. Personal Injury

### ◆Workers Compensation

1. Statutory benefits for the injured employee
2. Employers liability Coverage

### ◆Professional Liability

1. Directors and Officers Insurance may not cover some professional liability exposures

### ◆Employee Benefits Liability

1. Liability arising from providing erroneous information from the Human Resource Department-Example, Benefits coverage, Worker's Comp. etc.

### ◆Auto Liability

1. The use of an automobile company or personal

### ◆Directors & Officers Liability

1. Exposures are too complex to go into detail.

An organization must not only get the proper insurance coverage, it must also take the time to educate all employees and management about reducing and preventing risks that could lead to

future lawsuits. Everyone should know how to properly respond to problems that arise unexpectedly.

In addition, it is recommended that representatives of non-profit organizations visit the local city hall to determine which type of liability insurance best suits the organization.

In conclusion, when volunteers offer their time

and energy to help a non-profit organization, they need to know they are protected physically and financially by that organization, as well as where their own responsibilities lie.

For more information please visit these sites:  
[www.riskinstitute.org](http://www.riskinstitute.org); [www.nonprofitrisk.org](http://www.nonprofitrisk.org) ; [www.niac.org](http://www.niac.org)

## Department Water Events Calendars & Announcements

### 1. The State Water Resources Control Board's Water Events Calendar:

<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/events/eventscalendar.html#calendar>

### 2. The Department of Fish and Game's Calendar of Events:

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/coned/events.html>

### 3. Association of California Water Agencies Calendar of Events:

<http://www.acwanet.com/events/ontap.asp>



## Contact Information:

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