Thirty Year Anniversary of the Clean Water Act

October 18, 2002 marked the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Clean Water Act. This date commemorated a milestone in efforts to protect our nation's water resources, and it also presented an excellent opportunity to enhance public appreciation for the importance of our water resources, celebrate successes, build a better understanding of remaining challenges and solutions, and rekindle the public stewardship and support for watershed protection programs.

A series of events throughout October were led throughout the nation to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the signing of the Clean Water Act. These events were intended to help achieve these objectives, and build a base of understanding, commitment, and cooperation that will carry on and grow in subsequent years.
Clean Water Team Ushers in National Monitoring Day

It was early spring of 2002 that the State Water Resource Control Board’s Clean Water Team began to promote National Water Monitoring Day. Special announcements were made, save the date cards mailed and informational packets distributed. Clean Water Team staff coordinated with the national event organizers to ensure that California’s citizen monitors’ needs were met. The Team also worked with many citizen monitoring organizations, watershed councils and steering committees on their National Monitoring events. As National Monitoring Day approached, Clean Water Team staff served as the State’s primary contacts for the Year of Clean Water.

In keeping with the Team’s mission of supporting stewardship of California’s watersheds through the involvement of Citizen Monitoring to reduce and prevent water pollution many workshops were held. All throughout October Citizen Monitoring Coordinators conducted workshops. These workshops ranged from ½ to full day citizen monitoring that taught about water quality testing, bioassessment, data management and other special topics. The Team also distributed free water testing kits as a special way to promote the event and encourage groups to become citizen monitors.

Californians Get the Jump on Clean Water Related Activities as Clean Water Events Started Early

Celebration, education and stewardship activities offered everyone a chance to make California’s water cleaner. Starting in September nearly 3,000 people participated in the annual Coastal Cleanup Day. Throughout the state our inland waters were also cleaned-up in events like the Great American River Cleanup.

Many wetland restoration activities focused on removing non-native plants and planting native vegetation took action early as well.

Elk Grove Science Students Represented California at National Water Summit

The Elk Grove High School Envirothon team represented California at the National Watershed Summit in Maryland, where the country’s best and brightest teen science buffs learned the importance of protecting our waterways. (continued on page 3)
(continued from Page 2)

The State Water Resources Control Board views the trip as a symbol of how young adults can lead the way toward cleaner water for future generations. The youth summit was one of the key national events held in honor of the 30th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. State Water Board Chairman Arthur G. Baggett Jr. said, "The most effective way to fight this pollution problem is through public education, and it starts with our young students. The future of water quality is in their hands."  

Lake Tahoe in the News

By Cindy Wise

The Regional Board is one of thirty partners comprising the Lake Tahoe Environmental Education Coalition (LTEEC) whose mission is to support and facilitate the overall effectiveness of environmental education at Lake Tahoe. LTEEC staff recently forged an agreement with KOLO-TV News Channel 8, Reno’s ABC affiliate, to present 90-second environmental news segments once each week during the evening news. Dubbed the “The Lake Tahoe Report”, each segment will focus on environmental issues at Lake Tahoe, particularly erosion control and other nonpoint source pollution management. Following each segment, the Tahoe Daily Tribune will publish an accompanying article as part of its series titled “The Enviro Report.” KOLO-TV staff was recently at the Regional Board office to film the tabletop watershed model as demonstrated by about 15 elementary school age children and to interview two Regional Board staff about nonpoint source pollution in the Lake Tahoe basin. This segment is slated to air on April 1. The entire series will air from February through April. Upon completion of the series, LTEEC will provide a video copy to the Regional Board.  

How successful was the outreach in California?

In a word, super. A total of 2,370 people participated, 281 sites were monitored and 196 test kits were given away. Numerous TV and radio interviews were conducted and many newspapers ran articles. Most importantly a significant number of individuals and organizations were recruited for Coastal Snapshot 2003.

For more information, please see http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/volunteer.html
Approximately 25 people braved rain, cold, and wind to attend the most recent Clean Water Team Water Quality Monitoring Workshop March 15th and 16th on the Lower Merced River near Snelling. Fortunately, the little stone cottage where they met (on the banks of the Merced) had a blazing fireplace (for warmth and s’mores!) and the weather improved significantly.

Clean Water Team trainers Erick Burres and Holly Sheradin worked together to teach participants both chemical, and bioassessment water quality monitoring methods. Participants came from the Upper and Lower Merced River regions and beyond: San Leandro, Sacramento, Stockton, Modesto, Fresno, Sanger, Auberry, Clovis, and Northfork.

Day 1 covered water monitoring techniques with instruments. The group learned how to test for temperature, transparency, turbidity, pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, nutrients such as nitrate, ammonia, and phosphate, and pathogen indicators.

The highlight for most came on day 2 – gathering macroinvertebrates from the River and then determining the water quality based on the critters present or absent. To the relief of the Lower Merced folks, Erick Burres examined the macroinvertebrates collected and in his understated manner deemed the water quality at that location on the Lower Merced River, “pretty good!”

The workshop was hosted by the East Merced Resource Conservation District in partnership (continued on Page 5)
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with the Merced River Stakeholders and their upriver colleagues, the Upper Merced River Watershed Council, Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), California State Water Resources Control Board and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. 

Teri Murrison  
Watershed Coordinator  
Merced River Stakeholders  
c/o P.O. Box 366  
Snelling, CA 95369  
209.852-0112 phone  
209.852.9863 fax  
info@mercedriverstakeholders.org  

The Volunteer Monitor  
is the national newsletter of volunteer water quality monitoring, which facilitates the exchange of ideas, monitoring methods, and practical advice among volunteer environmental monitoring groups across the nation.  

Issues are available on the internet at:  
http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/volunteer/vm_index.html  

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National Water Monitoring Day in Riverside  
By Erin Snyder, Resource Educator of Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District  

A nationwide event to mark the 30th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, National Water Monitoring Day (NWMD) was held in Riverside October 19th. The main purpose of the event was to take a snapshot view of streams, lakes and coastal waters throughout the U.S. by inviting citizen monitors and established volunteer, federal, state and local monitoring organizations to evaluate water conditions within their local watersheds. Data collected was entered into a national databank at www.yearofcleanwater.org.

The Santa Ana River Volunteers (SARV), a citizen group funded by an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 319 grant managed by Orange County Coastkeeper and administered by the State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB), held an outreach event for NWMD at Riverside’s Sycamore Canyon. In addition to providing water quality data to the national databank for Sycamore, Temescal and Golden Star creeks,  

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The day was bright and sunny at the grand opening of the new Sacramento Robla City Park. The pace was hectic, the band was loud (but good), and the teen peer water pollution prevention educators’ lunch appetites were amazing. Hundreds of SWRCB water pollution prevention bookmarks, doorhangers, coloring books, and other educational materials were passed out to all visitors. More school supplies were distributed to youth who learned why and how to help prevent local water pollution. The exhibit was headlined by live small creek animals, stuffed representations of some larger creek mammals, reptiles, and birds, and photos of community members hard at work for the local environment.

Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) currently has thirty volunteers with SARV. East Valley Resource Conservation District (EVRCD) has additional volunteers monitoring Mill Creek in San Bernardino County. SARV monthly monitors sites in the Santa Ana River watershed for temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, turbidity, phosphates, nitrates, ammonia, bacteria and flow. The EPA and SWRCB may use data to identify impaired waters and non-point sources of water pollution. Training and equipment are provided to volunteers, many of whom are students. Anyone interested in volunteering or more information may contact Erin Snyder, RCRCD, (909)683-7691.

Water Pollution Prevention Exhibit at the Robla Park Opening Celebration

By Mary Tappel, SWRCB

The ‘people’ photo shows my husband, John Graham, and some of our peer water pollution prevention teen instructors, posing in front of our natural oak park, another one of our local projects.

The Robla Community Park design is shown here (next page), including the wetlands (continued on Page 7)

For more information about California Project WET, check out: http://www.water-ed.org/
pond, which is unusual in an urban park. However, wetlands along with more native riparian trees are very much in line with the ‘going natural’ trend in Sacramento. In the future city parks may be improved with stands of native grasses.

Local teens helped explain to the community the right things to do to assist our own urban wildlife, as well as to improve their own and their neighbor’s quality of life in our city. Yes, they know how important preventing water pollution is, they saw it on T.V.! This reference is to the excellent ‘appreciate and protect your local watershed’ public service ads aired by the Sacramento River Watershed Program (SRWP), the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA), and one of the local news channels.

Hundreds of people had stopped by, visited for a while, validated our efforts, and learned more themselves. Others in our community realized our (happy but large crowd) challenges and chipped in to help us spread the word about preventing water pollution. Together we got our important messages out to the public.

Overall, I have been so happy to keep hearing from community members these quietly confident expressions of environmental understanding and connection, and to witness the shining pride in young faces as they show off their important knowledge. We are always thrilled to be in the airy role of validating youthful (and older) understanding, conviction, citizenship, community, confidence, leadership, and enthusiasm.

### Volunteer for this year’s Secchi Dip-In

Participate in the Dip-In event anytime during June 23 to July 13, 2003. Find out how by visiting [http://dipin.kent.edu](http://dipin.kent.edu), and in California by contacting the Clean Water Team coordinators (see last page).

In July 2002, more than 2,500 volunteers from volunteer monitoring programs in the U.S. and Canada measured transparency in their watershed and sent their collected data to the Dip-In Website. Their result show that lakes in the northern part of the United States and Canada are the clearest.

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**Available Now!**

Two guides for activists working to protect and restore watersheds published by River Networks are now available for ordering!

Contact the River Network in Portland, Oregon by phone: 503-241-3506 or to order online: [www.rivernetwork.org](http://www.rivernetwork.org)

Choose from:

*Permitting an End to Pollution: How to Scrutinize and Strengthen Water Pollution Permits in Your State*

*Tracking TMDLS: A Field Guide for Evaluating Proposed Watershed Restoration Plans*
Splash Off Event is the beginning of Creek Week and this year it was held in Rio Linda on April 4, 2003. Besides being the official start to Creek Week, the event was held to honor the Creek Week Steward recipient Laurie Beyer from Dry Creek Elementary School in Rio Linda.

The Sacramento Urban Creeks Council honored her class for raising steelhead and salmon for release, and also for helping plant over 60 oak trees along Dry Creek. While the event lasted a little over an hour, the importance of the event to her class was very significant. Her students were more than excited to receive recognition for their effort in helping their local environment. It is events such as the Creek Week’s Splash Off that make us all realize that it is always nice to be thanked for doing work that most people take for granted. 🙏
There were nearly 45 of us, even in the rain and wind, at the lower Arcade Creek cleanup in North Sacramento April 12th. It clearly would have been over 100 people with good weather, which we plan for next year. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Executive Director, Celeste Cantu, along with Deputy Director Dale Claypoole, led a contingent of approximately 10 State Water Board staff, former staff, and family members. In spite of the rain and wind, we also had 15 boy scouts and leaders from the local Troop 99, nearly ten local youth (some of the 2002 Annual Creek Steward Award winning youth – see Currents Summer 2002 article) and 10-15 neighborhood stalwarts.

As it rained, there were more than enough refreshments (although no hot drinks) and school supplies to go around.

The boy scouts pulled out of the creek a box spring & mattress, a microwave oven, ‘whooffers & tweeters’ meant to fit into a car trunk, a camp stove, a full size woman’s purse full of stuff, and a walking crutch, along with the usual plastic wrappers, drink containers, styrofoam, paper, cardboard, wooden boards & miscellaneous scraps, and pieces of broken tools, toys, and general housewares.

Others fished out metal fencing, shopping carts, tires, and old car batteries. The City Parks Department volunteered with a truck and trailer to immediately haul away the trash collected from the creek. So we thanked them and helped load.

The rain stopped just in time for our important water pollution prevention information and school supplies distribution. This is a critical part of our additional volunteer incentives for youth in this lower to middle income, multi-ethnic community, Del Paso Heights. So this material all stayed dry. It then started to sprinkle again on cue just as we finished.

Shortly thereafter, it was off to the Discovery Museum for a free day there looking at the exhibits, browsing at the gift store, viewing the animals, and admiring the small creeks, pond, & associated wildlife on the grounds. The scouts stayed for the Planetarium Show. The Sacramento Urban Creeks Council, along with dozens of agency and private company annual Sacramento Creek Week sponsors, provided a free lunch of hot dogs (all we could eat this time), drinks, chips, & cookies, and Creek Week T-shirt for every creek cleanup participant showing up.

All in all, the event was successful in spite of the wind and rain. ☀️
For nearly half of the twentieth century, Jiminy Cricket reminded America’s youth to "Let your conscience be your guide." In the twenty-first century, with the help of the State Water Resources Control Board and Walt Disney Productions, the cricket’s message expanded into an "Environmentality Challenge." Fifth grade students throughout the state could raise their environmental awareness on two levels. The first level was a pledge. Students suggested three steps they could take to improve the environment. If this new environmental consciousness spurred students to action, they could take on the second part of Jiminy Cricket’s challenge. Level two required a commitment on the part of the entire class to identify a real environmental problem in their world. (Continue on next page)

Between October, 2002 and March, 2003, fifth graders were asked to devise a plan to help solve that problem, execute the plan, and deliver a portfolio chronicling their action. Points are awarded for the plan and portfolio, with the winning class going to Disneyland. Encouraged by Cindy Wise, Education Coordinator for Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board in South Lake Tahoe, fifth graders at Meyers Elementary School accepted the challenge along with 43 other schools across the state.

Meyers Elementary School is situated at the southern end of the Lake Tahoe watershed, approximately one half mile from the Upper Truckee River, which supplies 40% of the water flowing into Lake Tahoe. It is surrounded by a mix of forests, meadows, and residential development. The local environment and the students interact daily. The class decided to accept the Environmentality Challenge when they realized they had already begun to study their interaction with Tahoe’s environment through a unit on weather and the water cycle and a hike up 9,400 ft. Mt Tallac. (Continued on Page 11)
After hearing from speakers from some of the many state, bi-state, and federal agencies mandated to protect the clarity of Lake Tahoe, it was clear to the class that the word needed to get out to citizens of, and visitors to, the Lake Tahoe Basin. Their solution was to create public service advertisements and a web site defining the problem of Lake Tahoe’s declining clarity while giving simple remedies. But that didn’t satisfy everyone in the class. Some wanted more direct action.

With the help of the Erik Larsson and Kim Melody of Tahoe Resource Conservation District (TRCD), it was decided to help scientists monitor effects of the Upper Truckee River on the Lake. This consisted of taking data on the physical, biological, and chemical condition of a section of the river. Three contiguous reaches were identified in this section of the river. The class was divided into groups of 3-4 students to take data from each reach on one of three elements of the river. Some gathered data on the types of macro invertebrates in the water, others documented the condition of the river channel through a visual assessment, and still others assessed the turbidity, acidity, and dissolved oxygen in the water. Data was given to TRCD as part of the state-wide citizen monitoring database for water quality. Along the way the kids learned to set agendas, listen to each other, take and analyze data, write to inform and persuade, and reflect their feelings with art.

By taking data on a section of the Upper Truckee River these Meyers Elementary School fifth graders join other citizens monitoring watersheds throughout California to provide scientists with useable data relevant to planning for the state’s water needs. To find out what they suggest you do to maintain and improve the quality of their local watershed visit their web site at www.adventuresintahoe.com.

California Environmental Education Interagency Network (CEEIN) http://www.calepa.ca.gov/education/CEEIN/
Presents the Jiminy Cricket’s Environmentality Challenge!
The Challenge provides 5th grade classes an opportunity to "think green." It’s challenging and fun hands-on experience that will help fifth graders learn more about their environment and the State of California and show them why "it’s cool to care" about the earth. For more information see http://www.calepa.ca.gov/education/CEEIN/Environmentality/

Applications for the next Challenge will be available soon. Keep checking!
Contact Information:

California State Water Resources Control Board:

1001 I Street, 15th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: (916) 341-5455
Fax: (916) 341-5463

Clean Water Team Web Site:

www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/volunteer.html

Clean Water Team Contact:

Statewide Citizen Monitoring Coordinator
(Region 5 & 6 interim)
Holly Sheradin
(916) 341-5466
E-mail: Sherh@swrcb.ca.gov

North and Central Coast
(Regions 1, 2 & 3)
Revital Katznelson
(510) 622-2470
E-mail: rk@rb2.swrcb.ca.gov

South Coast & Colorado River Basin
(Regions 4, 7, 8, & 9)
Erick Burres
(213) 576-6788
E-mail: eburres@rb4.swrcb.ca.gov

Editing & Designing:
Linda Liu