



CURRENTS

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

Spring 2003



Summary of National Water Monitoring Day Events in California

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.



Participate in this year's
World Water Monitoring Day event
Sept 18th-October, 18th

See website
www.yearofcleanwater.org
and/or

In California Contact the Clean Water Team Coordinators
(see last page)

A series of event throughout October were led through out 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.

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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 1/2 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.

National Water Monitoring Day Successful in a Big Way in California

- 565 Sites were registered to be monitored
- A thousand plus participated including 2,000 students
- 170 Organizations registered to participate
- Hundreds of Boy and Girl Scouts did monitoring

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)*

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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." ❧

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>

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. ❧

Clean Water Team Comes to the Lower Merced River

by Teri Murrison, Watershed Coordinator of Merced River Stakeholders



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
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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. ✂

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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



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, (continued on Page 6)



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volunteers demonstrated methods and equipment to the public.

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. ✍



is a project of the Water Education Foundation, an impartial, non-profit organization whose mission is to develop and implement education programs leading to a broader understanding of water issues and to resolution of water problems.

For more information about California Project WET, check out:

<http://www.water-ed.org/>

Water Pollution Prevention Exhibit at the Robla Park Opening Celebration

By Mary Tappel, SWRCB

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.



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)*

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 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

adds 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.



The Robla Community Park – Master Plan

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>, 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.

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

Choose from:

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

Or

Tracking TMDLS: A Field Guide for Evaluating Proposed Watershed Restoration Plans

Creek Week Splash Off took place in Rio Linda

By Raquel Gutierrez & Edgar Jaime , Students of SWRCB



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. ✍

State Water Board Staff Assist with Lower Arcade Creek Cleanup During Sacramento's Annual Creek Week

By Mary Tappel, SWRCB

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. ✂

Jiminy Cricket Works to Save Lake Tahoe's Clarity

By Bob Comlossy Meyers Elementary School



Doug Smith of Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board explains the problem with Tahoe's clarity

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



Sorting macro invertebrates from the Upper Truckee River

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

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)

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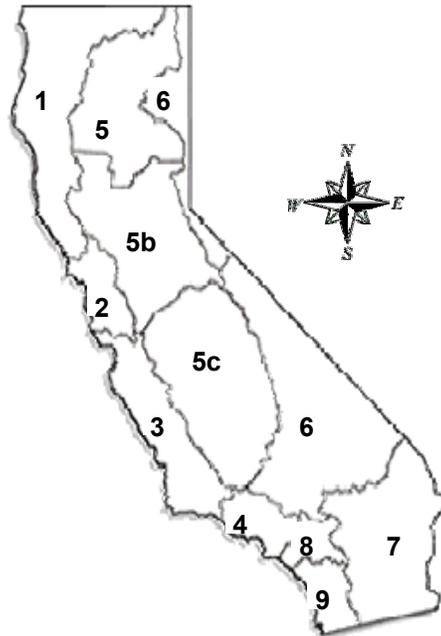
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