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CARPINTERIA CREEK WATERSHED RESTORATION UPDATE

SCHR continues to work towards removing all steelhead migration barriers from the Carpinteria Creek Watershed. Over the last several years SCHR has coordinated restoration efforts in partnership with the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition and the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District that have successfully removed 7 barriers to migration in the watershed. In 2011 SCHR removed the only remaining barrier along Gobernador Creek, Carpinteria Creeks main tributary. This project now allows passage from the ocean to the perennial headwaters in Gobernador Canyon.

Efforts are also taking place along the mainstem of Carpinteria Creek to open up passage to the historic limits for migrating steelhead. SCHR will be working to remove a barrier along the mainstem of Carpinteria Creek on private property known as the Pinkham crossing next year. The Santa Barbara County Flood Control District is working to remove the Lillingston Debris Basin which should be completely removed in 2014.

SCHR is excited to announce that we recently gained the support of the final property owner, with the only remaining major barrier in the watershed. The barrier is located on private property, downstream of the Pinkham crossing and upstream of the completed Cate School Bridge project. We are currently working to secure funding for the project and hope that we will be able to go to construction by 2014. This would allow for our efforts to restore fish passage in the watershed to be complete. We look forward to what will hopefully be a wet winter and the possibility of observing steelhead trout spawning in the Carpinteria Creek Watershed.

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For more information please visit us at: schabitatrestoration.org

Support SCHR
Click here to support our ongoing efforts, your contribution is tax deductible.
The threespine stickleback (Gasterosteus aculeatus) can live their entire life in freshwater or become anadromous. Freshwater sticklebacks are found from 3 to 4°C, while anadromous stickleback are usually less than 1°C. Stickleback prefer water with cover to protect from bird or fish predation in streams. While in the ocean, they stay close to shore. Some stickleback are armored with plates consisting of bone, while others are not. Anadromous sticklebacks are more likely to have armor, but individuals may have variable armors ranging from fully covered to unarmored. Sticklebacks reproduce from spring to early summer. Stickleback males build the nest out of plant material, sand, and petals held together by a bodily secretion. Once one or more females have laid their eggs, males protect and aerate the nest until the eggs hatch.

South Coast Habitat Restoration attended the 67th Annual California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) Conference in San Diego last month. The three day conference included presentations and workshops focused on ways for RCDs and other project partners including State and Federal agencies and nonprofits to work together to better implement conservation practices on agricultural lands. The conference provided a forum for organizations to share conservation tools and strategies.

SCHR gave two presentations at this year’s conference. SCHR Director, Mauricio Gomez presented on our efforts in the Carpinteria Creek Watershed and Project Manager, Erin Brown presented on the Tajiguas Watershed. For more information about the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts please visit www.CARCD.org

SCHR featured on TV Santa Barbara’s Channel 17

South Coast Habitat Restoration was invited to be the focus of a recent episode of Real World Conservation on the local broadcast network TV Santa Barbara’s channel 17. The show is a local fishing talk show that focus on efforts and issues related to fishing in our area. The recent episode entitled “Habitat Restoration with Pete and Moe”, is a half hour segment that films SCHR director Mauricio Gomez and local contractor Peter Lapidus as they discuss their efforts individually and working together to remove migration barriers to steelhead in our local creeks. The segment is airing regularly on Tuesdays at 10:30pm and on Wednesdays at 10:00am throughout the month of December on Channel 17. For a full list of air times visit www.bdvb.com/

As I look toward the challenges that await us in 2013, I can’t help but look to what South Coast Habitat Restoration has accomplished in the past as inspiration to help propel us into the future. This year marks our five year anniversary and during this time we have successfully completed many of the region’s leading voluntary restoration projects that improve habitat and water quality. Our strategic vision, mission and management has allowed us to work on steelhead barrier removal projects, bank stabilization projects, community-based non-native removal efforts and an opportunity to reach out to the community.

Below is a summary of some of the work we have accomplished over the past five years:

• Removed 12 barriers to steelhead migration & modeled one (more in progress!)
• Opened up over 30 miles of habitat to steelhead migration that had been closed for decades. Here are some of the watersheds we have worked in: Ventura River, Carpinteria Creek, Tajiguas Creek and Mission Creek
• Installed six clear span bridges over creeks providing safe access to landowners and steelhead trout.
• Planted over 5,000 native plants and trees at our restoration sites.
• We are currently working with landowners to remove an additional eight barriers to steelhead migration through additional voluntary restoration projects.
• We have begun to work with the County of Santa Barbara on programmatic steelhead barrier removal efforts.
• Awarded over five million dollars for voluntary habitat restoration projects in the region. The majority of these funds are spent locally and help improve our economy.
• Worked with several local landowners on the above projects. This has allowed us to work with new landowners as we move towards new watersheds.

As for the challenges of 2013, we welcome them. If our grant applications and permitting plans are successful, we will remove four additional barriers to migration and install fish-friendly crossings in their place. In addition, we will begin work at Refugio State Beach removing non-native trees and planting hundreds of native plants with our partners California State Parks and Channel Islands Restoration. This work allows us to reach out to dozens of community members and educate them about watersheds and the species that inhabit them. Our work continues to make a positive impact on the recovery efforts of the federally endangered steelhead trout and improve the health of our watersheds.

Our work is challenging as it requires us to build relationships, trust and many partnerships. We enjoy and appreciate the opportunity to work with landowners, regulatory agencies, community members and other non-profit organizations and appreciate their cooperation towards helping us restore our region’s degraded habitats. Please help us continue our efforts by making a generous tax deductible donation to South Coast Habitat Restoration. Your support will enable us to continue our restoration efforts in the future. Thank you for your interest and ongoing support of our efforts to degrade our watersheds in the Santa Barbara and Ventura region. Please continue your support of our efforts by making a tax deductible donation to South Coast Habitat Restoration. Your support will enable us to continue our restoration efforts in the future. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you would like additional information on the work we are proud to be part of.

Wishing you a Happy Holiday Season and a Fishy New Year,

Mauricio Gomez

Letter From The Director
The 20th annual, California Society for Ecological Restoration or SERCAL Conference, will be held in Santa Barbara next year, on the UCSB campus, May 4th-6th, 2013. The three day conference consists of workshops, field tours, presentations, and other educational activities dealing with the different practices and aspects involved in the restoration of California native habitats. SCHR director Mauricio Gomez will be moderating a technical session on habitat restoration in Santa Barbara County.

SERCAL is currently looking for presenters to participate in the conference. The deadline to submit presentation and poster session abstracts is February 1st, 2013. SERCAL is dedicated to the purpose of bringing about the recovery of damaged California ecosystems. SERCAL was founded in 1991, and was the first state chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration, SERCAL has since reorganized as an independent nonprofit, the California Society for Ecological Restoration.

For more information on submitting an abstract or to register for the conference please visit www.sercal.org/

SERCAL Conference

CCWC Annual Celebration Recap

The Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition (CCWC) held its 11th anniversary celebration on Saturday, September 15th at Carpinteria’s Linden Field. The celebration included tables and displays with information from coalition members that have been involved in the CCWC’s efforts. This included the City of Carpinteria, Carpinteria’s Creek Committee, South Coast Habitat Restoration, the California Conservation Corps, Channel Islands Restoration, the County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office, and the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park Docents. The event coincided with Santa Barbara County’s 13th Annual Creek Week. Creek Week is a week long event that celebrates our local creeks and the ocean. In total around 75 individuals from the community came out to learn about the watershed, the Coalition’s collaborative efforts over the last eleven years and celebrate this anniversary with us. This year’s event was a great success. Thank you to all of the Coalition members that helped organize and support the celebration. We look forward to continuing the Coalition’s efforts and eventually remove all the major migration barriers, and seeing the return of steelhead to the perennial headwaters of the Watershed.

If you are interested in getting involved in the CCWC the Coalition meets on the third Thursday of every month, at Carpinteria City Hall, from 10am-12pm. Meeting topics vary from updates on projects and issues in the watershed as well as presentations from local researchers and restoration practitioners. For more information please check out the CCWC website www.carpinteriacreek.org

New Watershed Stewards Project (WSP) Members

SCHR is excited to present our new Watershed Stewards, Riley Kriebel and Diana La Riva. Diana and Riley have both signed on with the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project to work with SCHR and California State Parks for the program’s year 19.

Riley received his undergraduate degree at UCSB majoring in environmental studies with a minor in Portuguese. He first gained an interest in ecological and habitat restoration projects during his time at UCSB, where he interned for the Ecological Restoration Group on campus and the City of Santa Barbara Creeks Division. During his free time Riley enjoys being outside hiking, backpacking, playing golf and growing his own food. In the future Riley hopes to continue pursuing his interests in the environment and sustainable community development.

Diana graduated from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana with a B.S. in Environmental Plant Studies and minors in Natural Resources and Environmental Science, and Italian. She continued on at Purdue receiving a M.S. in Ecological Sciences and Engineering for her research in phytoremediation. Diana is from Orange County where she has volunteered with the Upper Newport Bay Community Based Restoration and Education Program during the past two years.

Prior to that, she lived and volunteered on a small organic farm in Italy for a year learning the language and experiencing sustainability in another culture. In the future she would like to work with a non-profit organization related to environmental restoration, conservation and preservation where she can also educate and involve the community. In a more distant future, she would like to teach Environmental Science and coach softball at the high school level. In her free time, Diana enjoys cooking, hiking, camping, farming and traveling.

Diana and Riley began their 10.5 month term in October and will be working with SCHR through the middle of August. They will be helping with ongoing project site maintenance and monitoring as well as native re-vegetation projects. They will also be working to complete their individual service project and present watershed science lessons to K-12 grade students in our area.

In addition to our members, locally there are two members in Ventura working with the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, and two members in Santa Barbara working with the Department of Fish and Game. The AmeriCorps Watersheds Steward Project, is a program that places AmeriCorps members throughout the state of California working to conserve, restore, and enhance anadromous watersheds for future generations by linking education with high quality scientific practices. Each site varies in the duties, schedule, and scope of work, however, all sites provide some amount of watershed assessment, education and outreach opportunities, and plenty of training opportunities for the AmeriCorps members.

SRF Fish Passage Design and Engineering Field School Workshop and 31st Annual Conference

The Salmonid Restoration Federation (SRF) is hosting a training event that will demonstrate innovative, technical methodologies in salmon restoration to professional fisheries biologist and watershed restoration professionals. The training will be held January 15th-17th, 2013 at the Marina Inn, in Ventura Ca. SCHR is helping with the coordination of the field component of the workshop by visiting some of our local restoration projects. Additionally the 31st annual SRF Conference, will be held in Fortuna, California next year. The conference is entitled “Innovative Approaches to Fisheries Restoration” and will be held at the in Fortuna, March 13th-16th, 2013. The four day conference consists of two days of workshops and field tours on Wednesday and Thursday followed by two days of concurrent sessions on Friday and Saturday. The Salmonid Restoration Federation (SRF) was formed in 1986 to help stream restoration practitioners advance the art and science of restoration. SRF promotes restoration, stewardship, and recovery of California native salmon, steelhead, and trout populations through education, collaboration, and advocacy. This will be the 31st annual SRF conference, registration is now open. If you are interested in attending or for more information about SRF check out www.calsalmon.org
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California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) Annual Conference

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Patagonia’s Advocate Weeks Program aims to help raise awareness and funds for local conservation efforts. Thank you for your purchase of a pair of shoes and thank you to Patagonia for your continued support of our efforts.

For more information about Advocate Weeks and a full list of participating retailers and scheduled events check out www.patagonia.com/storepatagonia/advocate-weeks.

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