



South Coast Habitat Restoration Newsletter

Winter 2014

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Tajiguas Watershed Restoration Now Complete

SCHR has finished construction and re-vegetation efforts at four barrier sites in the Tajiguas Creek Watershed. The Tajiguas Watershed is located along the Gaviota Coast, just one canyon west of Refugio Canyon. This large restoration project removed the last four major barriers to fish passage in the watershed. Following on successful efforts in 2011 to remove five low flow crossings from the watershed, SCHR again partnered with the property owners to complete the final barrier removal efforts in the watershed. With matching funding from the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Fisheries Restoration Grant

Program in the Fall of 2014 three concrete low flow crossings and one concrete dam were removed as part of the project and two aluminum arched culverts were installed to provide access across the creek. In addition this October Caltrans modified the Tajiguas culvert under the 101 freeway by installing six concrete weirs that provide suitable depth and resting areas within the culvert to improve opportunities for trout to migrate. Passage has now been restored to over six miles of historic steelhead habitat. We look forward to seeing steelhead trout return to the watershed.



A BEFORE PHOTO SHOWS THE INITIAL DEMOLITION OF ONE OF THE CONCRETE LOW FLOW CROSSINGS AND.



AFTER ONE OF TWO NEWLY INSTALLED ALUMINIUM ARCHED CULVERTS AND THE NEWLY REGRADED STREAM CHANNEL AND BANKS



CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CORP MEMBERS HELPED TO INSTALL EROSION CONTROL BLANKET AND NATIVE CONTAINER PLANTS



FROM UPTREAM LOOKING BACK DOWNSTREAM SHOWS THE NEWLY GRADED STREAM CHANNEL AND POOLS WHICH PROVIDE FISH PASSAGE

The mission of **South Coast Habitat Restoration** is to protect, conserve, and restore the various habitats and native biodiversity of Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

For more information please visit us at: schabitatrestoration.org

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CREATURE FEATURE: CALIFORNIA BLACK BEAR (*Ursus americanus californiensis*)



Black bears are found throughout the foothill and mountain ranges of California. The vast majority occur in the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountain ranges, and approximately 10% of all California black bears found along our local Transverse Ranges. Despite their name, black bears can range in color anywhere from tan, brown or black. And despite their intimidating weight of around 250 lbs (up to 600 lbs), these bears are normally quite timid and prefer to use their claws to climb trees or forage for roots, berries, small animals, and insects. A single bear can inhabit a home range of up to 80 square miles, which makes the Los Padres National Forest, as the third largest national forest in the state, the most viable habitat for this subpopulation of the species. Black bears are most active at dawn and dusk, yet are more likely to be nocturnal when in close proximity to human development. Bears secure den sites in the winter to raise young, but unlike most other bears, the bears in our region do not normally hibernate because of the mild winters we have. The California black bear is an unprotected species and faces a number of threats, the largest being habitat loss from development, depredation, and legal hunting.

Upcoming Events

Audubon Christmas Bird Count

The Santa Barbara Audubon Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday January 3rd, 2015. If you are interested in participating check out their website and be sure to register for the event www.casbbirdcount.org/

Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition

The Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalitions first meeting of 2015 will be held Thursday January 15th, from 10:00am-12:00pm at Carpinteria's City Hall. For more information carpinteriacreek.org

Salmonid Restoration Federation (SRF)

The 33rd annual, SRF Conference, will be held in Santa Rosa, California next year. The conference will be held March 11th-14th, 2015, at the Wells Fargo Center for the Arts. The conference consists of two days of workshops and field tours followed by two days of concurrent sessions. To register and for more information please visit www.calsalmon.org/

SERCAL California Society for Ecological Restoration Conference

The 22nd annual, California Society for Ecological Restoration or SERCAL Conference, will be held in San Diego next year, May 12th-14th, 2015. For more information or to submit an abstract please visit www.sercal.org/

NEPA/CEQA Integration course to be hosted in Santa Barbara

The Northwest Environmental Training Program Center (NWETC) will host a two day work shop February 25th and 26th, 2015, in Santa Barbara on preparing, reviewing, challenging, and defending environmental documents. For more information or register www.nwetc.org/

UCSB Coastal Fund Watershed Restoration Interns

SCHR is excited to present our latest UCSB student interns! Lia Nelson and Kari Zajac, have been working with SCHR thanks to a grant from the UCSB Associated Students Coastal Fund.

Lia is a undergraduate student at UCSB graduating this spring with a B.S. in Environmental Studies with an emphasis in habitat restoration and wildlife conservation. Lia has studied abroad in Australia where she conducted research on coral bleaching, and she is currently in the process of writing her senior thesis on the environmental implications of hydraulic fracturing proppants. In her free time, Lia enjoys surfing, reading, backpacking, dancing, and simply being in nature. She hopes to pursue a career working with animals and their habitats in order to help preserve wilderness areas for the future.

Kari Zajac graduated from the University of California Davis in 2012 with a Bachelors of Science in Wildlife, Conservation, and Fisheries Biology. She has worked in the environmental field for organizations such as Soundwatch, LSA Consultants, and the UC Davis Ecology Department completing fieldwork and data entry. At the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute she worked with cheetahs completing endocrinology studies to help determine any negative impacts from housing male cheetahs together in captivity. Through her experiences Kari has furthered her passion of conservation and land management. In her second year at the

Bren School she is pursuing a specialization in Conservation Planning. Her thesis group project is creating a conservation plan for the Morro Bay watershed to identify areas with the highest biodiversity and water quality. The Morro Bay National Estuary Program will utilize the final product to select areas for future restoration and conservation projects. In her spare time Kari enjoys running, biking, playing tennis, reading and cooking.

Lia and Kari have completed 80 hours of work this quarter. They have learned a lot about native plants and the implementation of habitat restoration projects. SCHR would like to thank Lia and Kari for their assistance this quarter and the Coastal Fund for supporting our efforts by funding these positions.

SCHR is now accepting applications for winter quarter student interns. If you are an interested UCSB student please email your resume and cover letter to erinbrown@schabitatrestoration.org



SCHR INTERNS LIA NELSON (LEFT) AND KARI ZAJAC (RIGHT) TAKING A BREAK FROM HELPING TO REMOVE NON NATIVES AT THE REFUGIO CREEK MOUTH.

Maria Ygnacio Fish Passage Restoration

SCHR is finishing construction and re-vegetation efforts at a restoration site in the Maria Ygnacio Watershed. The fish passage restoration project removed a concrete low flow crossing from a private ranch within the upper perennial portion of Maria Ygnacio Creek. The barrier was removed, the channel was regraded, two large pools with root-wad structures were installed, and a new clear span bridge was constructed to provide the property owners safe access across the creek. All of the stream work is now complete. Construction of the bridge railings, paving and the installation of native plants will occur between now and early January.

This fish passage restoration project was funded by the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program and through a small grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. SCHR is excited to be working in this locally important watershed. The Maria

Ygnacio Creek Watershed is part of the Goleta Slough Complex which the National Marine Fisheries Service has ranked as a Core watershed for the recovery of steelhead. We plan to continue restoration efforts in the watershed in partnership with the County of Santa Barbara Public Works Department to address additional fish passage barriers.



A BEFORE PHOTO OF THE LOW FLOW CONCRETE CROSSING THAT WAS REMOVED AS PART OF THIS PROJECT. THE ROADWAY WAS UNDERMINED AND HAD A 6 FOOT DROP ON THE DOWNSTREAM END.



THE CONTRACTOR BEGINS THE INITIAL DEMOLITION OF THE CONCRETE CROSSING AND ROADWAY



LOOKING DOWNSTREAM SHOWS THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED STREAM CHANNEL AND THE NEW BRIDGE BEING INSTALLED

Refugio Creek Mouth Restoration Nearly Complete



BEFORE (LEFT) THE BANKS OF REFUGIO CREEK WERE DOMINATED BY ANNUAL AND PERENNIAL NON-NATIVE PLANTS. AFTER (RIGHT) THE PROJECT SITE IS FILLING IN WITH A DIVERSITY OF NATIVE SPECIES INCLUDING COAST SAGE SCRUB SPECIES AND NATIVE RIPARIAN TREES.

The Refugio Creek Mouth Restoration Project is nearly complete. Non-native vegetation including palm trees, eucalyptus, and myoporum, were removed from the site in late 2013. Non-native trees and shrubs that were removed were mulched on site and spread around the newly planted native plants. Volunteers helped to plant over 2,500 native plants at the site and hand

remove non-native weeds from the site. The native container plants have shown considerable growth over the last 8 months. The plants will continue to grow and fill in the site. Thanks to the onset of winter rains the plants are no longer being irrigated. We will continue to monitor survival as well as remove non-native seedlings from the site. Thank you to all the

Volunteers who helped make this project a success and thank you to the Southern California Wetlands Recovery project for funding this effort and to our project partners Channel Islands Restoration and California State Parks. If you would like additional information about the project please check out the Refugio project blog at refugiocreekmouth.blogspot.com

1st Annual Steelhead Summit in Ventura and the Upcoming 33rd Annual Salmonid Restoration Conference in Santa Rosa



The 1st Annual Steelhead Summit, hosted by the Salmonid Restoration Federation (SRF) was held in Ventura on October 21-22nd, 2014. The two day summit was designed to bring

engineers and biologists from a variety of different backgrounds together to focus on the regional and unique constraints and concerns associated with restoring wild runs of steelhead to California streams. The two day event consisted of a day of presentations and a full day of field tours to restoration sites. SCHR led a field tour to a number of different current and future restoration sites in Santa Barbara County. The event was well attended and provided a great opportunity for restoration practitioners to come together and collaborate on issues and planning efforts for future restoration projects.

SRF hosts an annual conference focused on the recovery of salmonids across California. This year's conference will be held in Santa Rosa, California, March 11-14, 2015. The conference will start with two days of technical



SCHR DIRECTOR MAURICIO GOMEZ LEADING A FIELD TOUR AS PART OF THE 1ST ANNUAL STEELHEAD SUMMIT



A PHOTO OF SCHR PROJECT MANAGER ERIN BROWN GIVING A PRESENTATION ON THE CARPINTERIA CREEK WATERSHED AT THE 2014 SRF CONFERENCE IN SANTA BARBARA

workshops and field tours followed by two days of concurrent sessions. Conference attendees are also encouraged to attend the Friday night poster session and Saturday evening banquet. Registration for the conference is now open.

SRF was formed in 1986 to 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. For more information about SRF or to register for the upcoming conference check out calsalmon.org



A PREVIOUS SRF FIELD TOUR OF THE MISSION CREEK FISH PASSAGE PROJECT

The CCC helps to remove Debris from Carpinteria Creek

SCHR has been working with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) to remove old irrigation lines from the upper portions of Carpinteria and Gobernador creeks. Thanks to a small grant from the NOAA Restoration Center the CCC was able to spend a few days hiking in and hauling out the old pipe. The remnant waterlines were no longer in use and scattered throughout the channel and creek banks. In places the pipe had been cabled to large riparian trees and these cables were beginning to girdle the trees. The CCC's worked to remove these cables and protect the trees. All of the plastic pipe was taken to the City of Carpinteria for recycling.



AN EXAMPLE OF THE GIRDLING THAT WAS OCCURRING ON A NUMBER OF NATIVE RIPARIAN TREES



CCC MEMBERS LOADING UP THE PIPE FOR RECYCLING

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Letter From The Director

Mauricio Gomez

Thank you for your ongoing support and interest of our work! As we wrap up 2014, I am happy to share with you that we had a tremendous year restoring our local streams for steelhead trout and other species too! We removed five barriers to migration this year which opened up approximately 3.5 more miles of stream habitat for steelhead trout access. Four additional barriers were removed in the Tajiguas Watershed along the Gaviota Coast and one along Maria Ygnacio Watershed in the Goleta area.

The barriers removed along Tajiguas creek mark the completion of the barrier removal efforts in the watershed. Steelhead trout can now access the perennial habitat in the watershed they historically used to access. We are thankful to the landowner for their continued partnership in the effort to restore habitat for steelhead. Without the landowner support, and that of the Department of Fish and Wildlife, we would not have been able to get this watershed "checked" off the list. We are also thankful for the team that was part of the barrier removal efforts this year including: Waterways Engineering, Peter Lapidus Construction, California Conservation Corps, and Vince Semonsen Biological Consulting.

The barrier in the Maria Ygnacio Watershed has allowed us to begin to focus our efforts in this important watershed. As part of this project we removed an old concrete stream crossing and built a clear span bridge across the creek. We are very thankful for the landowner's support and patience as we worked on this project. We are just beginning efforts to address other barriers in the Maria Ygnacio Watershed with the goal of seeing passage opened up to the perennial headwaters over the next few years.

In Carpinteria, we have been working to complete the designs for the removal of the final barrier on private property. We have grant proposals currently being reviewed and hope to have the barrier removed in the Fall of 2015. Soon, all the major barriers will be removed in the Carpinteria watershed and hope to begin seeing steelhead trout swimming upstream to the perennial pools.

Below is a summary of our accomplishments in 2014

- Awarded over \$1.4 million dollars for steelhead recovery project
- 5 community presentations
- Over 750 Community members reached through outreach events
- Continued our quarterly newsletters
- Over 250 community volunteers recruited
- Over 775 volunteer hours
- Over 3,000 native plants planted
- Removed five barriers to steelhead trout migration
- Opened up ~3.5 miles of habitat for steelhead trout
- 7 UCSB student assistants trained

Once again, thank you for your continued support of our work and I hope you will consider [supporting our efforts by donating to our work](#) so we can continue to implementing voluntary habitat restoration projects.

Happy Holidays,

Mauricio Gomez

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The Mission of South Coast Habitat Restoration is to protect, conserve, and restore the various habitats and native biodiversity of Santa Barbara and Ventura. For more information please visit us at: schabitatrestoration.org

Support SCHR Visit www.earthisland.org/schr/donate to support our ongoing efforts, your contribution is tax deductible

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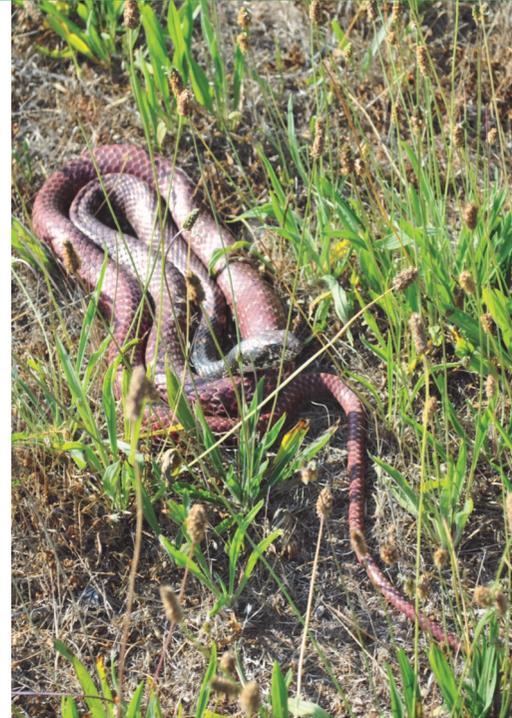
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