



# South Coast Habitat Restoration E-Newsletter

Winter 2010

## In This Issue

LION CREEK Page 1

Steelhead trout restoration project in the Ventura River Watershed.

CATE BANK STABILIZATION Page 2

Bank stabilization project in the Carpinteria Creek Watershed.

CARPINTERIA CREEK MOUTH Page 3

Habitat Restoration project at the mouth of Carpinteria Creek.

UPCOMING PROJECTS Page 5

Updates on the progress of projects we are working to implement.

SCHR DOCUMENTARY Page 6

Will help inform community members and landowners of SCHR's work.

END OF THE YEAR SUMMARY Page 7

Annual summary of SCHR efforts in 2010.

## Lion Creek Steelhead Passage Restoration Project

South Coast Habitat Restoration completes a steelhead trout restoration project which increased access to 9.5 miles of habitat on Lion Creek in Ojai, California.

This summer SCHR helped manage and raise grant funds for a steelhead trout restoration project in Ojai. The project removed a low flow creek crossing which impaired migration for the federally endangered steelhead trout and replaced it with a single span bridge. Removing the barrier increased steelhead access upstream by approximately 9.5 miles. The project was on private property along Lion Creek, a tributary to San Antonio Creek and the Ventura River Watershed. The project was a collaboration between private, non-profit, local, state and federal agencies. The original low flow crossing was removed and replaced with an 85 foot bridge which allowed for the restoration of the stream channel.

The contractor, Evans Excavating, broke ground on the project in mid July. In order for heavy equipment to reach the project site a temporary crossing over San Antonio creek was needed. Once the crossing was installed the contractor worked to remove the barrier on Lion Creek. The barrier was removed from the stream channel during the first week of August. As work was being done to remove the old crossing, the pilings and abutments for the new bridge were being formed and poured with concrete. The road approaches to the bridge and the stream banks were then regraded. Large rocks were keyed in along the slope surrounding either abutment.



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS OF THE LOW FLOW CROSSING (ABOVE) AND NEWLY INSTALLED BRIDGE (BELOW) ACROSS LION CREEK, LOOKING UPSTREAM

The new 85 foot, single span bridge was installed on September 14<sup>th</sup>. A crane was used to lift the two bridge sections off of trucks and then lowered it into place. The final welding and cement pouring took place over the two days following the bridge installation. Regrading of the stream channel occurred shortly thereafter. A low flow channel was constructed with creek rock and fine sediment in order to improve steelhead migration opportunities.

Since the onset of winter rains the California Conservation Corps has been out working to spread native seeds and install erosion control material at the site.

Continued on page 6.....

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](http://schabitatrestoration.org)

### Support SCHR

[Click here to support our ongoing efforts.](#)  
[your contribution is tax deductible](#)



## THE NEW SCHR LOGO!

SCHR is thrilled to announce the release of its new logo. The logo is made up of four different images representing a local organism for each letter of SCHR. The images are a Steelhead trout, a Cottonwood leaf, a Hawk, and a Red-legged frog. SCHR would like to thank Jessica Hokanson for her help in developing the design. Stay tuned for new SCHR t-shirts, stickers and additional swag.

## SCHR featured in the Patagonia Winter 2010 catalog

South Coast Habitat Restoration was recently featured in Patagonia's Winter 2010 Catalog. Director of SCHR, Mauricio Gomez was featured in a full page spread that highlighted SCHR's ongoing efforts to restore steelhead trout to the South Coast's streams as fish passage and fish strandings continue to be an issue. SCHR would like to thank Patagonia for their ongoing support of our restoration efforts. To see the full article [click here](#).

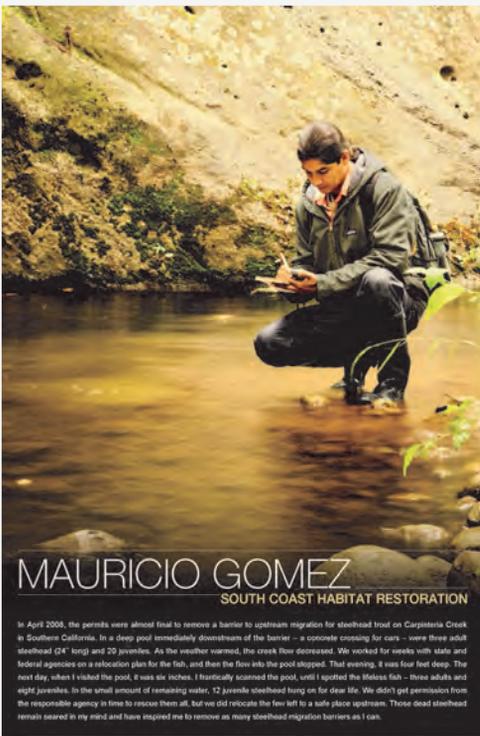


PHOTO OF THE PATAGOINA WINTER CATALOG.

## Cate School Bank Stabilization

South Coast Habitat Restoration completes a bank stabilization and restoration project on Cate School property along Carpinteria Creek.

In October SCHR managed a bank stabilization and restoration project on private property owned by the Cate School along the mainstem of Carpinteria Creek. The project involved the restoration and stabilization of approximately 300 feet of the western creek bank. Prior to the project, the creek bank was nearly vertical as a result of the removal of riparian vegetation by the previous property owner in order to make way for an avocado orchard. The banks were a contributing source of fine sediments into the watershed, which decreased spawning habitat for steelhead trout. The reach lacked important riparian cover and bank stabilizing vegetation.



BEFORE PHOTO OF THE UPPER MOST SECTION OF THE PROJECT, SHOWING VERTICAL CREEK BANK AND UNSTABLE AVOCADO TREES AT THE TOP OF BANK.

The project was the result of many years of planning in which SCHR worked to get permits and grant funding. The project aimed to improve steelhead habitat, water quality, streambank condition, and riparian vegetation in the Carpinteria Creek watershed. Carpinteria Creek has been a focal point of recent efforts to restore steelhead trout to the South Coast.

The habitat restoration project consisted of three sections. The upper and lower 100 foot reaches of near vertical creek banks were laid back to a more gradual slope. Large rocks were placed in a trench along the toe of the slope. The more gradual grade of the bank will be more stable and less likely to erode fine sediments into the watershed. Willow and sycamore poles were placed in the trench along the toe of the slope, as well as staked throughout the project area. In the middle section of the project four large avocado root wads were installed in the bank to help deflect the flow and protect it from further erosion. The banks were not laid back in this section in order to preserve four large oak trees along the top of the creek bank. Nine avocado trees along the top of bank were removed in order to make room for planting native riparian tree species. Regrading of the top of bank roads into a drain was done in order to prevent over bank flow and future erosion. Finally re-vegetation efforts were done through seeding and planting of native species.

Continued on page 4....



## UPCOMING VOLUNTEER DATES

Please Join us out at the Creek Mouth for volunteer planting days on **December 4th, 5th, 11th and 12th**. Help us to remove the black plastic at the site and begin the revegetation efforts as we have thousands of native species to plant in the ground. We will meet from 9am to 2pm each day. Contact us for more information or to RSVP [erinbrown@schabitatrestoration.org](mailto:erinbrown@schabitatrestoration.org)

## Carpinteria Creek Mouth Restoration Project

The Carpinteria Creek Mouth restoration project is located at the mouth of the creek at Carpinteria State Beach, on State Parks property. The goal of the project is to increase the habitat and ecological value of the mouth of Carpinteria Creek by removing non-native flora and the planting of native flora along the banks.

South Coast Habitat Restoration has been working with Channel Islands Restoration and numerous volunteers over the last several months on a project at the mouth of Carpinteria Creek. The project has been in collaboration with the California State Parks and Coastal Restoration Consultants.

This project involves the removal of non native ice plant from the creek banks and restoring the native biodiversity of the area through the planting of native species. We used a technique known as solarization to remove the ice plant. This involves laying out large sheets of black plastic over the non-native ice plant, securing the plastic with sandbags and stakes to hold it in place until the ice plant is starved of enough light and dried out from the heat that it will not resprout when the plastic is removed.

The black plastic has been in place since August, thanks to the help of many volunteers who came out to help put the plastic in place. Over the last four months we have been monitoring the ice plants progress and are now ready to

remove the plastic and begin the planting phase of the project. The project has been generously funded by a grant from the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (SCWRP). The project will greatly increase the habitat value of the estuary. The creek mouth is critical to the restoration of the Carpinteria Creek Watershed, as it provides important habitat for a variety of bird species as well as the federally endangered Southern Steelhead trout and Tidewater Goby.

Volunteer planting dates are scheduled for December 4th, 5th, 11th and 12th. If you are interested in joining us to help remove the black plastic at the site and plant thousands of native species, we will meet from 9am to 2pm each day at the creek mouth. Please wear appropriate attire and remember to pack sunscreen and water. Please contact us with any questions and to RSVP if you are interested in attending.

For more info on the [creek mouth project click here](#)



DEAD ICE PLANT UNDER THE BLACK PLASTIC AT THE CREEK MOUTH PROJECT



OXNARD CITY COPRS MEMBERS HELPING OUT AT THE CREEK MOUTH.

## California Conservation Corps Weed Strike Team

SCHR has been coordinating efforts with the CCC Weed Strike team. This special CCC crew travels around the state working to eradicate non native invasive plants. The crew has been helping with the removal of Pampas grass, Arundo, Cape Ivy, Myoporum and Ice plant from the Carpinteria area. They have also helped with efforts to control a large population of bladder flower and Arundo on the Gaviota Coast. SCHR has coordinated these efforts as well as helped with the non native removal. The crew will be working with us again in January to remove non native invasive plants.



BEFORE PHOTOS OF THE LOWER MOST SECTION OF THE PROJECT LOOKING UPSTREAM.



AFTER PHOTOS OF THE LOWER MOST SECTION OF THE PROJECT LOOKING UPSTREAM

## Cate School Bank Stabilization

Continued from page 2.....

The new, more gradual grade of the creek bank will be less likely to erode fine sediments into the watershed and will also allow for the establishment of riparian trees and understory vegetation, which will help further stabilize the bank. The pictures to the left show the before and after project conditions at the site. The once highly unstable creek bank (top photo) is now a far more gradual slope that will allow for the establishment of native riparian vegetation (bottom photo).

Chris Lima, the Fish Habitat Specialist with the California Conservation Corps, said "It's been great to be a part of this project with SCHR. The CCC members received a lot of great work experience while working at the Cate School property to improve the creek and habitat conditions. We are very happy with how the project turned out and look forward to seeing the creek conditions and steelhead trout populations improve from this project." The California Conservation Corps have partnered with SCHR in the past. They are a crucial component of the hands on restoration work that we do.

The project was funded by the California Coastal Conservancy through a partnership with the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, and additional funding from NOAA. Engineering designs and consultation was provided by Questa engineering. Peter Lapidus Construction handled all the excavation and grading work. Coastal Restoration Consultants helped design the restoration plan for the site and the California Conservation Corps were heavily involved in the restoration activities pre and post project implementation.

Many thanks to the Cate School for their ongoing participation and support of Carpinteria Creek restoration projects. Our partnership with the Cate School over the years has been very successful. Business Manager Sandi Pierce has been a critical part of these efforts and we look forward to future collaborations.

For more information and photographs of the [bank stabilization project](#), [click here](#).

## SCHR celebrates three years as an Earth Island Institute Project!

SCHR is pleased to announce that in December of 2010, is our three year anniversary as an Earth Island Institute Project. Founded by environmental activist David Brower, over 27 years ago, the Earth Island Institute has been involved with grassroots campaigns dedicated to conserving, preserving, and restoring the ecosystems on which our civilization depends. Their Project Support program acts as an incubator for start-up environmental projects, giving crucial assistance to groups and individuals with new ideas for promoting ecological sustainability. They have provided fiscal sponsorship to more than 100 projects around the globe. SCHR immensely appreciates the support that EII provide us. For more information on the [Earth Island Institute](#) [click here](#)



## Upcoming Projects

South Coast Habitat Restoration continues to seek out new restoration projects along the South Coast. Below are projects that we have been actively working to implement and updates on where our progress stands. Contact us with ideas for potential future projects.

### TAJIGUAS WATERSHED

SCHR is working with a private ranch owner along the Gaviota coast to improve habitat conditions for the federally endangered steelhead trout. Efforts are focused on the removal of five low flow Arizona crossings and installation of one new clear span bridge. The crossings were constructed several decades ago as part of the ranch agricultural operation and over time have created barriers to steelhead migration. Removal of the barriers and replacement of the crossings with a single bridge structure will significantly improve conditions for steelhead on the property. SCHR submitted a grant to the California Department of Fish and Game's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program last Spring for this riparian restoration project. Grant notifications will be announced early in 2011 and we hope this project will be awarded funding so that construction can begin in July 2011.



### GOBERNADOR CREEK

SCHR is continuing to coordinate talks with the property owners adjacent to the last major barrier on Gobernador creek in the Carpinteria Creek Watershed. The barrier is just downstream of the recently modified County debris basin and represent the last barrier inhibiting steelhead passage to the perennial headwaters of the creek. Just upstream of the debris basin the creek runs perennially in a unconstrained or altered channel. SCHR is in the process of finalizing an agreement with the property owner so that plans can be made to complete the engineering designs and plan for the removal of the barrier in 2011. The project has already been awarded funding from the CDFG and NOAA. This project is an essential component of the efforts to restore steelhead runs to the Carpinteria Watershed.



### CARPINTERIA CREEK

SCHR has been working with a property owner with an undersized rail car crossing along the mainstem of Carpinteria creek. The crossing does not provide adequate conditions for Steelhead migration as above and below the crossing there is concrete and grouted rip rap that produces a velocity barrier in the channel. SCHR has just been awarded two grants for \$50,000 from the DFG and the USFWS. These funds will be used to start engineering designs in January 2011. The barrier is just downstream of the Lillingston debris basin which the Santa Barbara County Flood Control is working to modify in order to open up the headwaters to Steelhead migration.



### WHEELER GORGE, DAVY BROWN, AND MUNCH CREEK

SCHR has been coordinating with the Los Padres National Forest Service to remove Steelhead barriers on National Forest lands as well as expedite their permitting process so that projects of this nature can go forward more easily in the future. The Wheeler Gorge project in particular has been recognized as a complete barrier to Steelhead passage and removing it would open up an additional 4.5 miles of habitat along the mainstem of the Lower North Fork Matilija, but also tributary habitat in the Ventura River Watershed. SCHR hopes to remove these barriers by helping with the permitting process, writing grant proposal and coordinating the designs and stakeholder meetings.



## APACA Award given to SCHR



South Coast Habitat Restoration has accepted an award from the Central Coast Section of the American Planning Association's California Chapter on behalf of the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition. The award is titled Outstanding Planning Award in the Grassroots Initiative Award. For more information about other 2010 award recipients or for more information about the APACA [click here](#)

## Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition will celebrate 10 years



The Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition (CCWC) will celebrate its 10 year anniversary in 2011. The Coalition was founded by local residents, landowners, and resource groups

back in 2001. Inspired by a shared sense of community responsibility for the health of the Carpinteria Watershed. Today the coalition continues to be an important forum for communication on issues critical to the watershed as well as an opportunity for public outreach on local restoration and stream improvement efforts. The coalition has grown to be represented by a diverse group of organizations and involved local residents. The CCWC holds monthly meetings, on the 3rd Thursday of every month at Carpinteria's City Hall from 10am to noon.

For more information on the CCWC check out their website at [carpinteriacreek.org](http://carpinteriacreek.org)

## Lion Creek Project

Continued from page 1

The CCC will return to plant the disturbed areas with native container plants and install irrigation next week. The area has been fenced in order to keep cattle of the erosion control fabric and from browsing our container plants. Native species used to revegetate the site included mulefat, arroyo willow, western sycamore, black walnut, deerweed, coyote bush, purple sage, and elderberry, just to name a few. The aim is to revegetate the site to improve riparian cover and bank stability. The project is nearing completion. Migrating steelhead will now be able to swim upstream and the land owners will have safe and reliable access across their property. SCHR works to foster positive relationships with property owners, in order to support their efforts and improve their land.

The Lion Creek property owner, Mary Bergen, said: "Without the hard work of South Coast Habitat Restoration, the project would never have been done. And it's such a great project, improving steelhead passage while still providing safe access across the creek. It has been a pleasure working with such smart, pleasant, and fun people."

SCHR was able to secure over \$300,000 in grant funding, the remainder of the funding for the was contributed by the property owner. Granting agencies for the Lion Creek project include, the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the CDFG Office of Spill Prevention and Response.

For more information on the [Lion Creek Project please click here.](#)



TEMPORARY STREAM CROSSING OVER SAN ANTONIO CREEK



ABUTMENTS & ROCK SLOPE PROTECTION PRIOR TO BRIDGE INSTALLATION



LION CREEK BRIDGE INSTALLATION



CCC MEMBERS INSTALLED EROSION CONTROL MATERIAL AND NATIVE SEED ON SLOPES IN THE PROJECT AREA



## Letter From The Director

Mauricio Gomez

I would like to thank all of our partners, funders, supporters and volunteers for another successful year of habitat restoration in the Santa Barbara and Ventura region. South Coast Habitat Restoration has had a busy year and we are thankful for all the support we received this year. Below is a summary of our accomplishments in 2010 along with next steps for 2011.

We recently hired a project manager, Erin Brown, who graduated from UCSB's Bren School of Environmental Science and Management this year and we are excited to have her be part of the team. Erin has been working with us to manage our on the ground restoration projects as well as coordinating our public communication through newsletters, email marketing and tabling at events. We hope you enjoy this newsletter and periodic emails which keep you informed of our work.

This year SCHR has continued to focus on restoring and improving our natural areas. We continue to reach out to private property landowners and government agencies to assist them with implementing voluntary habitat restoration projects that improve habitat conditions for the federally endangered steelhead trout. We have also focused on coordinating and managing the removal of non-native invasive plants. We also conducted many community outreach efforts by making presentations, tabling and leading tours of our restoration projects. Finally, one of the things I am most proud of is our relationship building with landowners as well as the jobs our projects have sustained for our local community. Here is a summary of our highlights in 2010:

- 9.5 miles of stream restored for steelhead trout,
- One bridge installed to improve steelhead passage in Ojai,
- 300 feet of stream bank restored,
- 24 acres of non-native vegetation removed,
- \$913,192 awarded in grants in 2010,
- 253 community members reached through outreach events,
- 52 volunteers recruited,
- 171 volunteer hours utilized

As we continue to focus on steelhead restoration projects in the region, we feel we have made considerable enhancement towards the available habitat to steelhead trout (we have now removed five migration barriers and installed four bridges in the region opening access to over 12 miles of habitat!). We are currently working on a number of steelhead restoration projects in the region including projects along the Gaviota Coast, Carpinteria Creek, Ventura River and the Sisquoc River.

We would not be able to do our work without our supporters. This support comes from a number of sources including private landowners, granting agencies, private foundations, volunteers, and partners.

I am proud of the work South Coast Habitat Restoration has accomplished this year and I am excited to tackle new projects for next year. Thank you for your ongoing support of our efforts to restore our degraded habitats 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 to 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.

Sincerely,



## SCHR Documentary

SCHR receives videography opportunity.

South Coast Habitat Restoration has been chosen to be the focus of a Patagonia/LifeChronicles documentary. Patagonia's Leave Work for Good internship program offers to pay its employees to work directly with non profits for up to three months every two years to "leave work to do good" for the environment. Val Franco, an employee of Patagonia, received her internship opportunity and chose to partner with LifeChronicles, as they have served Patagonia employees on numerous occasions, and SCHR for this exciting opportunity.

The video will be used to educate community members and landowners about the valuable work that SCHR provides to restore land to its original habitat as well as to provide a valuable video archive of SCHR projects. The video will be completed in early February and shared on our website. LifeChronicles is a Santa Barbara non profit that produces videos for people who are terminally ill or are in various life crises. With the help of student volunteers, LifeChronicles preserves the memory and essence of an individual through videotaping. For more info on LifeChronicles please visit [www.lifechronicles.org](http://www.lifechronicles.org)

Please support this effort by making a donation to SCHR. This video will be an important and valuable resource to our program.

**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](http://schabitatrestoration.org)**

**Support SCHR [Click here to support our ongoing efforts, your contribution is tax deductible](#)**

Contact us: SCHR Director: Mauricio Gomez  
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