

South Coast Habitat Restoration Winter 2015 Newsletter



STREAM ORCHID



GAVIOTA CREEK



RED RACER



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www.schabitatrestoration.org

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South Coast Habitat Restoration Newsletter

Winter 2015

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Mauricio Gomez

Upper Carpinteria Creek Fish Passage Restoration

SCHR has successfully removed the last major barrier to steelhead migration in the Carpinteria Creek Watershed. The project removed an undersized bridge and 100 feet of concreted stream channel that acted as a velocity and depth barrier to migrating steelhead. The project returned the creek to its natural state by removing all of the concrete from the stream channel, re-building the stream channel with cobbles and rocks to mimic the natural channel, and removing and replacing the undersized bridge. The project was also the first project to be approved under the Habitat Restoration and Enhancement

Act (AB2193).

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A OF THE BRIDGE INSTALLATION AT THE UPPER
CARPINTERIA CREEK FISH PASSAGE
RESTORATION SITE

Refugio Creek Mouth Restoration

South Coast Habitat Restoration and Channel Islands Restoration will host **our last volunteer event** at the Refugio Creek Mouth Project, **Saturday December 19, at 9:00am**. The restoration project located at the beautiful Refugio State Beach removed a variety of non-native plants from the banks of Refugio creek and with the help of hundreds of volunteers planted local native container plants along the creek banks. Join us to help nurture the native plants by hand removing non-native invasive plants from the site. In addition help to plant a few extra native container plants at the site in areas that are lacking native cover. If you would like additional information about the project please check out the project blog at refugiocreekmouth.blogspot.com. Thank you to the Southern California Wetland Recovery Project, the Wildlife Conservation Board, Southern California Edison and the UCSB Coastal Fund for supporting this effort and to our project partners Channel Islands Restoration and California State Parks. If you are interested in volunteering contact info@schabitatrestoration.org to RSVP.



BEFORE THE BANKS OF REFUGIO CREEK
WERE DOMINATED BY NON-NATIVES



TODAY THE BANKS ARE DOMINATED BY A
DIVERSITY OF NATIVE PLANT SPECIES.

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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Click here to support our ongoing efforts,
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CREATURE FEATURE: Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)



The Acorn Woodpecker is a native species of bird found from southwest Oregon to Southern California, as well as sporadic locations in Colorado and Utah. Acorn Woodpeckers are medium-sized birds with black, yellow, and white faces and distinctive red crowns. Females and males look similar, although males have a pure white forehead while females have a black bar on their forehead. They are noisy, social birds that can live in groups of up to 15. Their call is a ‘waka-waka’ sound that can be heard from a great distance away. Like all woodpeckers, they drill holes with their beaks in order to make homes and storage areas in woody structures and trees, preferably Coast Live Oak trees. As Santa Barbara County’s most common Woodpecker species, the Acorn Woodpecker resides in oak forests, chaparral, riparian woodlands, and mountain forests, and are commonly spotted in urban areas.

Upcoming Events

Volunteer at Refugio State Beach

South Coast Habitat Restoration and Channel Islands Restoration will host our last volunteer event at the Refugio Creek Mouth Project, Saturday December 19, at 9:00am. Join us to help nurture the native plants by hand removing non-native invasive plants from the site. In addition help to plant a few extra native container plants at the site in areas that are lacking native cover. For more information or to RSVP please contact info@schabitatrestoration.org

Audubon Christmas Bird Count

The Santa Barbara Audubon Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday January 2nd, 2016. If you are interested in participating check out their website and be sure to register for the event www.casbbirdcount.org/

Salmonid Restoration Conference

The 34th annual, Salmonid Restoration Conference will be held in Fortuna California, at the River Lodge, April 6th-9th, 2016. 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. Registration for the conference is currently open, space is limited so register early for more information check out calsalmon.org

UCSB Coastal Fund Watershed Restoration Interns

SCHR is excited to present our new UCSB student interns! Nathan Buroughs and Sarah Halperin. Sarah and Nathan, who are both first year Master’s students at the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, have been working with SCHR thanks to a grant from the UCSB Associated Students Coastal Fund. Sarah intends to focus her Master’s degree in Water Resource Management. She received



SCHR INTERNS NATHAN BURGHOUS (LEFT) AND SARAH HALPERIN (RIGHT) HELPING TO OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS AT THE PATAGONIA SALMON RUN

her undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology with a minor in the Environment. While at the University of Michigan, she participated in biological field work concerning Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ boat launches and habitat fragmentation of crayfish. Her future goals are to go into freshwater restoration work. In her free time Sarah enjoys hiking, cooking, and snowboarding.

Nathan is specializing in Conservation Planning and Coastal Marine Resources Management, as he hopes to use his Master’s degree to

preserve the natural world in the face of human encroachment. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of California, Los Angeles in Biology with a minor in Conservation Biology. As an undergraduate he researched the relationship between nest shape and sexual dichromatism among the New World blackbirds (family Icteridae). Nathan loves natural open-space and is fascinated by the wildland urban interface. His life goal is to return ocean run steelhead trout to his childhood creek in Northern California.

Nathan and Sarah will complete 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 them both for their assistance this quarter and the Coastal Fund for supporting our efforts by funding these positions. SCHR will be hiring student interns for winter quarter, contact us if you are interested in applying. For more information about the Coastal Fund check out coastalfund.as.ucsb.edu/



SCHR INTERNS NATHAN (LEFT) AND SARAH (RIGHT) WORKING TO HAND REMOVE NON NATIVES FROM A PROJECT SITE IN THE TAJIGUAS WATERSHED.

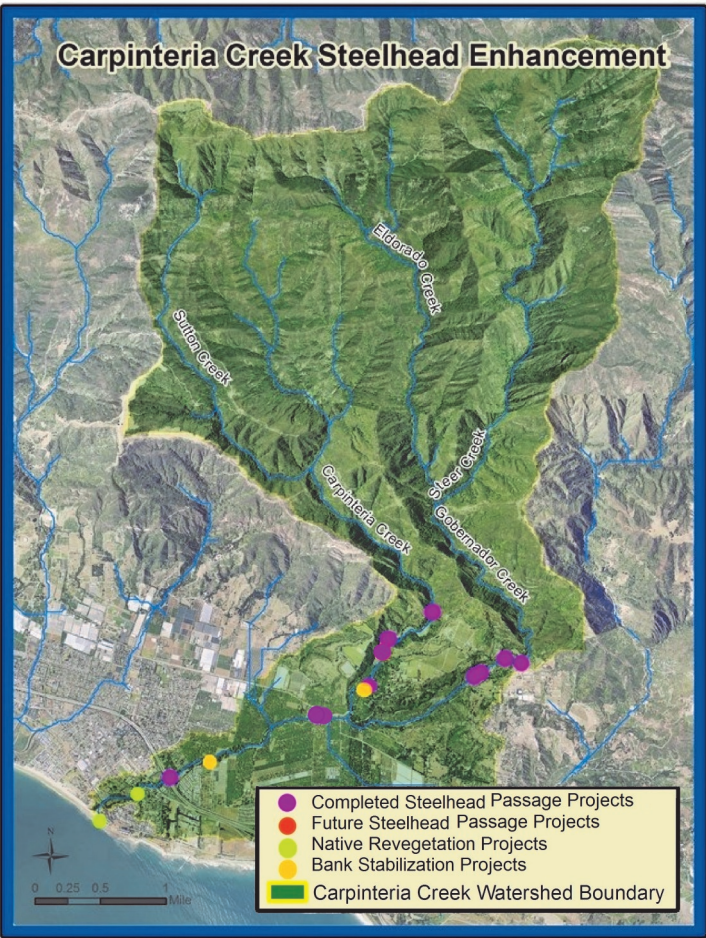
Carpinteria Fish Passage

.....Continued from page 1
Last year Governor Brown approved State Assembly Bill, 2193, also known as the Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Act, which established a simplified permitting process with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for restoration and enhancement projects. The program is designed for landowners, state and local government agencies, and conservation organizations wanting to implement small-scale, voluntary habitat restoration projects across California. Restoration and Enhancement projects approved by CDFW, pursuant to the Act, receive an expedited review and approval to the traditional Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement /1600 permit (LSAA) process. The Assembly bill was sponsored by our non-profit partner, Sustainable Conservation and Assembly member Richard Gordon introduced the legislation. SCHR is excited to be the first project in the State of California, taking advantage of this program and hopes that it will lead to the further development of streamlined environmental review and permits for beneficial restoration projects.

A short film is currently in production about the project and the success of AB 2193. In addition a tour of the project site was recently hosted, to highlight the work of SCHR, this important project and AB 2193. The tour was attended by local elected official’s staff and resource agency personnel. It highlighted the importance of incentivizing restoration actions through streamlining permits for beneficial projects.

SCHR working with other partners of the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition have completed 11 barrier removal projects in the watershed over the last several years. The Coalition, was founded in 2001, and spearheaded efforts to create a watershed management plan which helped to initiate barrier removal projects by it’s members. SCHR has contributed to this effort by implementing 7 of the 11 barrier removal projects in watershed. The Coalition members look forward to potentially seeing returning adult steelhead this coming winter.

For more information about the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition please visit carpinteriacreek.org



A MAP OF THE CARPINTERIA CREEK WATERSHED SHOWING THE ELEVEN BARRIER REMOVAL PROJECTS THAT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED BY MEMBERS OF THE CARPINTERIA CREEK WATERSHED COALITION OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS.



Salmonid Restoration Conference

The 34th Annual The 34th annual Salmonid Restoration Conference will be held in Fortuna California, at the River Lodge, April 6th-9th, 2016. The four day conference consists of two days of work-shops and field tours on Wednesday and Thursday, followed by two days of concurrent sessions on Friday and Saturday. SRF presents awards for outstanding achievements in the salmonid restoration field. If you would like to nominate someone for the Lifetime Achievement, the Golden Pipe Award for Innovation, or the Restorationist of the Year Award, please send 200 words describing the accomplishments of the nominee to srf@calsalmon.org by January 8, 2016. Registration for the conference is currently open, space is limited so register early for more information check out calsalmon.org



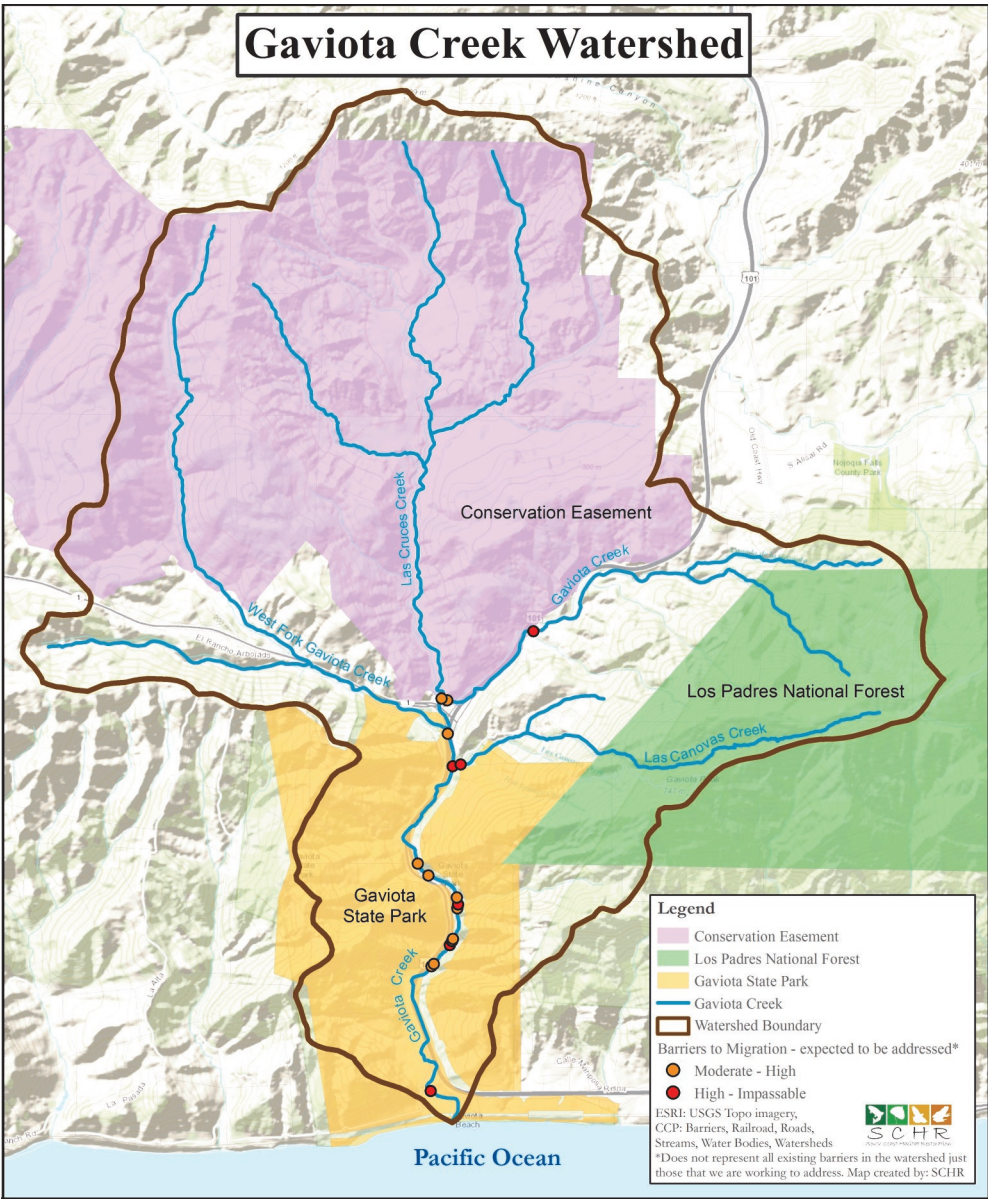
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SCHR partners with Coastal Ranches Conservancy on Gaviota Creek

SCHR is partnering with Coastal Ranches Conservancy (CRC) to improve habitat for endangered southern steelhead trout in the Gaviota Creek Watershed. Coastal Ranches Conservancy was formed in 2003 by a group of Gaviota ranch owners, who were actively working to protect and improve the natural resources of the Gaviota Coast. CRC is a non-profit organization, working to support and encourage Gaviota Coast land owners, government agencies, and other interested parties to address various environmental, education, and habitat management issues. Since its inception ten years ago, Coastal Ranches Conservancy has raised over \$250,000 in donations; providing much needed financial support to a variety of projects that protect and enhance the natural resources of the Gaviota region.

Gaviota Creek is the largest watersheds on the Gaviota Coast and has a significant population of wild steelhead. Steelhead, in order to spawn, must be able to swim in from the ocean to the headwaters of a stream where they can lay their eggs. Unfortunately, Gaviota Creek has a number of barriers which limit fish migration upstream. Gaviota Creek has consistently been ranked as a priority watershed on the south coast, for potential restoration of a sustaining steelhead population. Over the next few years, SCHR will work with Coastal Ranches Conservancy, California State Parks, CalTrans, and adjacent landowners, to remove the barriers to steelhead migration along Gaviota Creek. CRC's primary role in this will be to raise matching funds to help support grant funding efforts to do the work. For more information about CRC or to support this fundraising effort please visit www.coastalranchesconservancy.org



TWO EXAMPLES OF THE MANY CONCRETE GRADE CONTROL STRUCTURES THAT LIMIT FISH PASSAGE ALONG GAVIOTA CREEK



Letter From The Director Mauricio Gomez

As I reflect on the work South Coast Habitat Restoration has completed in 2015, I think of the great strides we made to help restore watersheds in the Santa Barbara and Ventura region. Some of the highlights of this work are as follows:

- Removed the final major barrier to migration in Carpinteria Creek
- Began working with the Los Padres National Forest for barrier removal efforts in the Ventura Watershed
- Began our engineering design work in the Atascadero/Maria Ygnacio Watersheds
- Awarded over \$1.5 million dollars for steelhead recovery projects
- Multiple community presentations
- Over 500 community members reached through outreach events
- Continued our quarterly newsletters
- Opened up ~1.25 miles of habitat for steelhead trout
- Mentored seven UCSB student interns through continued partnership with the UCSB Coastal Fund
- Assisted various governmental agencies with their goals to restore steelhead
- Assisted various landowners with their goals to restore habitat

With the removal of the final impassable barrier in the Carpinteria Watershed the efforts to removal all barriers in the watershed, which began in 2001 by the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition (CCWC), are nearly complete. This model of community supported watershed restoration has been an exemplary model for other watersheds in Santa Barbara County, the region, the State and even the Nation. As the Chair of the CCWC, I have had the pleasure of seeing the dream of removing steelhead trout barriers into reality. This was done through a partnership of the various landowners, agencies, non-profits and contractors and has allowed us to learn the methods for implementing complex large scale habitat restoration projects. We hope the predicted El Niño rains will allow steelhead the opportunity to return to the Carpinteria Creek headwaters and help the endangered population reestablish itself.

As I look into next year, I am excited about the work we have before us to help restore our habitats. Our work next year will focus on the following watershed: Santa Ynez River, Gaviota Creek, Tajiguas Creek, El Capitan Creek, Atascadero Creek, Maria Ygnacio Creek, Carpinteria Creek and the Ventura River. In total, next year we have planned work to address 17 barriers to steelhead migration, which will allow for many miles of habitat to be opened for steelhead.

Finally, I'd like to share that Erin Brown our project manager will be advancing her career to work with the City of Santa Barbara Creeks Division in January. Erin has been a tremendous asset to SCHR which has allowed us to grow and reach out to more members of the community. She will be greatly missed and I wish her the best of luck with her new position.

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 and improve the chances for the recovery of steelhead trout.

Wishing you a Happy Holiday season,

Mauricio Gomez, Director

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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

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Production of this newsletter is funded by the Department of Fish and Game, Fisheries Restoration Grant Program.