



Sotoyome Resource Conservation District

NEWSLETTER

WEBSITE: SONOMAMARINRCD.S.ORG

SUMMER 03

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The Sotoyome Resource Conservation District newsletter is published quarterly by the RCD with input from NRCS staff.

Send comments, story ideas or letters to:
sotored@sonic.net or via fax to:
(707) 569-0434.

Participation in the programs of the RCD and NRCS is voluntary. All programs are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or disability.

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COAST WIDE SNAPSHOT DAY 2003: A COASTAL SUCCESS!!

BY SIERRA CANTOR

Hundreds of volunteers spent Saturday, May 17, 2003 testing the quality of water in California's coastal watersheds. The effort was the first, and largest water quality-monitoring event in California. The coast wide "Snapshot" Day – was a one-day, simultaneous water quality monitoring event where trained volunteers collected important information about the health of coastal waters flowing into the Pacific Ocean.

Snapshot Day included volunteers collecting water samples from the Oregon Border into Mexico. An estimated **565 Stations** were sampled including several in Mexico. Over **679 volunteers** (including many in Mexico) came out to work together to collect the largest simultaneous set of data on coastal streams of California.

The Sotoyome Resource Conservation District coordinated snapshot Day activities for the lower North Coast region. This region included sampling stations on coastal water bodies from the Navarro River to Stinson Beach. Forty-six volunteers monitored 71 sites throughout the region and represented a wide variety of local agencies and organizations.



Monitoring the Russian River Photo Courtesy Jim

Parameters measured included air & water temperature, pH, conductivity, turbidity, and dissolved oxygen. Collected samples were sent for laboratory analysis of nutrients and bacteria levels. At least one member of each team attended an equipment calibration and water quality monitoring training prior to the event.

Ultimately the goal of Snapshot Day is to help people gain a better understanding of the natural systems that surround them, as well as their impacts on it, and to highlight the key

role volunteer monitors can play. By involving people directly in monitoring activities they also gain a sense of ownership and responsibility to keep their waterways clean.”

Once the data returns from the participating laboratories and is checked for accuracy, it will be available at the Coastal Commission web site. Expect a final report for each coastal area in late August, and a Coast Wide Snapshot Day report in November.

For more information please contact Sierra Cantor Sotoyome Resource Conservation District Creek Stewardship Coordinator at (707) 569-1448 or sierrac@sonic.net; or visit the California Coastal Commissions Education and Outreach web page at www.coastforyou.org, and follow the Snapshot Day links.

If this sounds like fun to you – join us for First Flush! Contact Zeno Swijntink via email at swijntink@sonoma.edu to sign up for the organizational meetings

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and California State Water Resources Control Board funded this year's coast wide event.

WOOD IS GOOD – Creeks & Woody Debris

By Rick Kaye

From time to time, landowners have been faced with the situation where trees have fallen into the creek that runs through their property. Each landowner may view this occurrence differently, depending on their land use and perspective. The Sotoyome RCD receives occasional inquiries as to recommended options and regulatory guidelines for addressing this natural resource issue. This article highlights some lesser known findings on the impact of large wood in a stream system, the options available to remove wood, and some history and current projects involving wood placement in North Coast streams. These are summarized below:

Wood is Good Stream dynamics and improvement

Large wood, defined here as pieces approximately 4" diameter by 6' in length and larger, can be beneficial to a stream system. Imminent bank failures aside, the presence of large woody debris pieces set in motion a plethora of conditions that include slowing water flow, recharging the water table, creating deep pools and habitat shelter for fish, diversifying the kinds of aquatic insects that provide a food source for fish, providing natural predator-prey interactions, and enhancing aesthetic beauty.



Imminent Bank Failures Regulatory Options

Landowners concerned about bank failures and loss of property resulting from a fallen tree need viable answers. It's important to note that it is not permissible to simply remove wood from a stream without a permit from the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). In the event of imminent property failures, compared against the habitat values that will be displaced, different solutions will be presented. The Sotoyome RCD is not a regulatory agency. They provide education and referrals to landowners in need. Depending on the nature of your situation, they can refer you to free resources and personnel that can evaluate your property issues. The history of thought about stream dynamics has changed much over time.

History and Knowledge Forget what you learned in school

Resource Conservation Districts used to advocate placement of old automotive chassis's into river banks for bank stabilization. The Department of Fish and Game used to conduct stream clean-outs to remove wood so that fish could pass through. Much has changed! Large wood has received much attention in the last few years, and a growing body of scientific data exists to show its positive role. Local restoration projects involving the placement of large wood into streams are beginning to show increases in pool depth and creek gravel size. Also cooler water temperatures are occurring downstream of restoration projects. These are all improvements for fish and several other species.



The Sotoyome RCD has been the administrative agent for an exciting project on the North Coast. The agency has assisted with three phases of a CA. Department of Fish & Game contract, coordinated and implemented through the Gualala River Watershed Council and Gualala Redwoods Inc. (GRI), to place wood in streams. To date, the project has successfully placed 26,678 cubic feet of Douglass fir and redwood at several sites within six tributaries of GRI properties in the Gualala River Watershed basin, representing 188 pieces of wood. Maximum pool depth has increased from two-feet to over three-feet in one year at the monitoring reaches. There has also been an increase in the number of pools with the study reach area.

The University of California Cooperative Extension has also spearheaded efforts to gather information and present findings on the impact of hardwood species (alder, oak, etc) in improving fisheries habitat. Educational materials are being developed at this time to assist rural residential landowners. Beyond these local efforts, several resource agencies and industry members are working on the development of basin wide prediction models that suggest where wood will naturally come into a creek system over a 100-year period and beyond.

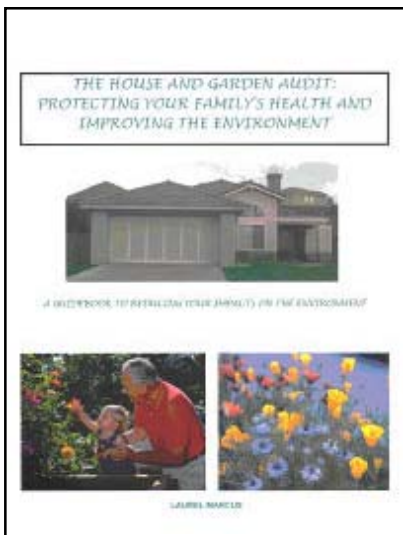
If you would like to learn more about these efforts, available education, or receive resource referrals, feel free to contact Rick Kaye at 569-1448 or via email at rickk@sonic.net.

Top picture courtesy of Sierra Cantor and bottom picture courtesy of Gualala Redwoods, Inc.

THE HOUSE AND GARDEN AUDIT: PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH AND IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

A Guidebook to Reducing Your Impacts on the Environment

"The House and Garden Audit: Protecting Your Family's Health and Improving the Environment" was developed under a grant from the State Water Resources Control Board and the California Department of Water Resources. The House & Garden Audit, written by Laurel Marcus & Associates in 2001, directs individual urban and residential landowners in the evaluation of their property management practices, such as gardening, water conservation, chemical use and other practices. The House & Garden Audit contains information for the homeowner on how their current practices may affect their and their family's health as well as the environment. It also contains guidance on how to improve backyard habits, how to reduce run-off of contaminants, sediment and pesticides, how to remove invasive plants, as well as how to implement creek restorations and management, and road repair and management.



The House & Garden Audit will assist you in learning how to:

Reduce the uses of pesticides in you garden using alternative pest control methods

Increase you family' health by reducing chemical use in your home

Protect your property from erosion

Take simple steps to reduce fire risk around your home

Plant native species to attract wildlife to your yard and garden

Remove non-native invasive plant species

Care for your creek banks and increase habitats

Conserve water and energy

Reduce run-off of contaminants from your driveway and yard into creeks

Recycle just about EVERYTHING!

A **Backyard Stewardship Workshop** focusing on the House and Garden Audit will be held on September 15, 2003 in conjunction with the Gold Ridge RCD and the Russian River Celebration. The workshop will be held at the Sebastopol Veterans Memorial Building from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND!

Contact Sierra Cantor for more information about participating in the workshop or giving a presentation to your organization or group at (707) 569-1448 or via email at sierrac@sonic.net.

Copies of the House & Garden Audit are now available for pick up at the SRCD office at 970 Piner Rd, Santa Rosa, during regular office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday).

Please call before coming by the office.

Through funding from the City of Santa Rosa, the Sotoyome Resource Conservation District was able to print 500 copies of the House & Garden Audit and hold a series of eight workshops in Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Windsor, Healdsburg and Sebastopol as part of the Sotoyome RCD's Creek Stewardship Program and other venues to educate individuals on how to use the guidebook.

RUSSIAN RIVER CREEK STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

WATERSHED MONITORING WORKSHOPS SCHEDULE SUMMER/FALL 2003



Watershed Group	July	August	September	October/November
Copeland	TBA: Pending Access Call the SRCD for more info.	TBA: Pending Access Call the SRCD for more info.	TBA: Pending Access Call the SRCD for more info.	TBA: Rainfall and Stream flow monitoring training/Quarterly Meeting
Hulbert/Fife	7/26 Fife Riparian Transect & Water Quality Training		9/6 Hulbert 9/20 Fife: Pebble Count & Embeddedness	TBA: Rainfall and Stream flow monitoring training/Quarterly Meeting
Hobson			9/6 Pebble Count & Embeddedness Training	TBA: Rainfall and Stream flow monitoring training/Quarterly Meeting
Mark West			9/13 Pebble Count & Embeddedness Training	TBA: Rainfall and Stream flow monitoring training/Quarterly Meeting
Matanzas				TBA: Rainfall and Stream flow monitoring training/Quarterly Meeting

These training workshops are **open to anyone** interested in learning about volunteer monitoring, **for more information contact Sierra Cantor at (707) 569-1448 or sierrac@sonic.net or visit our website at www.sonomamarinrcds.org.** The following descriptions summarize the parameters measured during each of the trainings; please refer to the Watershed Atlas for more detailed information on the protocols.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:

Riparian Transect: A method of identifying the composition and percent cover provided by the riparian plant species adjacent to the creek channel. Riparian vegetation is integral in maintaining cool water temperatures and providing food and shelter to a variety of animals.

SILTATION AND CHANNEL CONDITIONS:

Pebble Count & Embeddedness: A method of characterizing the material on the streambed. Size and distribution of material on the streambed are important factors in determining the quality of salmon habitat. Extensive fine particle deposits in pools decrease the pool depth and reduce the complexity of the substrate which creates poor habitat for salmon and other organisms.

WATER QUALITY:

Water Quality Monitoring: A method to determine if the water chemistry is suitable for fish and other beneficial uses of the water. The presences of high levels of certain constituents can indicate the need for change in land use or land management



Have you seen this
"alien invader"?

Arundo donax is a bamboo-like member of the grass family and grows in clumps that can reach 30-feet in height. It has formed nearly impenetrable thickets in the lower elevations of the Russian River and many tributaries. Its common name is Giant Reed and it has the capability of destroying valuable salmonid, red-legged frog and freshwater shrimp habitat.

Did you know that this plant not only destroys native riparian habitat but can steal precious water resources from your vineyard or ranch and increase the risk of erosion and wildland fires on your property?

Sotoyome Resource Conservation District is collaborating with Circuit Rider Productions, Inc. on the implementation of the Giant Reed Removal and Riparian Enhancement Program. The program will include landowner/community outreach and education through informational workshops, assistance in acquiring necessary permits for removal, landowner follow-up treatments to control re-infestation, riparian restoration through re-vegetation with native riparian species, and monitoring and maintenance of enhancement sites.

Circuit Rider Productions Inc.'s research identified significant infestations of *Arundo donax* in the tributaries of the Russian River listed below. The initial phase of the program will focus on these tributaries.

Does your property run along any of the creeks listed below:

Austin Creek	Foss Creek	Maacama Creek	Porterfield Creek
Barrelli Creek	Hobson Creek	Mark West Creek	Porter Creek
Dry Creek	Hulbert Creek	Mill Creek	Santa Rosa Creek
Dutch Bill Creek	Icaria Creek	Oat Valley Creek	Sausal Creek
Fife Creek	Lytton Creek	Peterson Creek	

...then the Sotoyome RCD and Circuit Rider Productions, Inc. would like your participation in the Giant Reed Removal and Riparian Enhancement Program!

Landowners with properties along the creeks listed above and/or if you would like more information about the program contact **Kara Heckert, SRCD Project Coordinator at (707) 569-1448 or via email at karah@sonic.net**. You can also contact Ms. Heckert if you are interested in receiving additional information about *Arundo Donax*, are interested in educational workshops, or would like to have your property evaluated for infestations and would like to learn more about removal options.

Funding for this program has been provided by the California State Coastal Conservancy, Sonoma County Water Agency, State Water Resources Control Board, CA. Dept. of Fish & Game and the Community Foundation of Sonoma County

**Sotoyome
Resource Conservation District**

Location: 970 Piner Road, Santa Rosa
Mail: P.O. Box 11526
Santa Rosa, CA 95406
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Email: sotorcd@sonic.net

Since 1946, the Sotoyome Resource Conservation District (SRCD) has been providing local leadership to protect, conserve and restore natural resources through education, information, and technical assistance. We work with landowners, businesses, schools, other agencies and the general public. SRCD is a special, independent district organized under Division 9 of the State's Public Resources Code. We are a non-regulatory, non-profit organization locally governed by a Board of Directors who volunteer their time.

Types of services available:

Education programs, project funding, conservation-related publications, workshops, water quality monitoring equipment, coordination of cooperative efforts, soil surveys and technical assistance.

District Board Meetings:

Third Friday of each month at 1:30 p.m.
Held in the conference room of the SRCD offices located at 970 Piner Rd., Santa Rosa, CA.
Meetings are open to the public.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Creek Stewardship Training Workshops:

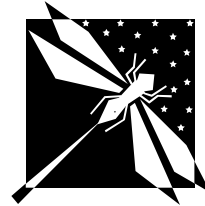
Various times, dates and locations – See Creek Stewardship Monitoring schedule for more information.

Gualala River Watershed Council – Gualala River Watershed Activities: On going Gualala Estuary Study monitoring, volunteers needed. Contact Rick Kaye for more information via email at rickk@sonic.net

Russian River Celebration – September 13th to 21st, various events and venues. For more information contact www.russianrivercelebration.org

Russian River First Flush Event – Contact Zeno Swijtink via email at swijtink@sonoma.edu to sign up for the organizational meetings

Check our website @ www.sonomamarinrcds.org for updates on all meetings and events



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