

IN THIS ISSUE...

- ▶ Creek to Coast Clean-up: September 18
- ▶ Local Students are Big Winners
- ▶ Upcoming Speak Off Contest
- ▶ Arroyo Committee Seeks Members
- ▶ Sycamore Canyon Group Seeks Support
- ▶ Volunteer Opportunities
- ▶ Fight the Bite: Stop West Nile Virus

1

The RCRCDD works to create sustainable communities by helping people preserve the integrity of natural resources and systems, so that high quality water, land, soil, wildlife, air, and plant life will be neither depleted nor damaged, ensuring future generations a healthy and clean environment.

SERVING: Portions of Riverside & San Bernardino Counties, including Riverside, Canyon Lake, Colton, Corona, Norco, Reche Canyon, Gavilan Hills, & Grand Terrace.

Coming soon!

**2004
SPEAK OFF**

For event information,
please call
(951) 683-7691 ext.207

Resources

UPDATE

Creek to Coast Clean-up Join Us: September 18

Come out to your river, stream, or neighboring waterway on Saturday, September 18 to help remove trash and debris as part of Southern California's effort to protect water quality and wildlife habitat. The inland clean-up event is being held in conjunction with *International Coastal Clean-up Day*. Our goal is to remove upstream pollutants that would otherwise flow downstream, through the Santa Ana River, eventually reaching the ocean.

The *StormWater/CleanWater Protection Program* of the Cities and County of Riverside is the local sponsor of the clean-up event. To date, other partners include Trails 4 All, City of Riverside Park and Recreation, Keep Riverside Clean and Beautiful (KRCB), the Riverside Land Conservancy (RLC), the Riverside Arroyo Preservation Committee (RAP) and the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD). We are still seeking sponsors and partners for this and next year's events.



StormWater/CleanWater Protection Program volunteers ready for action.

We are hoping to stage several clean-up locations along tributaries to the Santa Ana River including the Alessandro Arroyo, Sycamore Canyon, Golden Star Creek, Castle View Creek and Park, Don Derr Park drain, Temescal Canyon and Creek at Norco/Corona, and more. Main events will be held at Springbrook Wash and along the Santa Ana River at Fairmount Park. We are currently in need of location coordinators and are building a watershed-wide network of arroyo stewards (see article "Arroyo Committee Seeks Members" page 3).

If you or your group would like to volunteer an hour or more, or to host a clean-up site in your area, please call Erin Snyder at the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District, (951) 683-7691, ext. 207. Clean-up events can be arranged any time during *Coastweeks*. The California Coastal Commission sponsors *Coastweeks* from September 18 through October 10. Materials and trash pick-up will be provided.

Please check for updates and event information at www.trails4all.org/.

Local Students Win **BIG**

Speak Off

Laura DeSilva placed first at the local level 2003 Conservation "Speak Off" Contest, with a winning speech about "Forest Land-Our Legacy." At the time, Laura was a senior at Arlington High School in Riverside. Laura went on to win a regional competition and place third at the state finals, which were held last fall at Lake Tahoe.

The Speak Off is a public speaking contest for ninth through twelfth graders. Students deliver a 3-5 minute speech about a conservation theme or issue. Please pass this information on to high school students who may be interested in this type of learning activity. They can call Erin Snyder for information about our upcoming event. The local Speak Off, which is sponsored by this Conservation District, will be held in late September. The 2004 theme is "Urbanization and Our Environment". Awards include \$200 and \$100 savings bonds.

Arlington High Wins CA Environmental Championship: Twice in Two Years

Arlington High School's "American Lions" team took first place, winning the California Envirothon, April 23, 2004, at Highland Springs Resort in Banning. This is the second year in a row that our hometown team has won top honors and advanced to the national "Canon" Envirothon. The Lions placed 12th out of 50 states overall and placed 5th in the subject areas of wildlife and current issues.

At the California finals, Arlington students placed first in 4 of the 5 subject areas: aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and a current issue. Arlington's second team placed third in the state behind Redland's East Valley High School.

Congratulations to the Arlington High team members who worked so hard over the past year: Laura DeSilva, Ryan Bullard, Faith Lin, Tammy Phan, Mike Mees, Nikki Kinsinger, Sophie Kim, Tristan Willman, Trevor Johnson, Megan Casebeer and Matt Jensen.

An essential component of the winning team is advisor Sheri Harris. Sheri teaches advanced placement science classes and is the team's coach, mentor, chauffer, cheerleader and much, much more. We commend her for her dedication and commitment.

The Envirothon is a high school level competition in environmental studies. Teams of students compete with their knowledge of the five subject areas. The contest includes written tests, hands-on field-testing, species identification, and an oral presentation. Students study and prepare during the school year. Resource Conservation Districts (RCD's), in conjunction with other agencies and organizations, conduct the California Envirothon and provide learning materials and training. If you would like information about forming a team, please contact your local Resource Conservation District or Erin Snyder at (951) 683-7691, ext. 207 or RCRCD@RCRCD.com.

2



Speak Off winner Laura DeSilva of Arlington High School (center), her mother, Mary Ellen DeSilva (on left), and Sheri Harris, teacher (on right).

Arroyo Committee Seeks Members

Want to help protect wildlife, waterways, and open space? If so, consider joining RAP, the Riverside Arroyo Preservation committee. The joint City of Riverside and Riverside County committee provides suggestions about how to protect local waterways, streams, arroyos and the wildlife habitat that adjoins them.

RAP is working to:

- protect and enhance arroyos by improving cooperation and coordination between agencies, developers, and homeowners;
- educate people about the value and care of waterways;
- develop an “arroyo watch” system so concerned neighbors might report potentially damaging activities, such as illegal dumping, grading within stream setbacks, and landscaping with invasive plant species.

The RAP committee began in March of 2003, responding to a request of concerned citizens. RAP is seeking wide representation to increase its effectiveness and accomplish its mission:

1. To develop a comprehensive model that would promote the preservation of arroyos and compatible development, enhancing the quality of life for all residents of the community. (The model would then serve as a template for other areas.)
2. To promote cooperation between the County of Riverside and neighboring cities concerning the conservation and preservation of arroyos in the project area.

The current project area includes all arroyos in the City of Riverside and adjacent county lands. The RAP committee has identified the following specific goals for the initial project:

- record the biological, historical, and anthropological assets of the arroyos;
- document and promote the wildlife and recreational trail connectivity of arroyo systems and open space areas;
- review laws, regulations, and ordinances pertaining to arroyo protection and use, and recommend modifications as necessary;



Photos by Len Nummy

- provide suggestions regarding the development review process that would be consistent with regulations which afford arroyo protection while accommodating compatible development;
- offer suggestions to County and City staff, commissions, councils, and boards regarding projects that are adjacent to arroyos, in support of arroyo protection;
- identify undeveloped arroyo areas for future review;
- coordinate with economic development representatives from Cities and the County;
- educate the public and government agencies about the value and conservation of arroyos, personal stewardship, and connectivity, in cooperation with the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District.

If you would like to help protect the dwindling waterways and wildlife of the Riverside area and maintain the quality of life we all enjoy, please join the RAP committee as a citizen representative of your city council ward or county supervisorial district. Consider asking your Riverside city council member or Riverside County supervisor to appoint you as a representative to RAP. For more information about RAP or about starting an “arroyo watch” in your area, please contact Gail Egenes at the Riverside Land Conservancy, (951)788-0670 or e-mail: RLC0670@pe.net.

RAP committee meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month, 9 AM at the Riverside County Administrative Center, Board of Supervisors’ Offices, Fifth Floor, Conference Room D.



Volunteer



Stream Water Quality Monitoring

Volunteers test water quality to help scientists and government agencies identify pollution problems in local waterways. The volunteers test water for pollutants and sample for aquatic life. The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) is currently seeking volunteers to monitor a stream over the course of the next year. The sampling requires one to two hours per month. Some of our sites include Sycamore Canyon and Alessandro Arroyo. For more information, or to volunteer, please call Erin Snyder at (951) 683-7691 ext. 207.

To date, nearly 50 volunteers have helped collect data. The past Santa Ana River monitoring program was sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency and managed by the Orange County Coastkeeper. From 2004 forth, the RCRCD will continue to conduct local monitoring efforts.

Sycamore Canyon Group Seeks Support

The Friends of Sycamore Canyon Park is a volunteer organization that works to conserve and spotlight the Sycamore Canyon wilderness park in Riverside. The "Friends" will meet this fall to plan their support efforts and interpretive hikes. As stewards of the park, the group plans to be proactive with the Riverside Parks Commission and City Council. According to organizer Sue Nash, the "Friends" will partner with the Park and Recreation Department to "show off this gem of a wilderness park in the heart of the city." For more information, please contact Sue Nash at (951) 781-0164 or snash22@earthlink.net.



Opportunities

Help Bring Back the Bluebirds

The Bluebird Nest Box Program has ended for the 2004 season. About 30 volunteers provided homes for more than 100 baby bluebirds by hanging nearly 70 nest boxes. Way to go! Some of our volunteers have been checking nest boxes each spring for the past five years.



We are always looking for a few good volunteers to help the bluebirds. Some volunteers prepare boxes off-season. Others check boxes for nests, eggs, and baby birds each week during spring and sometimes as late as July. The data is sent to the North American Bluebird Society and added to the data of the Transcontinental Bluebird Trail. If you are interested in volunteering, please call Erin Snyder at (951) 683-7691 ext. 207.

Scientists believe that the local breeding populations of some native cavity nesters, including the Western Bluebird, have declined due to urban development and competition for nesting space. Urbanization eliminates natural nesting sites, such as dead trees with cavities. The competition for nesting sites has also increased due to population growth of some cavity nesting birds, such as common House sparrows and non-native European starlings.

Santa Ana Watershed Pollution Patrol Club

Adriana Mena	Paola Serna
Matthew Froeming	Damion Monroe
Domonique Deimler	Nicki Delgado
Marissa Moreno	Christina Gumucio
Veronica Reyes	Joshua Lim

Whitewater Watershed Pollution Patrol Club

Stephanie Mata	Nicholas Creech	Victor Sanchez
Mariah Schmidt	Diamond Martiez	Samantha Garcia
Jenna Scott	Amber Shupe	Victor Taylor
Sarah O'Conner	Jacob Risser	Charyne Toribin
Kat Molloy	Danielle King	Alexis Galvez
Tyler Lotto	Noel Hernandez	Estevan Garcia
Lorraina Robison	Christopher Mariosek	Adilene Zamora
Maria Gomez	Charlie Knapp	Melarie Castro
Jasmin Lopez	Catrinna Garza	Carlos Valdez
Selena Calderon	Facindo Sanmiguel	Gerry Gutierrez
Clarissa Flores	Grace Eaton	Adrian Alba
Meriah Padua	Garin Mesarch	Richard V.
Alyssa Sonner	Celyna Ramos	Daniel Gradilla
Myeli Vargas	Scheridan Vorwaller	Erandi Liera
Peter Cornejo	Joshua Chaudhry	Rubi Lambarena
Chloe Haro	Adrian Latasquin	Francisco Olivan
Moises Murillo	Alexander Okanoto	Draven
Diego Zepeda	Hailey Ghelber	Mariah Rodriguez
Kelly Blasderg	Alex Lopez	David Hoffman
Joe Duran	Alex Zamora	



School Programs

Kindergarten through Sixth Grade Teachers:

Call to request a free storm water education presentation for your class. Programs include student participation, audiovisuals, and Pollution Patrol activity booklets. Call Mrs Stormwater (Beverly Howard) at (951) 683-7691, ext. 208. Sponsored by the *Storm Water/Clean Water Protection Program* of the Cities and County of Riverside.



Middle and High School Teachers:

Request a *Help Create a Sustainable Community* presentation, including student booklets. For more information, please contact Erin Snyder at (951) 683-7691 ext. 207.

Fight the Bite:

Stop West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne illness that was first detected in the U.S. at New York City in 1999. By 2002, WNV had reached 44 states with more than 4,100 cases in humans. That year, only one case was detected in California, and it was found in Los Angeles County.

The majority of people who are infected with the virus, about 80 in 100, have few or no symptoms. About 20 in 100 will develop West Nile fever, described as a mild flu-like illness, which lasts 3-6 days. Symptoms may include fever, headache, nausea, body aches, mild skin rash, and swollen lymph nodes. One person in 150 may develop brain inflammation (encephalitis), which can lead to muscle weakness, partial paralysis, confusion, and death.

WNV is transmitted to people and animals through infected mosquitoes. The virus is most prevalent from May to October when mosquitoes are abundant. The time between the mosquito bite and the onset of the illness ranges from 3-15 days in humans.

An infected mosquito may bite any animal, but not all animals will become infected. The disease most often affects birds. Infection has been reported in more than 200 bird species. The most severe illnesses are seen among crows, where almost all those infected die within 5 days of contracting the virus. Jays, ravens, and magpies suffer high mortality.

West Nile Virus has also been detected in over 40 species of vertebrates, making it one of the most widely infectious diseases ever recorded. Most species suffer a fate similar to that of humans: widespread, low-grade infection with some mortality.

To decrease exposure to mosquitoes:

- Avoid outside activity at dawn, dusk, and nighttime during the mosquito season, May to October.
- Wear protective clothing such as long pants and sleeves, and apply insect repellent when outside.



USDA Agricultural Research Service

- Make sure that doors and windows have tight fitting screens in good condition.
- Drain all standing water. If you have a pond, stock it with fish that eat mosquito larvae.
- Make sure roof gutters drain properly. Clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.

Mosquito Facts

- Mosquitoes must have standing water to complete their life cycles. They do not hatch in grass or shrubbery, unless standing water lies beneath.
- Immature mosquitoes develop in almost any water source. Destroying them during this vulnerable stage is more effective and less costly.
- During warm weather, it may take only 5 days for an egg to develop into a mature mosquito.
- Only the female mosquito bites. She uses the blood to produce eggs. The male feeds on plant juices and is incapable of breaking the skin.
- Female mosquitoes remain infected with West Nile Virus and can pass it on to each host they bite. They may live for months under the right conditions: warm and moist. They become dormant during cold weather, over-wintering in protected areas to start a new generation in spring.
- Southern California has over 50 species of mosquitoes, some of which transmit WNV, as well as other diseases.

What Do I Do If I See A Dead Bird?

If you find a dead bird, particularly a dead crow, please call the toll free number **877-WNV-BIRD**, (877) 968-2473. Do not touch the bird. Wait for handling instructions. It may be needed for testing.

To report mosquito problems or learn more, please contact the Northwest Mosquito and Vector Control District at (951) 340-9792 or www.northwestmosquitovector.org.

Information can also be found at the website: <http://westnile.ca.gov>.



Low Cost Testing for Homeowners

The Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) conducts soil and water testing to measure soil texture, levels of nitrate-nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, pH, electrical conductivity, and requirements for lime or gypsum. For residents of the RCRCD, a complete soil test costs \$20. To learn more about this service and how to collect samples, please call Barbara Slayton at (951) 683-7691, ext. 204, or visit www.rcrcd.com/techser.htm.

Irrigation Evaluations

The RCRCD's Irrigation Water Management (IWM) Mobile Lab evaluates irrigation systems for efficiency and uniformity in applying water. The Mobile Lab staff travels to cropland, homes, and large turf areas at parks, schools, and golf courses to test irrigation systems. The staff develops a report with recommendations for system improvements, which helps irrigators conserve water and reduce expense.

To schedule an evaluation, please contact Barbara Slayton at (951) 683-7691, ext. 204.



7



Barbara Slayton tests sprinkler application at a private home.

Board of Directors

Alfred B. Bonnett President
Roy Takeno Vice-President
Carol Bartels Treasurer
Charles Colladay Directors
John Gless, Jr.
Stanley G. Cooley Associate Director

Staff

Shelli Lamb (951) 683-7691 District Manager Ext.202
Barbara Slayton (951) 683-7691 Resource Assistant Ext. 204
Kerwin Russell (951) 683-7691 Resource Mgmt. Specialist Ext. 203
Diana Ruiz (951) 683-7691 Education & Sustainability Program Coordinator Ext. 217
Beverly Howard (951) 683-7691 Resource Educator Ext. 208
Erin Snyder (951) 683-7691 Resource Educator Ext. 207
Arlee Montalvo (951) 683-7691 Plant Restoration Ecologist Ext. 218

Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff

Bob Hewitt (951) 654-7933 District Conservationist

E-mail our staff at rcrcd@rcrcd.com



All RCRCD programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, or gender.

Help Steward Natural Resources:

Create a Healthy, High Quality Community.

We invite your involvement and personal commitment to natural resource stewardship. Here are a few ways you can help:

Learn more. Expand your understanding of local natural resources, land-use, and sustainable methods. Begin by requesting the *Help Create a Sustainable Community* booklet (available in English and Spanish) or check out our website at www.rcrcd.com and the websites listed in the booklet's "yellow pages".

Take Action. You can make a difference simply through the way you live. Use your daily actions, your vote, and your purchasing power to reduce waste, prevent pollution, conserve resources, and to support sustainable methods. Help guide your community by sharing your knowledge and stewardship ethic with others, especially children. Support ecosystem-based land management, pedestrian-friendly cities, and environmentally responsible businesses.

Get Involved. Advocate for sustainable planning and practices in government and land-use. Voice your concerns and share your vision for the future with legislators and local leaders. Support your community's conservation organizations. Give of your energy and talents by volunteering. If you feel your business, church, or community group may be interested in partnering with the RCRCD on a project, please contact District Manager Shelli Lamb at (951) 683-7691 ext. 202.

From a local to a global scale, your efforts will make a difference.



Printed on recycled paper.



Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District

4500 Glenwood Drive
Building A
Riverside, CA 92501
(951) 683-7691
(951) 683-3814 FAX

E-mail: rcrcd@rcrcd.com
Web site: <http://www.rcrcd.com>

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
RIVERSIDE
CALIFORNIA
PERMIT NO. 944