



Return of the Natives

<http://watershed.csumb.edu/ron/>

A Program of the Watershed Institute, California State University Monterey Bay

RON Highlights

- **A “Must Read” Book**
- **Weed Warriors experiment with Poison Hemlock**
- **Weekend Planting in Salinas Creeks, Ft. Ord, Dunes, + Carmel Lagoon**
- **Carr Lake Project**
- **Educator Workshops**

Fabulous Website for Natividad Creek Park

Check it out!!!!
<http://watershed.csumb.edu/ron/html/sub3/ncpwebsite/index.html>.

Oscar Loya School Shines!!

Cliff Gilkey’s 4th Grade Class at Oscar Loya School and CSUMB’s Professor Talan Memmot’s “Teledramatic Arts

in the Community Class” created a fabulous website for Natividad Creek Park, featuring an interactive trail map with the voices of his students in English and Spanish. Six years ago Cliff and a former 6th grade class did a print version of the trail guide which this year his 4th graders revised. This print version will soon be available on the website. Cliff’s plans for this school year include having his students paint reptiles and insects on some of the large rocks in the park which sometimes are damaged by graffiti.

RON Partnership with City of Salinas Deepens

Working under a contract with the City of Salinas and a Whale Tail grant, RON started a year of intensified programming along Natividad Creek. RON staff, our weed warriors and our park steward have been an active presence in Natividad Creek Park and in the Upper Carr Lake area downstream of the park. Thousands of invasive weeds

have succumbed to shovels and wackers, and over 12,000 pounds of trash has been removed from the creek or along the banks since May 2006. RON Schools Coordinator, Emily Smith will be including messages about protecting the waters of the Creeks of Salinas when she visits schools this fall!

Service/Youth Groups - Creeks of Salinas

RON wants to partner with local service, church, youth and community groups in all our restoration projects. Plan ahead and bring your groups to our weekend plantings. We can even arrange for after-school planting events. Contact Emily_Smith@csumb or 582-3687

SUN STREET CENTER-VOLUNTEER HEROS OF SUMMER OF 2007!!!

RON takes part in Warped Tour

On Tuesday, August 21, RON staff hosted 100 rock stars of the Warped Tour as they

participated in environmental service as part of their Earth Eco Summer Tour. Punk rock band members and their support staff dug out invasive weed species, pulled 174 pounds of trash from the Creeks of Salinas, and dug a 100 yard diversion channel in the Frog Pond Area of Natividad Creek Park to allow way to flow more consistently to the area. RON rocks!!!!

Granite Construction donates 50 Shovels

Granite Construction, a RON partner donated 50 shovels to RON for the Warp Tour. Some of the shovels will be going to schools as they begin new gardens and others will stay with RON for our many restoration events. Thank you Granite Construction! Granite Construction rocks!!!!

A Must Read: "Blessed Unrest" by Paul Hawken

For those of us who sometimes feel that things are hopeless, Hawken's book is a manifesto of hope. He chronicles the thousands of small groups, like Return of the Natives, which bring together social and environmental activism in the name of social justice and environmental health. We are the action that has replaced the talk. Read this book!!!

Soledad Street Transformation

For years, most of us would never dream of visiting Soledad Street, Salinas' "skid row" on the other side of the tracks from the Steinbeck Center. You do need to drive down the street and see for

yourself the transformation that is taking place—wine barrels full of flowers, large murals, and best of all a beautiful community garden complete with raised beds, a straw-bale tool shed, and a Chinese-Japanese meditation garden. CSUMB's Service Learning Institute has a community center on the street and is partners with the City of Salinas' Redevelopment Agency in stimulating this urban transformation.

Carr Lake Project Highlights

The Watershed Institute has hired Gary Shallcross as their Carr Lake Coordinator pursuant to a recent grant received from the David and Lucille Packard Foundation. The Carr Lake project is a long-envisioned recreational park and open space area in the center of the City of Salinas that will also address flood control, water quality issues, wetland restoration and provide for wildlife habitat. The 450-acre site is located near Natividad Hospital between Laurel Blvd and Hwy 101. Historically, this area was a lake that was drained in the early part of the 20th century for agricultural use. Gary formerly served as Monterey District Director for both Assemblymembers Fred Keeley and John Laird. He is currently a member of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. Gary works closely with City of Salinas staff and with Carr Lake partner organization, the Big Sur Land Trust. The Land Trust's expertise in brokering

land deals and in bringing-in state and local grants will be invaluable to the project. Another of Gary's chief responsibilities will lie in supporting the **1000 Friends of Carr Lake**, the citizen grassroot group responsible for keeping the project alive in the past decade. Gary is available to address community groups regarding the project. 582-3323
Gary_Shallcross@csumb.edu

Ray Villaneuva, Natividad Creek Park (NCP) Steward

Q. What message do you hope all kids and visitors take home from the park?

I hope all kids and visitors take home their experiences at NCP and share with family members and friends. The message would be to really care about our environment and get involved. ***Q. How have your thoughts changed about NCP from when you worked for the City of Salinas to now working with RON?***

.People should learn to preserve and care for our park, so the next generation of people can enjoy a more healthier and beautiful green planet. ***Q. What are your hopes for the future of the park?*** I hope all citizens and non-citizens of the City can visit NCP and enjoy a couple of hours getting close to nature and learning the balance of life at NCP.

Living Christmas Tree?

If you are thinking about a living Christmas Tree this year, consider using a live redwood tree and then donating it to RON for planting in the Natividad Creek Park's emerging redwood grove. A Ray Villanueva project!

RON goes South --- To Gonzales

Thanks to RON teacher, Michelle Micalizio of Gonzales High, RON has ventured into the Sloughs of Gonzales. In June, a group of 10 Gonzales teachers from the Elementary, Middle and High Schools spent a day together looking at curricula that could be used to bring nature into the classrooms. Hiking around the slough immediately adjacent to the three schools, we saw hundreds of tiny tree frogs and tiny toads, several egrets, herons and songbirds and we came away energized to work together to restore an abandoned nature trail and clean up the area. The trail had been maintained by RON member, John Washburn and his Fairview Middle School students for years before John's retirement.

Granite Construction, a partner of the School District was represented at the workshop by Judy Stevens—an amazingly supportive partner. (Granite Construction has facilities in Gonzales and they are interested in being a good neighbor). Granite Construction supported the workshop with a delicious lunch. A week after the workshop, RON's Laura Lee Lienk met with the City Planner for Gonzales who expressed interest in partnering with RON and the Schools around restoration Gonzales Slough. Wow!!

RON Clan Gathers at Bree and Jordan's Wedding

Fourteen years of RON folks gathered in a beautiful meadow in Tilden Park in Berkeley to celebrate the marriage of two long-time staff members Bree Candiloro and Jordan Plotksy. Present were Deborah Stark, RON Founding Teacher; RON's first director, Bruce Stewart, Bruce Delgado of BLM who helped present early RON teacher workshops in April 1993; Drew Ready, early staffer, Sue Shaw one of the RON founders who is still active, and lots of RON and Farm to School Staff. It was a joyous event and a great reunion.

New Restoration Site at The Fort Ord Dunes

RON has been contracted to begin the restoration on the new Fort Ord Dunes State Park. It is seen by millions of people as they drive by on State highway One, but it has been closed to the public for decades. The vegetation is dominated by African ice plant, yet the area is highly valued for its habitat value for endangered species such as the Smith's Blue Butterfly, the Snowy Plover and the Monterey Spine Flower. There is a commonly shared vision that the park can become an area of outstanding environmental quality, available for all to enjoy. Exotic plants, abandoned buildings, and contaminated soil are not problems we should dread to face but challenges we are anxious to tackle and overcome. The establishment of Fort Ord State Park represents the

public's commitment to the environment, to our quality of life, and to our faith in ourselves and the future. RON will host two public restoration events on the dunes this winter, Saturday, January 26th and Saturday, February 16th, 2008. Come join us from 10-1pm and help restore this awesome area!

Farm to School News

The wonderful Kari Bernardi-Ibsen has left the Monterey County Farm to School Partnership to move to Mendocino with her husband. Up north she will continue Farm to School efforts as an educator and a raw food chef. Kathryn Spencer, the long time Outreach and Education person for Farm to School, will be taking over as Interim Program Coordinator.

Kathryn.Spencer@csumb.edu

Americorps Promise Fellow-to focus on 5 MPUSD School Gardens- Interested? Contact RON

What is Maritime Chaparral??

Did you know that Maritime Chaparral, a threatened type of habitat that is found in places like the Elkhorn Slough Reserve and the Fort Ord BLM lands, is considered by the California Coastal Commission to be an 'environmentally sensitive habitat area' giving it the highest level of protection of any habitat in our state? With our BLM community partners, RON works to restore Maritime Chaparral plant communities in the Ft. Ord

backcountry. If you want to add a little bit of Maritime Chaparral to your schoolyard try planting Monterey Ceanothus or Manzanitas like Sandmat, Hooker's, and Toro species. Keep in mind that these beautiful evergreen shrubs are adapted to very dry and sandy conditions, so take care not to overwater!

Weed Warriors Conduct Experiment: Poison Hemlock

We conducted an experiment to see which of five methods was most effective at suppressing poison hemlock re-growth. We first weed whacked our Natividad Creek Park site, then set up thirty half-meter square plots so that each method could be replicated five times. The methods included scraping the ground bare, a control, and covering each site with cardboard, newspaper, dead hemlock stalks, and mulch. We found the newspaper blew away and the mulch scattered quickly, stalks, cardboard and bare ground worked well at suppressing re-growth. We think that a combination of newspaper and mulch could work just as well as cardboard, as the mulch would weigh the newspaper down so that it doesn't blow away and the newspaper will fill in any gaps in the mulch that sprouts might take advantage of. Written by Abby Gwinn Creeks of Salinas Weed Warrior. Abby is available to meet Salinas Area classrooms who want to come to the Park to battle weeds.

Two School Greenhouses Need a New Home!

This past summer two RON greenhouses been removed from their homes at Harden Middle School and Kamman Elementary. Harden's was replaced with a brand new greenhouse thanks to the wonderful efforts of teacher and garden friend Chris Carrier. If there is an interested school the cost to relocate the greenhouse at their site is \$2000. Please contact Emily Smith for more information @ 582-3687 or emily_smith@csumb.edu

14th Annual RON Introductory Workshop- September 29 9am-4pm

Built around the "Cycle of Restoration" activities of seed collecting, propagating, planting and maintaining, this free workshop is for educators interested in transforming schoolyards and communities through native plant gardens and restoration sites on your school yard. Learn simple landscaping techniques and standards based activities that connect standards to hands-on learning. Free. Contact: Laura.Lienk@csumb.edu

November 3rd School Garden Workshop

Farm to School and Return of the Natives will be hosting an exciting workshop on Creating and Sustaining Your School Garden Saturday November 3rd from 9am-4pm. Teachers from the same school are encouraged to attend this workshop together as "garden team". We will spend the day learning how to jump-start a school garden, explore lesson

ideas for garden based learning, and discuss how to sustain a successful school garden for learning. Cost is \$40 per person. CEU credits will be offered the day of the workshop for \$50. Lunch and materials will be provided. Please RSVP by Friday October 5th with Kathryn Spencer at 582-5115.

Join friends: RON's Fall/Winter Weekend Volunteer Schedule

- *Sept. 15th @ Upper Carr Lake 9-12pm clean up and weed - California Coastal Cleanup Day
- *Oct. 13th @ Upper Carr Lake 10-1pm clean up and weed
- *Oct. 27th @ NCP 10-1pm clean up - National Make a Difference Day
- *Nov. 10th @ Upper Carr Lake 10-1pm clean up
- *Dec. 8th @ NCP 10-1pm clean up and planting
- *Jan. 19th @ Upper Carr Lake 8-10 Winter Bird Count 10-1pm planting and clean up
- *Jan. 26th @ Fort Ord Dunes State Park 10-1pm planting
- *Feb. 2nd @ Fort Ord BLM Public Lands 10-1pm planting
- *Feb. 9th @ NCP 10-1pm clean up and planting
- *Feb. 16th @ Fort Ord Dunes State Park 10-1pm planting
- *Feb. 23rd @ Carmel River Lagoon 10-1pm planting
- *March 1st @ Upper Carr Lake 10-1pm planting and clean up
- *March 8th @ Carmel River Lagoon 10-1pm planting
- *March 22nd @ Natividad Creek Park 10-1pm planting, clean up and Eco Egg Hunt

Contacting RON: Return of the Natives, 100 Campus Center, Seaside, CA 93955 TEL: 582-3686 FAX 582-3691 Laura.Lienk@CSUMB.edu watershed.csumb.edu/ron

