



Return of the Natives

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

RON Highlights

- No Child Left Inside!!!!
- Earth Partnerships
- Bree and Jordan Leaving RON
- Emily Smith RON School Coordinator
- Much Happening in Creeks of Salinas: sculpture—service events
- Deborah McDonald earns 1st Certificate!!!
- Educator Workshops
- NEWS!! Community Garden on Soledad Street started
- NEWS!! Carr Lake Project has monthly meetings

"No Child Left Inside"

"No Child Left Inside" is the mantra of Richard Louv, bestselling author of *Last Child in the Woods-Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder* as he crosses the country addressing governors, business people and educators. Louv has found that he is able to tap into the hearts of every audience when he prompts listeners to think about their own childhood experiences in nature. Louv has been invited to speak before over 500 groups and he appears to be surprised that he, as a journalist, is becoming the defacto leader of an environmental movement! A movement aimed at saving our children! RON staff have had the opportunity to hear Louv at professional meetings and we are gratified that our work is entirely congruent with Louv's research and thinking. The RON Mission, "Bringing people to nature and nature to

people through hands-on experiences in restoring habitats" fits with Louv's call for "No Child Left Inside". We have 10 copies of Louv's book at the Watershed Institute for two week loan. You will be inspired and will have a treasure chest of responses with which to respond to your administrator when you engage in RON supported projects like a planting day or field trip! This book is an absolute must for all educators who believe that our children deserve more.

RON to Bring "Earth Partnerships Restoration Program" to California

Last winter, RON was invited by the University of Wisconsin's Arboretum to send a team of educators to their two week institute in restoration education and to become a member of their "Earth Partnership" network. In July, a RON team comprised of longtime RON staff members, Laura Lee

Lienk and Christina McKnew, new staffer-Emily Smith, and Gonzales High Teacher Michelle Micalizio flew to lovely Madison Wisconsin as the California delegation for the RESTORE institute which drew teams from four other states. The institute used as a teaching site the Curtis Prairie originally restored by Aldo Leopold, the father of the modern restoration and conservation movements. It was thrilling to be in this wonderful habitat where the grasses were taller than our heads and where the flowering forb diversity is so high that a different native every day comes into bloom over the course of the 6 month growing season. Even more exciting was the Earth Partnership Curriculum which we received, a compendium of 75 great multidisciplinary activities for teachers to connect the construction of a schoolyard garden and then the study and maintenance of that garden to educational standards.

RON is to be California's Earth Partnership Program Center and we are planning to present our own one-week Institute in late June 2007. We are anticipating inviting five member teams comprised of 3 teachers, 1 parent and an agency partner to our June 2007 Institute. As team members participate in the great standards-based restoration activities, they will also plan for significant native gardens or restorations on their sites. Michelle Micalizio plans to bring a Gonzales High Team and we hope that other

local teams will want to make the large commitment of attending for a week. Our intent is to offer stipends and CEU credits for participating team members. At this point we are planting the seeds of this idea with our RON community and we hope to attract 5 local teams, though the July 2007 institute will be open to teams from across the State. Local teams will receive significant staff assistance and plants from RON. This RON/Earth Partnership Institute will make strong standards based curriculum linkages to RON's Cycle of Restoration set of classroom visits and planting days. Team members will have time during the Institute to make curricular and garden plans which will span several years and will involve multiple partners.

RON Cycle of Restoration Workshop

The annual fall RON workshop will be offered from 9-4 on Saturday, September 30, 2006 and will provide local teachers a gateway into the RON program. We have been offering this workshop since 1993 as a taste of all the services that RON offers. This free workshop is required of all RON partners who can also receive CEU credit for participation.

Laura_Lienk@csumb.edu

Bree and Jordan are Leaving RON

In early August two of RON's most beloved staff members, Bree Candiloro and Jordan Plotsky, will be leaving the

area to make a new life together in the SF Bay Area. Jordan, RON's special projects person has been with RON since the 1994/1995 rainy season where he participated in the initial restoration work of the Creeks of Salinas and on Ft. Ord. Through the years, Jordan has built school greenhouses, planted thousand of natives, battled invasive weeds, led planting events., built school gardens, created brochures and reports, designed our website and created our videos. Jordan has constantly made RON look good. Bree first became involved in RON while an Americorps volunteer on Ft. Ord. She then worked in our greenhouse, served as the "School Greenhouse Mom", taught teacher workshops as part of the EE Leadership Team and most significantly she served as RON's School Coordinator. Both Bree and Jordan have brought constant compassion for people of all ages and a love and enthusiasm for nature to our program. Bree will be working for the Save the Bay organization where she will be their nursery coordinator, while Jordan will continue his filmmaking career working for a production company which makes documentaries for PBS and National Geographic. They promise to come back for a planting event sometime in the 2006/2007 rainy season.

New RON Schools Coordinator

RON welcomes Emily Smith as the new RON Schools Coordinator. Emily, Bree

Candiloro's replacement, brings many years of experience working with youth in the out-of-doors in addition great organizational leadership. Most recently Emily has been the Director of CSUMB's RISE (Recruitment in Science Education) program and previously she was with the Ventana Wildlife Association where she led many youth programs. This fall, Emily will be working with the school greenhouse program and getting ready for RON's rainy season plantings on Ft. Ord, in the Creeks of Salinas, or at the Carmel Lagoon. Welcome to Emily and her energetic dog, Pixel!!!

RON after Retirement

This June, Lynn Hamilton, one of the RON founders, retired from teaching. While Lynn is taking the year to ride her bicycle and to decide what is next on the horizon, RON is quietly lobbying her to remain involved in our organization. As more RON leaders make lifestyle changes, our organization is challenged to find ways to utilize their energies as highly qualified volunteers. Opportunities exist at our campus greenhouse, in adopting school gardens, in conducting outreach, in website maintenance, in brochure creation, and....Please contact us. RON needs volunteers.

Creeks of Salinas: Mountain Lion and Watershed Sculptures Coming

Watch for the notice in our local newspapers for the art

events that will herald the placement of RON's newest interpretive elements, a huge faux rock mountain lion and accompanying sign panel to be placed on the corner of Freedom Parkway and Nogal in Natividad Creek Park; and the elegant bronze watershed model and panel to be placed at Upper Carr Lake off of East Laurel Drive. New interpretive panels constructed of a high impact material are being placed all over the Park!! The panels are the work of Jordan Plotsky and the sculptures the creations of Charlie Abildgaard, Bill Ingram and Bree Candiloro. Get out walking or go on your bike to see the art in this beautiful area.

Loya School Classes to redo NCP Trail Guide

This fall, guided by teachers Cliff Gilkey and Jim Menendez, upper grade students at Loya Elementary School will be redoing a self-guided trail guide for Natividad Creek Park. The guide and a website should be ready by January 2007.

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.

Salinas' Creek Litter Flows to the Bay

RON has received a CA Coastal Commission Whale

Tail Grant for school and weekend programs aimed at lessening small pieces of litter-like candy wrappers, balloons and plastic bags which blow into the creeks and eventually flow into the bay killing sea turtles, whales and seabirds, and large objects such as shopping carts which obstruct the flow of water to the sea and the passageways of fish such as steelhead to upstream spawning sites. See the following so that you can be involved.

Student Researcher Tallies Creek Litter

CSUMB student, Kristina Wellbrock's senior research involves RON's Creek's antilitter campaign. Kristina has adapted for the creeks the Coastal Clean-up beach litter tally sheet and teams have been piloting creek litter pick-ups this summer. Four small events have seen 1186 pounds of trash comprised of over 6,000 pieces ranging in size from an equally lethal mattress to a styrofoam peanut. Please join Kristina and the RON crew as we clean beaches from a distance and we conduct litter research.

***Saturday, August 26, 9-12**

Natividad Creek Park

***September 16, 9-12**

California Coastal Clean-up Day, Upper Carr Lake, Laurel Drive, Salinas

***Saturday October 2110-1**

Make a Difference Day, Natividad Creek Park

***Saturday, November 11**

Veteran's Day 10am-1pm Gabilan Creek/Upper Carr Lake Clean-up

***December 2, 2006 10-1**

Natividad Creek Clean-up, Salinas

Creeks/Litter and Eight Salinas Classrooms

Research has shown that kid and schoolyard litter are significant sources of creek and ocean pollution. Eight Salinas based RON teachers are invited to participate this year in RON's efforts to keep litter out of the Creeks. Here is the process:

1. Tell Laura Lee that you will commit to participate.
2. Attend a "Waves, Wetlands and Watersheds" workshop on Monday, September 18 from 4-7pm (including dinner)
3. Pilot three standards based lessons in your classroom, assisted by CSUMB student, Sarah Chasko who is working on her senior project.
4. Bring your class to a field trip/clean-up/restoration in the Creeks of Salinas. We pay for the bus.
5. Involve your class in a fun research project to see if they themselves litter less!
6. Receive a \$100 stipend for your efforts.

Deborah McDonald Receives First Certificate

Highland Teacher, Deborah McDonald was the first teacher to receive a Certificate in Environmental Education and Environmental Service from CSUMB's Watershed Institute. Deborah completed 10 CEU's of work, through workshops and independent study to complete the certificate which was awarded on Earth Day 2006 at RON's Watershed Festival in Natividad Creek Park. Deborah's students were also

honored for their restoration work on their campus and throughout the community. Other schools/programs honored included: the Boys and Girls Club of Salinas, RISE, Sherwood School, Gonzales High School and Martin Luther King Academy.

EE Professional Development Schedule for Fall 2006

* Monday, September 18 4-7pm
Waves, Wetlands and Watersheds, Salinas site TBA

*Fri-Sat September 22-23
Environmental Ed Certificate Program Premier Workshop

* Sat. September 30 **RON Cycle of Restoration Workshop** 9am-4pm

*Sat. October 14 **River of Words-an Upper Pajaro River Experience** 9am-4:30pm

*Sat October 28 **Population Connections-People and the Environment** 9am-4pm

*Sat. November 18. **Project WET** 9am-4pm

All Trainings at the Watershed Institute, Bldg 42 and are free to all who register 3 days prior to training. CEU Credits available. All workshops are part of Environmental Education Certificate Program. To learn more about these trainings contact:
Laura_Lienk@csumb.edu or 582-3689 watershed.csumb.edu/ron

RON PLANTING DAYS FOR SCHOOLS

Free busses for restoration events are limited this year. For dates and if you can provide your own transportation please contact Emily Smith at 582-3687

Weed Warriors on the Attack

Natividad Creek Weed Warriors, Abby Gwinn, Zeke Bean, and Puffin Gwinn continue to patrol the Creek corridors looking for particularly invasive weeds that need to be controlled to insure a more natural path to restoration. Abby is concentrating on fennel and will be presenting some early research data at the California Invasive Pest Plant Conference in October.

WAR on WEEDS Conference at CSUMB

The annual War on Weeds Conference will be held at CSUMB on Friday, November 17 from 8:30-5:00. This conference brings together land managers, agency folks, researchers and restoration educators to share local information on controlling invasive weed species.

FEMA, FLOODING and CARR LAKE

Speaker Gregor Blackburn of FEMA will address the community on Tuesday, Sept 26 at 6:30pm—Salinas Community Center.

Kurt_Hunter@csumb.edu

Contacting RON: Return of the Natives, 100 Campus Center, Seaside, CA 93955 TEL: 582-3687 FAX:582-3691

Emily_Smith@csumb.edu
Christina_McKnew@csumb.edu

Laura_Lienk@CSUMB.edu
watershed.csumb.edu/ron

Carr Lake Coordinator

Kurt_Hunter@csumb.edu or 831-582-3323