



# Return of the Natives

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

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

## RON Highlights

- **SPRING 2007 EDUCATOR WORKSHOP SERIES**
- **RON to Offer Week-Long Earth Partnership Institute-June 2007**
- **Plantings Almost Every Weekend**
- **Creeks of Salinas/Carr Lake**
- **\$2500/School Funding for School Gardens**
- **\$100 for Native Plants**
- **Plant Signs for School Gardens**
- **Community Service Opportunities**

## RON Brings Earth Partnerships for Schools to California!

In July, a 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. At the University of Wisconsin's Arboretum, our team of educators attended a two-week institute in restoration education and became a member of the "Earth Partnership" network. 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 every day a different native comes into bloom over the course of the 6 month growing season. Even more exciting was receiving the Earth Partnership Curriculum, a

compendium of 75 great multidisciplinary activities for teachers to connect the construction, maintenance and monitoring of a schoolyard garden to educational standards. We are in the process of adapting these wonderful lessons to Coastal California ecosystems and to CA Standards.

## A First for RON!!!

### An "Earth Partnership" Program – RON to Present Week-long Workshop on School Yard Restoration June 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007 for California Schools

We are inviting five member teams comprised of 2-3 teachers, 1 parent and a community partner to our June 2007 workshop on schoolyard restoration. As team members will 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 /Granite Construction team and we hope that another 4-5 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 4-5 additional teams. Local teams will receive significant staff assistance and plants from RON. This RON/Earth Partnership Workshop will make strong standards based curriculum linkages to RON's Cycle of Restoration 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. To learn more about the workshop contact: Laura\_Lienk@csumb.edu or 582-3689  
<http://watershed.csumb.edu/ron>

### **Busy 2007 Weekend Planting Season Ahead**

RON invites everyone to participate in our community based restoration events in the coming months. Your help is really needed. All public events are on Saturdays from 10am – 1pm. Call (831) 236-0648 for updates on rainy days.

\*Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> – Clean-up and Planting Upper Carr Lake, Salinas

\*Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> – Planting at Carmel River Lagoon

\*Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> – Clean-up and Planting at Upper Carr Lake, Salinas

\*March 3<sup>rd</sup> – Planting at Carmel River Lagoon

\*March 10<sup>th</sup> – Clean-up and Planting at Upper Carr Lake, Salinas

\*March 31<sup>st</sup> – Clean-up and Planting at Ceasar Chavez Park, Salinas

\*April 21<sup>st</sup> – Earth Day Celebration, Clean-up and Planting at Natividad Creek Park, Salinas

### **Community Service Hours**

RON Weekend Events are a great place to fulfill High School Community Service hours. RON Outreach Coordinator, Julie Dustin is making contact with area high schools to promote these weekend opportunities. Please help us out by telling everyone to participate.

### **RON 2007 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

### **Education and the Environment Initiative**

California has recently taken a major step in committing to teaching about the environment by declaring that “environmental education is to be used as a means of teaching the educational standards to mastery in our public schools.” The legislation that developed the Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI) is AB 1548 (2003), and AB 1721 (2004). Preliminary

testing of the EEI is scheduled to begin in April of 2007. For more information contact James\_Mattson@csumb.edu

### **\$2500/School One Time State Funding for School Gardens! Apply NOW!**

Have you heard about Assembly Bill 1535? *California Instructional School Garden Program: California School Gardens flourishing and nourishing the Instructional School Garden Program*, a bill that allocates \$15 million for the promotion, creation and support of California instructional school gardens.

Two types of grants are available: 1. school garden equipment and supplies grants; and/or 2. School garden professional development grants. Each grant is for up to \$2,500 per school site for school sites of less than 1000 students enrolled. Schools with an enrollment of 1000 or more students will be eligible for funding up to \$5,000 per each type of grant.

School districts, State Board charter schools or county offices of education must apply for these non-competitive grants on behalf of school sites. The California Department of Education (CDE) is administrating the California Instructional School Garden Program grants.

Application materials will be downloadable from a CDE website in late January. The exact application release date is anticipated to be January 17th. Funds may be used by

school sites for the duration of the grant period ending spring semester 2009. Visit <http://www.csgn.org> in the weeks to come for information on the application process.

How can my school prepare for submitting a grant? The open application period is rather short and it would be worthwhile for your district's schools to start organizing. As it stands now (pending final review) each school site applying will need to fill out a three page site information form outlining how they plan to use their grants. These applications will need to include an outline of what materials will be purchased and what types of professional development will be implemented. Additionally there will be a one-page application to be signed by the district or county office of education superintendent or designee. Contact Anne Wheelis at MCOE for more information. 755-6466

Questions to ask while planning your grant proposal: Will our school be apart of a district wide or a countywide application process? Who at the district or county level would be best suited to organize collecting school site applications? If applying for a professional development grant, who will be the point person for coordinating professional development at our school?

### **How can the programs of the RON and the Watershed Institute be a part of your California Instructional School Garden Program proposal?**

1. Plant a native plant garden or get your RON school greenhouse refurbished! New plastic! Automatic sprinkler systems! Contact Emily Smith @ 582-3687 for information and pricing.
2. Professional Development: Send a 4-5 member team of teachers/parents to the Watershed Institute's Earth Partnership Institute-June 18-22, 2007. OR, The Watershed Institute's Environmental Education Leadership Team can help you design a garden based professional development workshop for your staff/faculty/parent volunteers. OR, you could ask to provide stipends for teacher leaders from your school to attend weekend workshops at the Watershed Institute—see this newsletter for further details. CEU units available.
3. Build a school vegetable garden, work with the Farm to School Partnership.

### **\$100 Gift Certificates for Native Plants for School Gardens**

Thanks to a grant from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Staff Donation Fund—RON is able to give \$100 gift certificates to schools whose teachers have attended a RON workshop and are installing native plant gardens at their school sites. The \$100 certificates are redeemable at Elkhorn Native

Plant Nursery in Moss Landing. For more information contact Emily at 582-3687

[Emily\\_Smith@csumb.edu](mailto:Emily_Smith@csumb.edu)

### **Native Plant Signs for School Gardens**

Thanks to the hard work and creativity of a group of Seaside High Students led by CSUMB Service Learner Erica Lanctot, RON is now piloting metal interpretive signs featuring 20 central coast natives in several school gardens. The cost per each of the 20 signs is \$5/per sign. Or, download the sign text from the RON website and make your own signs.

### **EE Professional Development Schedule for Spring 2007**

\* Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>  
**GLOBE Educator Training**  
9am – 4pm

\* Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup>  
**Environmental Grant Writing For Teachers** 9am – 4pm

\* Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup> **Project Learning Tree** 9am – 4pm

\* Fri-Sat May 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>  
**Environmental Ed Certificate Program Premier Workshop**

All Trainings are free to all who register 3 days prior to training. CEU Credits available. The workshops are part of Environmental Education Certificate Program. These trainings are supported by a NOAA BWET Grant. Info: 582-3689  
[Laura\\_Lienk@csumb.edu](mailto:Laura_Lienk@csumb.edu) or [watershed.csumb.edu/ron](http://watershed.csumb.edu/ron)

### **CARR Lake Updates- Sadness and Hope**

The Carr Lake Project is poised to make significant steps forward in 2007 after the past year which was saw amazing progress and some heart-wrenching setbacks. From September 2005 through October 2006, the Carr Lake Project was blessed to have Kurt Hunter as the project's first coordinator. Sadly, Kurt passed away on January 3, 2007 following a short and tragic illness. In his 13 months with the project, Kurt made significant inroads with the community and agency partners. One of his most important partnerships came in laying the foundation for the project to become a significant project of the Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT). Partnering with the BSLT will bring much needed fundraising, strategic planning, and land acquisition skills to the Carr Lake Project. We anticipate that the addition of the BSLT's expertise will allow the Carr Lake Project to move forward in acquiring state support through the recently passed Prop 84 Bond! Following Kurt's passing, the Watershed Institute was able to attract Gary Shallcross as the Interim Carr Lake Coordinator. Gary, an attorney, brings years of environmental experience to our work—he was Assemblymen Fred Keeley and John Laird's regional director, he serves on the Regional Water Quality Control Board and he worked on the Marine Protected Area legislation. We are hoping that

we will be able to obtain funding for Gary to continue with us as his expertise and his contacts throughout the State will be critical to the project in the coming year. Salinas is undergoing political changes with a new mayor and new faces on the City Council. It is our intent that the potential of Carr Lake for water quality improvement, flood control and for parkland creation will be always on their minds as they engage in decision making around runoff and land use issues associated with the new development projects taking place immediately upstream of Carr Lake. Together, the City of Salinas, the Watershed Institute, the Big Sur Land Trust, and the 1000 Friends of Carr Lake hope to have significant success in bringing this project forward in 2007.

### **Two New Creeks of Salinas Video/DVD's**

Classrooms or groups wishing to borrow videos about the Creeks of Salinas can contact Emily @582-3687 or [Emily\\_Smith@csumb.edu](mailto:Emily_Smith@csumb.edu). CSUMB new media students produced the *Carr Lake Story* while Jordan Plotsky produced the *Natividad Creek Story*. Both projects were completed in the fall of 2006 and give an excellent history of the Salinas area while teaching about the watershed.

### **Art in the Parks of Salinas**

Have you seen the giant cougar at the corner of Freedom Parkway and Nogal Street? Or the bronze model of the Gabilan Watershed by Upper Carr Lake on East

Laurel Drive? Both were funded by a grant to the City of Salinas and the Foundation of CSUMB from the CA Dept of Transportation.

### **Natividad Creek Nature Trail Guide on Web soon**

Cliff Gilkey's 6<sup>th</sup> grade class at Oscar Loya School and a CSUMB class will have this trail guide up before Earth Day!

### **Natividad Creek Steward**

Ray Villanueva, the Natividad Creek Park Steward is available to meet your class in the park if you go on a hike from your school. He can be reached at 757-4233.

### **Special Restoration Projects for Salinas**

Salinas Developer Fees earmarked for habitat restoration will enable RON programs to continue in the Creeks of Salinas for the next 18 months. Currently Sue Shaw is leading a crew consisting partly of recent graduates of the Service Learning Institute's garden training program on Soledad Street in planting natives in Cesar Chavez Park!! In the 2007-2008 planting season look for some exciting planting opportunities along the Natividad!!! Many thanks to Denise Estrada, Dale McCormick and Jim Pia-City Staff who help make our partnership happen.

Contacting RON: Return of the Natives, 100 Campus Center, Seaside, CA 93955 TEL: 582-3686 FAX582-3691  
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