

# O<sub>f</sub> the N<sub>atives</sub>

News Updates-----March 10, 1995 Vol 2. No 1

## Salinas Arbor Day Celebration and Natividad Creek Park Planting and Clean-up

**Saturday, March 25  
9:00am-12:00pm**

Teacher leaders are urgently needed to lead groups of volunteers in tree planting and clean-ups of the Natividad Creek Park. You will lead small family groups to areas along the new banks of Natividad Creek where native tree and shrub species will be planted. Or, you can also arrange to meet members of your own classes at the planting headquarters, Virginia Roca Barton School, and work specifically with them. If you have native grasses, wildflowers, or trees that are ready for planting feel free to bring them along. If you are in question if your plants are ready to go into the ground, call Trisha Lowe at 633-5606.

We are asking teacher volunteers to arrive at Virginia Roca Barton School no later than 8:30 am to receive instructions and equipment. At 9:00 the City of Salinas will host a short ceremony with local dignitaries and at 9:15 groups will head out to plant several trees and shrubs and to do some litter pick-ups in the area. Groups will work for 2-2 1/2 hours and will return to VRB for cookies and juice which will be provided by a parent group at Frank Paul School or by the Salinas Pride Organization. These are only a few of the neighborhood groups who will be participating with RON and the City of Salinas in this family event in the Park.

RON teachers should already have been contacted by phone with our phone tree system asking for your participation. You are asked to call our RON answering machine at 633-8138 to tell us you will be coming to volunteer on March 25th and if you plan on coming with or without your own students (tell us how many of your own students you expect to come).

**R**eturn  
Accompanying this newsletter are posters (in English and Spanish which can be circulated throughout your school community announcing the event.

### Student Planting Days Tremendous Success

Almost 1000 students and teachers planted oaks, buckeyes, assorted shrubs (ceanothus, toyon, etc) and hundreds of wildflowers and native bunch grasses on the slopes above Natividad Creek on three RON sponsored planting days. Thank you so much to everyone who worked so hard to make this a really successful event. RON staff, Trisha Lowe, Sue Shaw and Bruce Stewart aided by a crew of volunteers (mainly from Moss Landing) coordinated everything from staking out tree sites, providing tools, commandeering port-a-potties, contacting the bus folks--the list of tasks was impressive but the reaction of the participating kids made it all worth it. The RON steering committee will be scheduling additional plantings for next fall before the winter rains.

Planting areas can be seen on the hillsides below Nogal Drive and in the new wetlands off Boronda.

**High School Student Symposium Scheduled  
for Saturday, April 8**

In their first public collaborative event, RON and WEOP, the Watershed Ecology Outreach Program, will present an all day symposium on Restoration Ecology on Saturday, April 8 from 9am to 5pm at the new State University at Monterey Bay campus. Students will participate in colloquia led by scientists such as Bruce Delgado of the BLM, Dr. Roy Gordon, noted Monterey Bay author, and WEOP's, John Oliver, leader of the Fort Ord Restoration Project. Students will visit two heavily eroded and contaminated Fort Ord sites which will be the focus of the restoration work.

Finally students will be invited to participate in a work-study internship where they will be able to earn a minimum wage, college practicum or ROP work credit while at the same time participating in direct positive action to help the planet. Though the symposium is open to all high school students, interships will be available only to those students 16 and older.

For this first symposium, Title-1 Schools in the area of Fort Ord are being targeted as specified by WEOP funding sources. Thus, participating districts and RON lead teachers will be Salinas Union High SD (Pat McNeil), Monterey Peninsula USD (Pam Miller) and North Monterey County USD (Debra Thornley).

For more information call Laura Lee Lienk, RON Interim Coordinator at 659-7821.

### **Weeding and Mulching Work Sessions Possible at Natividad Creek Park Planting Areas**

We have received an okay from Ed Piper at the City of Salinas Park and Recreation Department for class groups familiar with the plantings at Natividad Creek to go over to the park on their own to weed and mulch around the native grasses, poppies and other wildflowers, shrubs and trees planted on our planting days. At the time of this writing the giant mulch pile is still at the bottom of the hill below the Nogal Street planting area.

WAIT>>>WAIT>>>WAIT. Before you and your class head over to the park you must first call the RON number, 633-8138, at least two working days in advance because we need to contact the City to tell them you will be on site. Failure to follow this notification process could lead us to lose this opportunity.

### **Phone Tree Update Needed**

Accompanying this newsletter is a copy of our current phone tree. Please find your own name on the list and verify all information and numbers. We apologize in advance if there are any errors, but please share these updates or errors with us by calling the RON number, 633-8138 and leaving a message. Also if you can receive FAX messages leave your FAX number, as well as, your e-mail number.

### **RON STEERING COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU**

The next meeting of the RON Steering Committee will be on Wednesday, March 22 at 5:30pm at the restaurant Las Palmeras, 542 E. Laurel Drive, Salinas (Natividad at Laurel behind the Chevron Station). We will start by making final plans concerning the Planting and Clean-up Day at Natividad Creek Park on the 25th. Then we will look at future goals for the organization including formation of a curriculum committee. All RON teachers are encouraged to come and participate.

### **GREENHOUSES AVAILABLE**

Three greenhouse kits are available for construction on school grounds. These temporary structures have a metal and wood superstructure and are covered with plastic vinyl. The plastic has a three year sun-life span and then can be easily and cheaply replaced. There will be two green houses that are 16' x 18' and one greenhouse 16' x 12'. One purpose of having the greenhouse is to provide a location for cultivation of native plants for eventual relocation at Natividad Creek Park, as funding is being provided by the Salinas City Parks grant to RON.

We estimate that the construction of each greenhouse can be accomplished in about 3 afternoon sessions, Sue Shaw and her staff will be working with you and parent volunteers in the construction.

Laura Lee will be contacting Salinas City Schools Buildings Department to learn their requirements for placement of such structures. It is our hope that their parameters will apply to other districts--but as applicable we will check with other districts as well.

If you are interested in having one of these greenhouses located on your schoolyard, and if

you have space for such a structure, please write a letter to Bruce Stewart, RON Director (P.O. Box 228, Moss Landing, CA 95039), stating that you want such a structure and that you realize that you and fellow staff members and parent volunteers will have to contribute several after school periods for construction. Please have your principal and 3 committed co-workers sign your request letter. Requests will be honored on a first come first served basis. If there is a great call for the structures we will do our best in garnering future funds for more greenhouses.

Each item is packaged in its own coded, protective carrying bag facilitating transport. Items are organized under the following headings:

- \*General Conservation
- \*Restoration and Propagation
- \*Landscape Design
- \*Plant Natural History
- \*Native American
- \*Curriculum

RON materials are available to all teachers in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. The IMC is located at Fontes Lane right beside Boronda School in Salinas.

### **Three to Receive Mini-grants**

Three RON teachers will receive mini-grants from RON to aid their schools work with native plants. These mini grants are thanks to John Hannum who returned \$1000 from last year's program when he received an added \$1000 from a non-RON source.

Receiving mini-grants are Lynda Kamrath of El Gabilan School, Nancy McDowell of Boronda School, and Peter Moras of Sherwood School. Congratulations to the three. Be sure to ask them what they plan to do!

### **RON Resource Shelves in IMC of Salinas City**

Peter Moras and the librarians at the IMC of Salinas City Schools have been busy this past fall purchasing and assessioning books, materials and periodical materials. Funding for the purchase of the materials came from a California State License Plate Grant, and was supplemented by generous donations of books from private individuals.

### **Laura Lee Lienk joins RON as Interium Coordinator**

Laura Lee Lienk, formerly with the Monterey County Office of Education where she was Director of the 5th and 6th grade Outdoor Education Program and was heavily involved in science training and coordination, has joined the RON staff as an Interium Coordinator. On January 1st of this year Laura Lee returned from two and a half years in South America where she served in the Peace Corps in Argentina. There her responsibilities included formation of a network of teacher trainers in environmental education throughout the county's 23 provinces (what a travel opportunity!).

As Interium Coordinator with RON she will be working with the schools in Ron's many projects, including the curriculum project and

interfacing RON's programs with the new  
Watershed Ecology Outreach Program