

Return of The Natives

Special Announcements

- *Sunday, March 11, 10-2, Last Ft. Ord Planting event of the season*
- *Cesar Chavez Service and Learning Training-March 24*
- *Cesar Chavez Celebration Saturday, March 31*
- *Earth Day/Cesar Chavez Service Events April 18, 19, 21*
- *YESS/RON team in Natividad Park-every Saturday, March 10 to May 5*
- *Weed Warriors in Toro Creek Watershed every Saturday, March 10 to April 7*
- *High School Symposium in Restoration May 12*

Teacher Workshop to Kick-Off Cesar Chavez Month of Service and Learning

Tell Your Colleagues!!! Great opportunity to connect the social and environmental values of the Cesar Chavez to Return of the Native's community based restoration projects. Join other teachers on Saturday, March 24 from 9-4 (at soon to be determined Salinas site) for a dynamic



value laden workshop experience. Workshop participants will be paid a stipend of \$300 for attendance on the 24th and on a May 16 follow-up. In addition participants are required to implement a Cesar Chavez based service curriculum before May 16. In addition to the stipend, participants receive an activities binder, two books of their choice on service, and eligibility to receive a free school bus to a service event in their community. Registration will be limited to 25 teachers and after-school coordinators and will be on a first-come first serve basis. To receive an application by e.mail or fax contact Brenda Valles at 582-3644 or brenda_valles@monterey.edu

Special Planting and Restoration Events

Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning **Saturday, March 31-** 10 am-2pm -Cesar Chavez Park, Salinas

Cesar Chavez/Earth Day for Schools—Thursday, **April 19** 9:30-1:30 Natividad Creek Park, Salinas

Cesar Chavez/Earth Day for Families and the Community—**Saturday, April 21** 9:30-2:00 Natividad Creek Park, Salinas

If it's a school day bring your class, if it's a Saturday, encourage your kids and their families to attend these days of environmental service, learning, and celebration in Salinas' community parks.

Calling all Toddlers and their Parents

Last Ft. Ord Planting- Sunday-March 11 10am-2 pm featuring music for young planters and all who are young at heart. Snacks provided.

For more information and directions to these events call the RON event hotline at 582-3689 immediately before.

Ft. Ord Plantings Recap and Future

We are just now finishing the last of our Ft. Ord 2000-2001 rainy season plantings. All told we will have sponsored 5 Saturday plantings and 8 school day plantings with over 24,000 plants being outplanted onto Ft. Ord's eroded slopes. This year we tackled some really large sites which took several days to complete. Special commendations go out to our BLM partners who prepared the sites with heavy equipment prior to our even arriving out there. Coordinating all these plants, school groups, and Saturday musicians were RON staff members Drew Ready (Project Coordinator), Bree Candiloro (Greenhouse Mom for our 15 school greenhouses), Christina Hurley (CSUMB Greenhouse Coordinator), with assistance from CSUMB students Peter Nelson, Roberto Chavez, and Julia Alpers, and of course the wonderful crew of Sue Shaw. This year's plantings which include seed collecting, greenhouse propagation, site preparation, and ultimately the joyous act of planting were funded by the BLM, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, CSUMB Academic Affairs (for music), the Coast Weekly fund, Chevron, and the McMahan Foundation

Planning for the year 2001-2002 planting season is now well underway and RON is

fortunate enough to have funding for what may be a final year from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. In this next rainy season we will of course be propagating plants in school greenhouses and at CSUMB, and outplanting on Ft. Ord. In addition we will be focusing our research efforts around looking at species survivability and at the amount of plant cover established by the restored plants. We are excited to have ecologist Shirley Tudor heading up our research program. Shirley will be working with CSUMB students and BLM and RON staff to make sense of the data which we are now generating on the study plots which we have established over the past few years on each of our restoration sites. Shirley hopes that what we are learning about the restoration of maritime chaparral plant communities will be useful for other land managers and restorationists here in CA. It is our intent that the restoration data will be up on our website in months to come.

Adopt-A-Watershed and RON—A Special Note from RON Director, Laura Lee Lienk

For the past four years RON has been working with Adopt-A-Watershed (AAW) attempting to introduce AAW into local schools and districts.

Through the years it has become evident that a school does not need to officially adopt the AAW curriculum but in essence must embrace the following five elements:

1. Using local environment as a place for learning
2. Partnering with agencies Planning and Researching needs with the partners. Monitoring projects
3. Engaging in a restoration project over a long period of time.
4. Reflecting on the learning
5. Communicating the project with others

RON now looks to all our projects to see if we are meeting all the five elements. And, more so, we are trying to focus our teacher training efforts so that they support one of the elements. That is why we have chosen to offer River of Words, Project Learning Tree, GLOBE, and AAW teacher trainings in the past. We are excited that the Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning Workshops mentioned earlier in this newsletter incorporate the five elements and feature as examples RON habitat restoration projects. Through the partnerships of AAW and Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning, RON hopes to involve more classrooms in hands-on habitat restoration projects. Interested in AAW and your school—contact Laura Lee at 582-3689.

WEED WARRIORS present series “Landowners as Landmanagers”

From March 3 through April 7 join Weed Warriors, Janice Jones, Jon Detka, and Thor Anderson for a Saturday Series of Field Seminars/Weed Bashes at various sites in the Toro Creek Watershed. These 9 am-12 noon sessions will take place at the end of Harper Canyon Road, on BLM land near Toro Creek, and on several private land-owners properties. Everyone is welcome to come and learn how to manage your own property in an ecologically sound manner. Call the RON hotline at 582-3689 for exact locations. This Weed Warrior program is being sponsored by a grant to the Monterey County Ag Commissioners Office through CA State Assembly Bill 1168.

RESTORATION CYCLE

The new RON curriculum, the Restoration Cycle, developed and piloted by Weed Warrior, Jon Detka, is to be featured on the website of the National BLM. Jon, a CSUMB senior is using the curriculum, as the focus of his senior capstone. The curriculum which features 8 native plant/exotic weed lessons is tied to the California Standards. Special thanks to Chase Jones of the BLM who has field tested many of the

activities with groups visiting Ft. Ord, and Linda Kamrath and her 6th grade class at Laurelwood Elementary School who have also tested many of the lessons while adopting an area of Ft. Ord near Toro Creek (they take MST busses directly to the site).

FORUM ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES in TORO CREEK WATERSHED

Thursday, April 5 5:30-7:00pm at Toro Park Elementary School on Portola Drive (off Hwy 68). Join Watershed Institute scientist, Bob Curry, and a panel of local experts for a discussion on environmental issues in the watershed.

RON goes to the Beach

Next rainy season RON will be bringing our school classes to the Moss Landing Dunes in (access from Sandholt Rd, Moss Landing) to continue the volunteer restoration initiated by Sue Shaw and Peter Slattery of Moss Landing Marine Labs. For the first time RON school greenhouses will be propagating dune plants for outplanting by the schools. While on the dunes, students will also, be pulling iceplant. This project is being done in partnership with California State Parks with funding from the Whale Tail Grant Program of the California Coastal Commission.

Lower Natividad Creek Park Moving Along

The City of Salinas is spearheading the restoration of what we are now calling Lower Natividad Creek Park off of Laurel Drive—near the standing water area which we now call Laurel Lake. The City has contracted Landscape Architect, Joni Janecki and Civil Engineer, Peter Hass to do the planning which will include sculpting with heavy machinery additional wetlands, wildlife islands, a bike trail, and bridge (similar to those in the upper park) to cross the creek. RON has applied for funding to permit us to start returning native plants to the site as early as the next rainy season. It will be great to move down the watershed toward Carr Lake.

CARR LAKE update

The Watershed Institute in partnership with the Monterey County Water Resources Agency and the City of Salinas are submitting grants for Proposition 12 and 13 funds (Parks and Water bonds) for the planning, acquisition, and restoration of Carr Lake for flood control, habitat enhancement, water quality enhancement, and parkland establishment purposes. This will be a long, arduous, and costly process but will be a major part in fulfilling RON's dream of creating a restored creek channel with accompanying bike and hiking trail from the

foot of the Gabilan Mountains to the Pacific at Moss Landing.

CSUMB Service Learning Students work in the community.

Students in Laura Lee's Community Based Restoration class have a diversity of placements this year. Jackie Shick is working with Peter Moras at Kamman Elementary in reestablishing what was one of RON's earliest school gardens in the early 1990's (thank you Peter and welcome back from India). Students, Edwin Dean and Alicia Glass are working with Debbie Delatour and the RISE afterschool program while Jeff Summers and Stacy Miller are working with Abra Tockerman's 6th grade earth science classes at King Middle School. Finally, Marie Corwin works every Wednesday at the Watershed Institute greenhouse with **THE GREEN THUMBS**, the loyal group of developmentally disabled gardeners from the Gateway Centers.

A Native Garden or Greenhouse -- At Your School Site???

If you are thinking about having a native garden or school greenhouse at your school site, now is the time to start planning. It is the time to convince the "powers that be" and your school colleagues this is what you want and that

you are committed to making it happen and maintaining them for many years to come. You must lay the ground-work now and get the buy-in. For garden assistance --from February to May a CSUMB Service Learning student could be sent to work with you and your students in implementing your plans. For gardens schools must make a commitment to contribute up to \$500 toward the purchase of plants, soils, and supplies. RON school greenhouses can be built at any time and cost about \$2,000 including installation and materials.

RON Greenhouses Growing Vegetable Starts

Five of RON's school greenhouses are not empty this spring—rather they are bursting at the seams with vegetable starts that the students are growing for organic farmers for the Rural Development Center. Later in the students will go to the RDC to help plant and weed "their" crop. This program is coordinated by CSUMB graduate Christy Cassel who is working with CSUMB's Dr. Hester Parker. Participating schools include: Los Arboles and Harden Middle Schools, Natividad Elem., Boronda Elem, and North Monterey County High School

Water Quality Monitoring Snapshot Day – April 21:
contact:
bhoover@monitoringnetwork.org

YESS Team Heads Weekend Programs in Natividad Creek Park March 10 - May 5 All Invited to Work

From 9-12 every Saturday morning, RON's YESS (Youth Environmental Services to Salinas) team will be meeting to do service in the park. *Families, individuals, community groups and students needing community service hours are encouraged to come and work with the team.* Special dates include: March 17-Bug Day, March 24-Feathers and Frogs, April 8-Weeds, April 14-Art in the Park, April 28-Seed Giveaway, May 5 Native Plants/Native Peoples. Call Bree at 582-3687 to register your group.

Alert!!! High School Teachers

On May 12, 2001, the 7th Annual Symposium in Habitat Restoration for High School Students and Teachers will be held at CSUMB. This ever popular symposium features CSUMB students as speakers, a free lunch, and action packed afternoon field trips. The event is free to all attending but is limited to 100 student participants. Free transportation from Salinas and MPUSD is available. Notices will go out in late March. This is a great extra credit opportunity.