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## **Quarter 1: July 2022 -September 2022 SCWA Program Updates**

### **1. OneCreek Putah Creek Seasonal Restoration Technician Program**

PCC staff has planned, initiated, and coordinated the OneCreek program during this quarter, for a start date of October 3, 2022. We received 46 applications from applicants from a variety of backgrounds, including applicants who are interested in a career change to the conservation and restoration fields, and selected 9 highly interested applicants. A majority of applicants were current students or recent graduates of UC Davis.

Staff time was spent:

- Arranging partnerships and scheduling work days with local agencies including SCWA, Solano RCD, Solano County Parks, the Center for Land Based Learning, the Haagen Daz Bee Garden, the UC Davis Reserve System, and the UC Davis Riparian Reserve.
- Advertising the program and recruiting applicants by emailing college advisors in Solano, Yolo, and Sacramento counties, press release, and posting on local job boards
- Reviewing applications, interviewing, hiring and coordinating scheduling with applicants
- Researching and compiling program materials including relevant readings and a reporting assignment that will help them build real-life work skills.

The planned work days include:

- Garden maintenance at the Haagen Daz Bee Garden
- Nursery work days which will include plant propagation, and seed collecting and processing
- Hedgerow and bird box maintenance at the Center for Land Based Learning
- Tree of heaven control and restoration site maintenance at the Putah Creek Riparian Reserve
- Trail rehabilitation and building with Lake Solano Park and the UC Davis Reserve system
- Hedgerow installation preparation at Lake Solano Park
- Hedgerow plant installation at Sackett Ranch

## 2. Creek Explorers (WaterWays Program Update for 2022-2023)

Due to lingering difficulties in facilitating school field trips, PCC has adapted the WaterWays program into a family water education program for 2022-2023 called Creek Explorers. Creek Explorers consists of two main components to help reach families throughout Solano County: the Creek Explorer Adventure Guide, which is an interactive activity guide that helps children and families explore water, and Creek Explorers Field Days, which are 20 Saturday events running from September 2022- June 2023. The goal of the program is to reach Solano County families with the same water conservation and watershed protection messaging from WaterWays, and to continue to connect families in the county to where their drinking water comes from. Special efforts were made to reach as much of Solano County as possible, and to make the program inclusive by offering program and advertising materials in both Spanish and English.

### **Creek Explorer Adventure Guide:**

PCC Staff developed and designed an 8 page half sheet booklet with three activities like building a watershed to explore how water moves over a landscape, going on a walk to find water in their neighborhood, and tracking their water use for a day to discover how much they use and how they can save. The booklet also includes a schedule of the 20 field days. PCC staff conducted outreach to schools and teachers that had participated or expressed interest in WaterWays in the past 4 years, to help maintain a connection with those schools, and distributed the Adventure Guides and Field Day Fliers digitally or physically to 4 schools in Solano County, 2 schools in Winters, and 1 school in Davis.

Staff also reached out to the Solano County library system and the Solano County Parks. The Adventure Guides are available to pick up for free by families at the 9 Solano County libraries and 2 county parks, and are available in both Spanish and English. In total PCC has so far distributed about 1,500 Adventure Guides. By distributing the adventure guide to all parts of



## **Creek Explorer**



## **Adventure Guide**



*Above: The front cover of the Creek Explorer Adventure Guide*

Solano County, PCC ensured that the field days were advertised to a large geographical area in Solano County, and also helped create a connection with areas of the county that are geographically far from Lake Solano, and would be less likely to attend a field day.

Staff time was spent:

- Writing and designing the booklet
- Coordinating with the printer
- Communicating with teachers and other distribution partners
- Distributing the booklet
- Creating a website page to house Creek Explorers program information including pickup locations, a digital copy of the Adventure Guide, and field day event information.

### **Creek Explorers Field Days:**

PCC staff planned 20 family field days at Lake Solano Park during this quarter, which will run on Saturdays from 9 am-12 pm from September 2022 to June 2023. Each field day consists of 3-5 free-form activities aligned to a specific topic that is related to water quality, conservation, and appreciation, and runs concurrently with a volunteer stewardship event at Lake Solano Park or Sackett Ranch. There are 10 topics which will each repeat twice, once in the fall and once in the spring. PCC held two field days in September entitled Use your Senses, and Water Engineers. Attendance:

- Use your Senses 9/10: 5 participants and 4 volunteers for the stewardship event who pulled bermuda grass around tree plantings, and collected alder seeds.
- Water Engineers 9/24: 23 participants with a wide variety of ages including adults, teenagers, preschool, and elementary age children.

PCC staff was able to have valuable conversations with parents and other adults visiting the park about the creek, where their water comes from, about the Monticello and Diversion dams, and about how water must be treated before people can drink it. Many participants expressed appreciation for the program and for the giveaways including a badge related to the topic of the day, and a small nature journal.



Above: Creek Explorers Field Days were advertised on Instagram and at outreach events.



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Field Days are advertised in the Adventure Guides that were distributed throughout Solano County, on PCC's website and social media, in PCC's E- Newsletter, in fliers posted throughout the day use and campground of Lake Solano Park, at the Winters library, and at several outreach events in September including Genentec's Eco Fair and the Winters Carnitas Festival.

Staff time was spent:

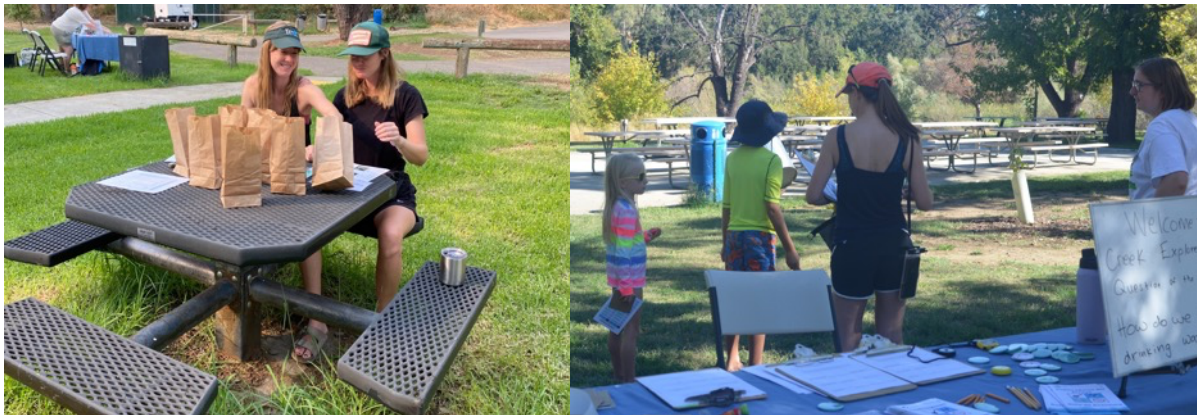
- Managing communications and relationships with local teachers
- Developing the content and activities of each field day
- Researching and adapting activities
- Designing program materials like worksheets, activity instructions sheets, and signs and organizing program supplies
- Managing program logistics including scheduling events
- Developing advertising materials like a flier, a banner, social media posts, and a webpage.
- Advertising the field days on social media, through direct emails to teachers and schools, in emails to PCC's subscriber base, and at outreach events.

Challenges/Obstacles:

About half of the teachers that PCC contacted about interest in Creek Explorers responded. PCC staff will make an effort to contact other schools, and to also reach out again to those teachers that did not respond, as the field day events repeat from March to June 2022. Teachers have expressed interest in field trips or classroom visits, so time will be spent to determine whether this can be successfully implemented in the next fiscal year. The attendance at the park is very variable depending on the weather and events that are happening that weekend. We have also found that many families are busy with soccer on Saturday mornings, so we believe attendance will pick up once the youth soccer season starts to wane.



*Left: A Creek Explorers Field Day participant builds a dam at the Water Engineers event. Right: A family builds a water filter to filter water at the same event.*



*Right: Participants test their senses of smell and feel at the Use your Senses Field Day. Right: PCC staff describe how to measure the speed of the creek on the Water Engineers event day.*

### 3. Stewardship Volunteer Events





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In August and September, PCC held five Saturday stewardship workdays, including Coastal Cleanup Day (see section 4). A total of 42 volunteers attended Saturday workdays in these two months. Volunteers have mostly been from Winters, Davis, Vacaville, Dixon, and Woodland, although some have driven from Sutter and the Sacramento area to volunteer with us.

Activities included:

- Weeding and mulching the native plant hedgerow along Sackett Lane
- Collecting thistle heads near the Winters Nature Park footbridge (Phase One)
- Weeding and mulching tree plantings on the day use side of Lake Solano Park
- Seed collection in Lake Solano Park (box elder, white alder, and valley oak)

Staff time was spent:

- Gaining familiarity of PCC work sites and assessing work to be done
- Planning workdays and developing projects for each event
- Managing program logistics including scheduling events
- Communicating with partners at Lake Solano Park and SCWA to best use volunteer efforts to meet park and management goals
- Creating registration forms and publishing events on the PCC website
- Promoting volunteer opportunities on social media, via email, by physical fliers, and at outreach events
- Designing promotional materials like graphics, fliers, social media posts, and emails
- Maintaining and organizing tools, equipment, and supplies
- Coordinating with volunteers, partners, and Stewardship Team members to handle logistics of each event
- Meeting with partners (e.g. SCWA, Solano RCD, Solano County Parks, UC Davis Riparian Reserve, Yolo RCD, YCCP) to plan and discuss future event possibilities

Challenges and obstacles:

We had to cancel two workdays, on August 27 and September 3, due to the heat and low numbers of pre-registrations (likely also due to the heat). Event attendance has also been variable but increasing as we reestablish our social media presence and rebuild connections with local volunteer groups, high schools, Rotary clubs, and other community members.

4. Creek Cleanup



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Throughout the months of July and August, PCC worked to plan the California Coastal Cleanup Day that happened on September 17th, 2022 from 9 AM to 12 PM. Staff time was spent coordinating event logistics, contacting partners with the cities of Winter and Davis, and meeting with Coastal Commission representatives to collect supplies and learn about event protocols. Staff also created outreach materials and advertisements to engage volunteers and Stewardship Team members including social media posts to PCC's Instagram, made social media stories encouraging people to sign-up, sent email communications to subscribers and through partner email lists, and made announcements on PCC's monthly newsletters. Staff time was also spent engaging our Stewardship Team to help run the event.

Working with the City of Winters, City of Davis, Yolo Landfill, and Waste Management, PCC selected two sites for the cleanups: Winters Nature Park including Putah Creek Road (section above Winters Nature Park), and City of Davis South Fork Preserve. The following describe the results of the events and volunteer participation:

- Winters Nature Park and Putah Creek Road: 13 volunteers picked up 235 lbs of trash and 33 lbs of recyclables.
- City of Davis South Fork Preserve: 25 volunteers picked up 337 lbs of trash and 43 lbs of recyclables.
- Five Stewardship Team members attended to assist in guiding volunteers, collecting trash, and sorting.

Going forward, Putah Creek Council will continue a monthly cleanup at Winters Putah Creek Nature Park and along Putah Creek Road giving volunteers an opportunity to help keep the parkway clean. These cleanups will be held from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on weekdays (usually the third Thursday of the month). We are also planning to do another Saturday cleanup on April 22 for Earth Day (locations TBD).

#### Challenges/Obstacles:

The major obstacle that came up this year was the logistics in removing the collected trash from South Fork Preserve. At Winters Nature Park, John McNerney with the city of Davis helped coordinate a dumpster drop-off from Waste Management which went smoothly. However, at the city of Davis we planned for the city to drop off a trailer which we could load all of the trash onto and they would remove the following Monday. When we arrived for the cleanup, the trailer was not there. We aren't sure exactly where this breakdown in communication happened but we decided to load the trash onto one of our Stewardship Team members, Rick Hein's, truck and take it directly to the Yolo Landfill. When we arrived at the Landfill, we found out that we were not authorized to use the City of Davis' account and that our non-profit fee waiver account had



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lapsed with the new fiscal year that began in July. We ended up paying \$12 for the drop-off and have since applied to renew our non-profit fee waiver status with the Landfill to prevent future issues. We also will be bringing the PCC truck with us on our future cleanups to avoid using a volunteer's personal vehicle to transport waste.



*Winters Putah Creek Nature Park event staff and volunteers after the cleanup.*



*Davis South Fork Preserve event staff and volunteers after the cleanup with some of the trash collected.*





*Putah Creek Council Education Manager Lauren Bradt setting up the burrito lunch for the volunteers.*

### 5. Project Planning

A new Stewardship Manager was hired in August and started planning for Winters Putah Creek Nature Park, Sackett Ranch, and Nishikawa.

Planning for Winters Putah Creek Nature Park included working with the city to determine what could be done to support rehabilitation of the Extension garden, working with Duc Jones and Miles Daprato to identify stewardship opportunities, weeding and planting needs. There is potential to look for grant funding in the future to support more weed control, plantings, and other elements originally planned by the City for the park.

Planning for Sackett Ranch included meeting with Duc Jones, Rich Marovich, and Miles Daprato to discuss what is wanted by SCWA, what is possible, and approaches to potential project elements. Future meetings will be set up with Solano RCD and Melanie Truan to help plan a pollinator garden and other planting assemblages. There is potential to partner with SRCD on a pollinator gardening grant they are expecting in November.

A draft plan has been written for Sackett Ranch, breaking it up into three phases, the floodplain, the island, and the tributary. This draft is 70% complete and incorporates many protocols from the PEIR and other appropriate documents. Great care is being taken to provide the greatest diversity of wildlife habitat while taking into consideration fire and other climate pressures and landowner preferences for the site.



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A planting plan for the Nishikawa project was started and should be completed for SCWA by the end of October. This plan will include planting maps, locations, and types, and general protocols including maintenance and monitoring. These protocols were also taken directly from the PEIR.