

Quarter 4: April-June 2023 SCWA Program Updates

OneCreek

In the fourth quarter, the OneCreek Seasonal Restoration Technician program ran from April 5th to June 2nd 2023. OneCreekers and PCC staff carried out the following field activities:

- **UC Davis Riparian Reserve Workdays with Miles Daprato, Environmental Steward:** Spot planting with milkweed seed, hand fertilizing natives, and checking irrigation.
- **Lake Solano County Park and Nature Center with Chris Drake:** Established a variety of new native perennials including 20 coyote mint, 20 yarrow, 20 gumplant, 20 goldentop, 20 aster, and 20 wooly sunflower with compost and mulch to front bed of Nature Center and planted around 39 mugwort plants to close off a trail near park entrance.
- **Peterson Ranch with Solano County Water Agency:**
 - Day 1: Planted natives at Peterson Ranch with PCC Stewardship staff and volunteers. In total, 3620 plants including 400 yarrow, 100 narrow leaf milkweed, 400 wooly sunflower, 400 gumplant, 400 coyote mint, 400 primrose, 360 california buckwheat, 600 mugwort, and 200 goldentop.
 - Day 2: Planted a mix of natives to establish a hedgerow
- **Center for Land Based Learning Hedgerow Workday with Yolo RCD:** Hedgerow maintenance: pulling broadleaf weeds by hand, hand pruners, or hoes and checking and repairing irrigation while learning how to use irrigation repair tools.
- **Solano RCD with Beck Vanderstoel and John Woodruff**
 - Day 1: SRCD Nursery Project. The team completed 24.5 baskets of 36 willow cuttings each (*salix lasiolepis*, *laevigata*, *gooddingii*), 6 baskets of 30 unpotted plants (*Eriophyllum lanatum*, *Euthamia occidentalis*, *Symphotrichum chilense*, *Montardella villosa*, *Phacelia californica*, *Verbena lasiostachys*), and 14 flats sown of yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
 - Day 2: Restoration Field Project @ Midway/Pitt School Rd. The team removed prickly lettuce and other invasives from the newly seeded field.

- **City of Davis South Fork Preserve with Chris Gardner, Open Spaces Lands Manager:**Public trail maintenance and vegetation control
- **Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve with Paul Havemann:**Public trail maintenance and berm repair

Putah Creek Nursery activities with our Spring 2023 OneCreek group consisted of:

- ***Plant ID and seed collection-*** OneCreekers learned about local native plants with educational materials, paired with a native plant walk at Sackett Ranch
- ***Seeding-*** OneCreekers learned to sow seeds of a variety species of forbs, shrubs, and trees in plug or freeform trays. This process involved learning how to sanitize seeds, fill trays to an appropriate level, and fully cover sewn seeds with a dusting of soilless media and vermiculite.
- ***Transplanting-*** OneCreekers learned the importance of up-potting nursery stock - an essential Spring nursery task - and how to properly care and transplant seedlings. These plants will be ready for projects in the fall.



5/24/2023: OneCreek team providing trail maintenance to the UC Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve.



May 10, 2023: OneCreek technicians installing plants in the Peterson Ranch Hedgerow.



OneCreekers working with Solano RCD to remove invasive prickly lettuce from a recently restored field.

Education and Stewardship

The Education and Stewardship program (formerly WaterWays), combines hands-on watershed education for younger kids with public creek stewardship events and planning efforts focused on Sackett Ranch as well as the watershed as a whole.

Creek Explorers

PCC's new Education Program Manager, Brenda Brinkhous-Hatch, started on April 10, 2023. Creek Explorers at Lake Solano Park resumed on April 15, 2023. Unfortunately, attendance was low throughout the remaining sessions this spring. However, Brenda reformatted the program into a summer series focusing on the wildlife of Putah Creek specifically for area libraries. There are eight total sessions and each week they are facilitated by the Education Program Manager in Winters, Davis, Woodland and Esparto. So far, attendance has been strong and many participants are coming back each week on a regular basis. Total attendance numbers each week from all four libraries average 110-120 participants. Our plan moving forward is to continue to develop more family-friendly youth programming throughout the school year that will be hosted at four Yolo libraries (Winters, Davis, Woodland, Esparto) and two Solano libraries (Dixon and Vacaville.)



Creek Explorers: Education Program Manager, Brenda Brinkhous-Hatch, leads the first Creature Feature youth program @ Woodland Library on June 12th with 87 participants in attendance.

Planning

The Stewardship Program Manager paused looking into grant opportunities for Sackett Ranch and other potential Putah Creek projects as site plans and grant application deadlines didn't line up for the 22-23 fiscal year. This effort will continue during the first two quarters of 23-24. The Sackett Ranch Restoration Plan Draft is near completion.. There are a few loose ends to tie up before it will be ready for review by SCWA.

SCWA Contract #FY21/22-9 Putah Creek Education, Outreach, and Stewardship

Staff time was spent conducting planning meetings for the Sackett Ranch project plan, gathering research and data for, and updating the plan. Time was also spent preparing for an extensive plant survey.

Challenges: Grant application availability and projects don't line up for completion by June, 2023. Delays carried over from previous staff shortages.

Stewardship Events

There were six SCWA-funded Stewardship events held during Quarter 4. Staff time was spent coordinating with nursery staff and staff of partner organizations to schedule stewardship days, managing volunteer signups, cleaning, organizing, ordering, and caring for supplies and tools, attending workdays, taking and organizing photos, advertising stewardship days, and writing stewardship updates for PCC's newsletter.

- April 7, 2023: One volunteer, five SCWA employees, three PCC staff, and 8 OneCreek technicians planted 3260 plugs at Peterson Ranch, including 400 yarrow, 100 narrow leaf milkweed, 400 wooly sunflower, 400 gumplant, 400 coyote mint, 400 evening primrose, 360 buckwheat.
- April 13, 2023: One PCC staff and 22 SLEWS mentors, teachers, and students planted 102 plants, created berms, and laid mulch at Winters Nature Park Phase 3 South. Plantings included 11 boxes of Santa Barbara sedge, 20 mugwort, 20 California rose, 20 gumplant, 11 dogbane hemp, and 20 streambank sunflower.
- May 10, 2023: Stewardship member Rick Hein and Stewardship Coordinator Rachel Snodgrass joined OneCreekers and SCWA staff for the hedgerow planting at Peterson Ranch.
- May 20, 2023: Two PCC staff members, one SRCD employee, and 4 volunteers weeded around tree and shrub plantings, and installed protection from deer including tubes and caging at Lake Solano Park campground. Tubex was installed around 15-20 shrubs, cages were installed around 25 shrubs, and approximately 50 shrubs and trees were weeded.
- June 10, 2023: One PCC staff member, one SCWA employee, and 6 volunteers (including one Stewardship Team member) planted trees and shrubs at the Peterson Ranch hedgerow along the highway. There were 20 oak trees, 155 toyons, and 1 coyote bush planted.
- June 24, 2023: Two PCC staff members and seven volunteers (including one stewardship team member) weeded vetch, yellow starthistle, and hog clover, planted 60 container stock, and installed emitters into the native plant garden behind the Nature Center at Lake Solano Park. Plantings included 2 bush lupine, 2 gum plant, 2 phacelia, 8 California aster, 8 milkweed, 8 Hooker's evening primrose, 8 yarrow, 8 deer grass, and 8 wooly sunflowers.



6/10/23: A volunteer installing toyon shrubs at the Peterson Ranch Hedgerow.



Volunteers pose in the native plant garden at Lake Solano Park on 6/24/23. L-R: Sammy (Solano RCD), Zach (Yolo RCD GrizzlyCorps), Rachel (PCC), Michael (PCC Stewardship Team) Janet, Vanessa, and Erica. Photo by Michaila Collins.

Challenges: Deer have been browsing on toyon in the Lake Solano Park campground, so we helped install cages to protect the plants from browsing.

Creek Cleanups

PCC held three separate community creek cleanups on Earth Day, April 22, 2023. The cleanups took place at three locations, Winters Nature Park (including Putah Creek Road), UCD Riparian Reserve: Levee Road trailhead, and UCD Riparian Reserve: Old Davis Road trailhead. The assumed weight of 1 bag was approximately 10 lbs, and there were 94 bags total = 940 pounds, plus the weight of metal, etc, for over 1,000 pounds of trash collected! Staff time was spent attending the cleanups, preparing for and advertising the events, and disposing of waste collected. At each site, a free lunch was provided to volunteers after the cleanup.

- Winters Nature Park (including Putah Creek Road): One PCC staff member and 18 volunteers collected 35 trash bags, 1 recycle bag, 1 metal bed frame, assorted metal, bedding, and 2 tires.
- UCD Riparian Reserve: Levee Road trailhead: Three staff members and 41 volunteers collected trash at this site.
- UCD Riparian Reserve: Old Davis Road trailhead: Two staff members and 24 volunteers collected trash at this site.
- The two UCD Riparian Reserve sites combined collected 58 bags of trash, 9 tires, various scrap metal and plastic.



Winters Putah Creek Nature Park Creek Cleanup crew on Earth Day 2023.



Volunteers pose after the Earth Day Cleanup at the Old Davis Road trailhead (4/22/23).

Challenges: We are implementing several strategies to boost creek cleanup attendance, which has been excellent at larger cleanup events such as Earth Day and Coastal Cleanup Day, but low at monthly cleanups in Winters Nature Park. We are transitioning from small monthly cleanups in Winters Nature Park to four larger cleanups throughout the year with a free lunch afterwards and spending more staff time promoting each event. We will hold the next cleanup in July, then Coastal Cleanup Day in September, a cleanup in January, and the Earth Day Cleanup in April. We are implementing new promotion strategies including hanging up more physical flyers around Davis and Winters and advertising in the Winters Express and Davis Enterprise.