

Seasons

INLAND EMPIRE



RESOURCE

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

FALL CLEAN-UPS

Under the direction of the Inland Empire Utilities Agency, the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District recently planned and executed two successful clean-ups in the city of Chino. Utilizing grant money from the California State Water Resources Control Board, the IERCD planned two separate clean-up events; the smaller of the two took place at Chino-Corona road where it intersects Mill Creek, while the larger clean-up took place at El Prado road, south of Flower Street, where it intersects Chino Creek.

Approximately 25 employees from a variety of Santa Ana Watershed agencies participated in the first clean-up. The Chino-Corona road site that was targeted for this clean-up is one of many illegal dumping sites in the area, and as a result, it was heavily polluted with several different types of garbage, including cement, bricks, roofing tiles, toys, shoes,

and clothes. Event volunteers sorted trash into categories including green waste, recyclables, and regular garbage; the smaller pieces of trash were put into garbage bags and tossed into dumpsters, while the more cumbersome items were picked up by tractors for placement into the appropriate bins. The IERCD was fortunate enough to have the assistance of tractors and work crews from the Army Corps of Engineers, Viramontes Express, and Responsive Pest Work in addition to the other volunteers, which made the process of removing waste from the clean-up site much more efficient than doing it only by hand.

A total of ten 40-yard roll off trash bins and one 10-yard low boy container were filled during this clean-up, with the final estimate of total trash removed being between 55 and 65 tons. There was also a large amount of trash put into

recycling or green waste centers, to be re-used rather than added to a landfill. All clean-up volunteers received lunch and raffle prizes. The area has now been bermed to eliminate access in order to prevent future dumping at this location.

The second clean-up was a larger event, with over 140 volunteers drawn from local high schools, service clubs, and the general community. The process of removing trash from this site, also the location of much illegal dumping, was similar to that of the smaller agency clean-up; volunteers sorted trash into piles depending on waste type, then picked up the smaller pieces and left the larger items to be collected by tractors. A total of nine 40-yard roll off trash bins and three 10-yard low boy bins were used to remove

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The Santa Ana River Walk

The California floristic province region of the United States is known as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, which according to Conservation International, makes it "...[one of the] richest and most threatened reservoirs of plant and animal life on earth." Part of this threat lies in the fact that many species in this region exist only in southern California, one of the fastest-growing areas of the country where native habitat is rapidly disappearing as a result of urban sprawl.

One regional species currently in decline is the Santa Ana sucker, a small fish endemic to three major linear water bodies in the area, including the Santa Ana River where it once thrived. The sucker requires gravel to both spawn and forage for food, and this habitat has become rarer in the increasingly concrete-lined urban reaches and finely-sedimented upper reaches of the Santa Ana River. One of the main challenges to increasing the success of the Santa Ana sucker is measuring the availability of and attempting to increase the presence of gravel in the river. The virtual absence of this substrate from several large stretches of river bottom is one of the reasons it has been listed as federally threatened since 2000.

There are several conservation organizations currently working to try and resuscitate the ailing sucker population, one of which is the Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team. This organization puts on the annual "Santa Ana Riverwalk," which focuses on data gathering in the river in an attempt to quantify remaining quality sucker habitat. This event is currently in its third year and encourages employees from area non-profits, special districts, and educational institutions to gather for the purposes of data collection within the river. All participants split up into teams of 3-4 and travel between predetermined GPS points, collecting data including river height and width, sediment type present, and percentage of vegetation on river banks.

For the 2008 Riverwalk, over 30 participants from organizations including the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Orange County Water District traveled along the Santa Ana River, taking measurements and photos for the purposes of cataloging existing sucker habitat. The data collected was turned over to the Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team, who will now use it to determine and understand the trends occurring in the river. The health and survival of the Santa Ana sucker depends on it.



Santa Ana River

Free Education Programs!

IERCDC offers free educational programs to all schools and organizations within the district. We offer science based programs in Backyard Conservation, Storm Water pollution, Toil of Soil, Trees Please, and Water Use Efficiency, our newest program. Water Use Efficiency is an interactive program that teaches kids about the importance of water and ways to conserve it. Our Conservation Educator will come to your school or event and provide all handouts, materials, and hands-on activities for you and your students. If you are interested in scheduling a program, please contact our Conservation Educator at (909) 799-7407, ext 107 or at education@iercd.org

NEW IERCDC BOARD PRESIDENT

The IERCDC would like to announce the election of Paul Williams to the position of President of the Board of Directors. Paul has served as a board member for the past six years, and most recently held the position of vice-president. A resident of Alta Loma since 1947, Paul serves on the boards of other area conservation organizations in addition to the IERCDC; among others, these include the Etiwanda Preserve Commission and the Southern California Resource Conservation and Development Council.

Paul served in the US Air Force from 1957 until 1961, followed by a 32-year career with the Southern California Gas Company in a variety of positions including engineer/division planner. Currently, Paul works as the owner/operator of W W Restoration. He has been married since 1960 to Diane Williams, a Rancho Cucamonga city councilwoman, with whom he has two children. In the hours that Paul is not working or dedicating his time to conservation, he enjoys running, cycling, stream fishing, and hiking.

VERMONT PARENT UNIVERSITY

In July of this year, IERCD began participating in “Vermont Parent University,” an experimental parent education program on the campus of Vermont elementary school in San Bernardino. The inspiration for the Vermont Parent University program, also referred to as “VPU,” was the recognition by school staff that student success is based on a variety of factors aside from what occurs in classrooms. Parent and guardian involvement in homework, nutrition, and encouraging healthy peer relationships is also critical for students to truly thrive in their academic environments. Using staff creativity and experience, the administration at the school began planning for the program, and in August of this year, the first Vermont Parent University was held.

In order for parents to take full advantage of the educational opportunities being offered through VPU, staff at Vermont elementary school realized that free childcare must be offered; for this reason, IERCD staff were contacted and asked to contribute to this portion of the program. For each monthly VPU session, IERCD staff design and implement educational programs for approximately 100 students divided by grade level into three childcare classrooms. Each month features a handful of environmentally conscious educational activities consistent with state standards; for each of these, IERCD provides all necessary supplies, including one instructor for each classroom of students. In the past few sessions, staff members from both the Santa Ana Watershed Association and interns from the Water Resources Institute at California State University have lent their support to IERCD and Vermont elementary school by acting as classroom instructors for the program. Following the childcare and parent-education portions of VPU, all participants enjoy a nutritionally balanced meal.

The IERCD has spent approximately 75 hours of staff time designing and implementing educational activities, as well as corresponding with school administrators to ensure seamless execution of the programs. There has also been a significant amount of time spent translating educational materials and presentations, since the primary language of many program participants is Spanish. IERCD will continue to participate in the Vermont Parent University program until its planned final date, which will be in May of 2009.

UPCOMING NATIVE PLANT SALES

Fall is the Perfect Time to Plant Your Natives!

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens Native Plant Sale	November 1-2. 11AM - 4PM Saturday, 9AM - 2PM Sunday	1500 North College Blvd, Claremont, Ca 91711
San Gabriel Mountains Native Plant Sale	November 15, 9 AM - 2 PM	Eaton Canyon Nature Center, 1750 Altadena Drive, Pasadena, Ca
California Native Plant Society, San Bernardino-Riverside Chapter	November 15, 9 AM - 3 PM	Riverside Metropolitan Museum 3580 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, Ca

Easy Tips for an Eco-Friendly Holiday Season

In considering the upcoming holidays, the task of practicing ecological habits amidst a sea of candy wrappers, plastic grocery bags, and endless rolls of wrapping paper can seem daunting. However, there are actually many ways to ensure that seasonal activities in the next few months do not negatively impact the environment. The following is a list of simple tips and tricks that can be easily adopted to ensure an environmentally-friendly holiday season.

- Re-use Halloween costumes or take them to a second-hand store.
- Buy locally grown produce for your Thanksgiving table.
- Utilize reusable bags for Halloween treats, Thanksgiving Day shopping and Christmas presents.
- Natural decorations give a festive feel. For example, decorate with pinecones and popcorn strings.
- Start a compost with leftover fruit and vegetables.
- Send eco-friendly greeting cards and gifts.
- Get creative when wrapping a gift. Use a basket, dishtowel or scarf instead of paper.
- Consider a Christmas tree that can be replanted.
- Purchase LED lights for decorating and turn lights off before bedtime.
- Give rechargeable batteries with your electronic gift.

We may not be able to do all the things listed above, but if everyone reading this column simply changes a few existing habits, we can make a difference!





RESOURCE

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Fall Clean-Ups

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trash from site using heavy machinery, while an additional five 40-yard roll off trash bins were filled. It is estimated that between 85 and 95 total tons of trash were removed from the site.

Tony's Famous French Dips of Pomona provided lunches for all volunteers, who were also treated to event t-shirts, REI giveaways, and a raffle. At the close of the event, the IERCD staff extended their thanks to all volunteers, as well as to all of the agencies who made the clean-up possible including the aforementioned donors of heavy equipment, as well as all of the organizations who donated raffle items for the volunteers. The Inland Empire Utilities Agency has bermed all access points to the site, and they are also currently in the process of installing surveillance cameras to assist in the prevention of illegal dumping. The presence of trash near waterways in the Santa Ana region is always dangerous as there is the constant possibility that it will wash into creeks, flow into the Santa Ana River, and ultimately end up in the ocean, which is why funding for trash removal remains a necessity.



Volunteers removing trash at Chino Creek