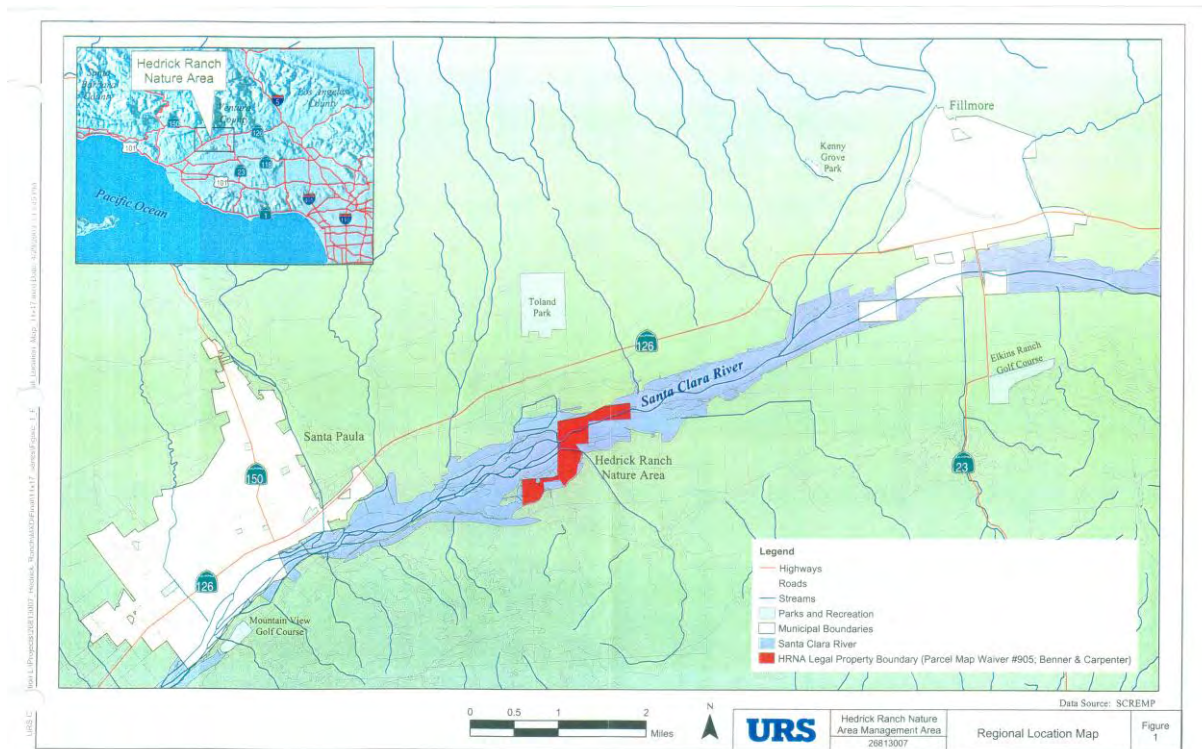


Restoration at the Hedrick Ranch Nature Area Volunteer/Stewardship Program and Information Kiosk Final Report

The goal of the Hedrick Ranch Nature Area (HRNA) Volunteer/Stewardship program was to involve, inform and educate the general public as to the restoration activities at the HRNA. Funding for this project was provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) from settlement claims for natural resource damages resulting from an ARCO pipeline oil spill into the Santa Clara River.

The HRNA is a 220± acre property located east of the city of Santa Paula, along the south side of the Santa Clara River (denoted in red on Figure 1, below). The property is owned by the non-profit Friends of the Santa Clara River (FSCR).



Project Description

The two principal components of this project were (1) to develop a volunteer and stewardship program and (2) to construct an information kiosk. A Volunteer Coordinator was hired to recruit a volunteer base and to develop a stewardship program for the HRNA. The volunteer group assisted with the restoration and monitoring activities of the Habitat Restoration project (a separate but related FWS grant, #G-016). The public was encouraged to participate in all phases of the restoration project, including weed eradication, installation of native plants, and on-going monitoring. Each of these phases utilized a variety of techniques, and the success of each was monitored for educational purposes. The kiosk serves as a central meeting place and display area, providing information about the Habitat Restoration project as well as information about the wildlife and plants found on the Ranch, and how the restoration effort are improving overall habitat quality for these species.

The project Volunteer Coordinator worked through local volunteers, school groups, service organizations and other non-profits to cultivate a conservation ethic through volunteer activities. These included a range of activities intended to extend public outreach such as workdays, informational wildlife talks, and special events such as street fairs and environmental events. The latter included the annual Patagonia Salmon Run in downtown Ventura, Earth Day events, and other public outreach venues.

Work on this grant began in November 2004 and was completed in May 2010. The first volunteer workday was held on March 5, 2005 and the last one was on April 3, 2010. Workdays were held from October to April or May (depending on weather and breeding bird activity), from 9:00 am to noon. The summer months were omitted from the schedule to accommodate the school calendar and to avoid the hot and dry months of summer.

A press release was created for the entire volunteer season, and sent to local newspapers, radio stations, schools, service clubs and scout troops, and the growing list of volunteers. An example of the notice used for the final season is provided as Attachment A.

Volunteers included school groups, home school groups, scout troops, Roots & Shoots (Jane Goodall Institute's international environmental and humanitarian program for youth of all ages.), and local citizens. Participants from area schools ranged from elementary to college volunteers, the latter including California Lutheran University, Ventura and Moorpark Community Colleges, and Cal State University Channel Islands.

All volunteers were asked to read and sign waiver form prior to working on the site, and a safety briefing was given regarding potential hazards on-site (ticks, poisonous plants, rattlesnakes, mud/quick sand, etc.).

The FSCR volunteer coordinator gave several Power Point presentations to area elementary schools and service groups, including Lion's Club and Surfrider Foundation.

Results & Discussion

Accomplishments of the volunteer/stewardship project includes the development of a strong volunteer base, with a total of 40 workdays conducted encompassing 1,739 hours (refer to Table 1). Rain canceled six workdays, sometimes due to heavy rain on the actual date, and sometimes due to dangerous mud levels on the access roads, restricting travel onto the site.

The volunteer program emphasized planting of native species appropriate to the site, grown at the on-site nursery, and weed removal. The educational component continued throughout the project. A highlight was the nature walks led by professional biologists where nature plants and animals are identified and a wide range of topics are discussed, such as habitat function and value to global warming. Volunteers were also shown the on-site nursery operation, with propagation methods explained and growing techniques discussed.

Table 1. Volunteer Dates & Hours Worked

2005 volunteer hours			
Month	Number of volunteers	Hours worked	Total hours
January	Rain	0	0
February	10	3	30
March	5	3	15
April	9	3	27
May	10	3	30
October	9	3	27
November	11	3	33
December	9	3	27
Totals:	63		189

2006 volunteer hours			
Month	Number of volunteers	Hours worked	Total hours
January	8	3	24
February	11	3	33
March	8	3	24
April	5	3	15
May	18	3	54
October	7	3	21
November	9	3	27
December	6	3	18
Totals:	72		216

2007 volunteer hours			
Month	Number of volunteers	Hours worked	Total hours
January	10	3	30
February	15	3	45
March	9	3	27
April	9	3	27
May	10	3	30
October	11	3	33
November	32	3	96
December	20	3	60
Totals:	116		348

2008 volunteer hours			
Month	Number of volunteers	Hours worked	Total hours
January	Rain	0	0
February	20	3	60
March	11	3	33
April	44	3	132
May	0	0	0
October	7	3	21
November	Rain	0	0
December	23	3	69
Totals:	105		315

2009 volunteer hours			
Month	Number of volunteers	Hours worked	Total hours
January	19	3	57
February	rain	0	0
March	52	variable	215
April	25	3	75
May	0	0	0
October	12	3	36
November	19	3	57
December	36	3	108
Totals:	163		548

2010 volunteer hours			
Month	Number of volunteers	Hours worked	Total hours
January	31	3	93
February	rain	0	0
March	rain	0	0
April	10	3	30
May	0	0	0
October	0	3	0
November	0	3	0
December	0	3	0
Totals:	41		123



April 2006: Sandy Hedrick at new kiosk; note informational display case and bench for storage.

Roots & Shoots volunteers in kiosk May 2009



Students planting native species.

Ron Bottorff at Salmon Run.



Workday in progress with City Corps & other volunteers.

Power Point presentation to elementary school.

Attachment A Public Notice of Workdays

Hedrick Ranch Nature Area

Contact Jackie Worden for more information: jbworden7@gmail.com

The Hedrick Ranch Nature Area is a ±220 acre preserve owned by the Friends of the Santa Clara River (FSCR), located on the south side of the Santa Clara River near Santa Paula. We have an active group of volunteers working to restore the HRNA, via regularly scheduled workdays once per month fall through spring. Our efforts include weed abatement, planting of native plants, and establishing trails. We also spend time bird watching and looking for other wildlife. We start at 9:00 am and finish by 11:30 or 12:00. Bring water and sun protection; we have some tools and gloves, but it's always nice to bring your own.

LONG PANTS AND BOOTS OR CLOSED SHOES ARE REQUIRED

Because of our healthy population of rattlesnakes, this dress code will be strictly enforced!!

The 2009-2010 workdays will be:

- October 3rd, Saturday
- November 1st, Sunday
- December 5th, Saturday
- January 10th, Sunday
- February 6th, Saturday
- March 7th, Sunday
- April 3rd, Saturday

NOTE: Substantial rainfall cancels the workday!!!



Directions to the Hedrick Ranch Nature Area from Ventura

- East on Hwy 126.
- Exit 10th Street (Santa Paula).
- Left at the end of the off ramp.
- Right on Harvard (first light).
- Right on 12th street (first intersection). 12th Street turns into South Mountain Road after crossing the Santa Clara River & going around a curve to the left.
- Go 3.7 miles to #20395 South Mountain Road on the left.
- Turn left onto the dirt road and follow to the end (~ 1/2 mile).