



# Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition

Volume 2, Issue 4, Winter 2005 NEWSLETTER

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## The Benefits of Watershed Planning By Katie DeLeuw, CEC

The Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition has been working diligently over the past two years to create the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Assessment and Management Plan. This Plan is being written in response to degraded Steelhead population and habitat. In addition, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) listed Carpinteria Creek as impaired for pathogens, which are disease-causing agents.

By identifying and pursuing restoration and monitoring opportunities, participants hope that Carpinteria Creek can be removed from the EPA's list. This comprehensive plan includes studies on water quality, instream flows, fish and other wildlife habitat. The main focus of the plan is on surface water quality, supply and flow as it relates to steelhead, wildlife habitat, and impacts to human health.

For those of you not directly involved or completely familiar with watershed management or watershed planning, this article explains the basic concepts, motivations, and processes involved.

### Terminology

To fully understand watersheds and strategies used to successfully manage them, you first need some knowledge of the ecological concepts. Some of these terms used in this article include:

**Biodiversity:** Used to describe species richness, ecosystem complexity, and genetic variation.



Carpinteria Creek Watershed Map, photo courtesy of CCWC.

**Ecology:** The branch of biology concerned with the relations between organisms and their environment.

**Ecosystem:** A community of organisms and their physical environment as an ecological unit.

**Hydrology:** The study of the movement of water from the sea through the air to the land and back to the sea.

**Watershed:** The land area that contributes runoff to a particular point along a waterway; an inter-

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## Volunteer Profile

### Lisa Killion: Adventures and Life Changes By Katie DeLeuw



A native of California, Lisa moved to the Santa Barbara area 24 years ago. After graduating from UCSB with a B.A. in Environmental Biology, Lisa was a single parent and was looking for full time work that would keep her and her son, Pete Mueller, in the Santa Barbara area. She took a temporary position with AeroVironment, Inc.(AV) doing work in the air quality field, which led to a full time position doing quality assurance work, primarily for the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District.

Although she enjoyed the work, it required frequent travel, taking her away from her son in Santa Barbara. After five years with AV, she took a position as an Air Quality Scientist with the local office of URS Corporation.

At URS, Lisa provided consulting services for various private, agency and industrial clients, including several large energy generation clients in the deregulated energy market.

About a year ago, Lisa left URS and began the most unusual year of her life. With her son attending City College and more free time on her hands, Lisa took advantage of her friends' invitation to bring their

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This newsletter was partially funded by: Santa Barbara County's Coastal Resource Enhancement Fund (CREF), Department of Fish and Game (Support Program-General Funds), NOAA Fisheries and the California Coastal Salmon Recovery Program (CCSRP).

## California Black Bears in Carpinteria Creek Watershed! By Katie DeLeuw

Did you know that a subpopulation of the California Black Bear calls the upper Carpinteria Creek Watershed home? One day while Moe Gomez and Matt Stoecker, two coalition members, were surveying the upper reaches of the watershed for *Arundo donax* they came across some curious clues, sure signs that bears must live in the area. Moe and Matt were very surprised (and a little worried!) to see trees, trampled and broken with fresh claw marks, as well as circular nests of leaves near bear feces. While scrambling up between some huge boulders and the face of the mountain, Moe and Matt also found a large cave with

branches and leaves that must have been left intentionally; perhaps the cave is used as a bear den?

### CA and Local Populations

The USDA Forest Service explains that many black bears make their home in the Los Padres National Forest, which binds the Carpinteria Creek Watershed to the north through the Santa Ynez Mountains. The statewide black bear population is currently estimated

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Right, Black Bear, photo courtesy of Wisconsin Dept. of Nat. Resources.



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### PLANNING (continued from page 1)

connected area of land draining from surrounding ridge tops to a common point such as a lake or stream.

#### Why create a watershed plan?

Watershed planning is a decision-making process encompassing the entire watershed system, integrating different uses of lands and waters within a watershed. This provides a chance for stakeholders to balance diverse goals and uses for environmental resources, and to consider how their cumulative actions may affect long-term sustainability of these resources.

A number of watershed management tools are available for resource managers to utilize when developing a plan. The practice of watershed protection requires managers to make choices about what tools or combination of tools to apply. These decisions are based on the desires of the local community, the economy, the ecosystem, and the characteristics of the watershed.

#### Planning as a Management Tool

Stakeholders and resource managers use watershed planning to protect and maintain the hydrological, physical, chemical and biological integrity of a watershed. They may decide to use watershed planning as a tool when one or more of the following problems occur:

- Loss of beneficial uses of water due to changes in water quality,
- Changes in hydrology, such as blockage of natural water flow patterns,
- Physical changes to streambeds, flood plains, wetlands or other natural landforms,
- Habitat destruction or fragmentation,
- Loss of biodiversity,

- Loss of native vegetation due to development, impervious surfaces, or introduction of non-native species.

While some watershed management strategies address one type of problem and the factors that contribute to it in one part of the watershed, watershed planning addresses an array of related topics, issues, needs, threats and problems throughout an entire watershed. This approach is comprehensive, taking into account each aspect of the watershed and the relationships between them.

In general, planning is a decision-making process focused on future actions. To begin this process, participants first determine their objectives and constraints, and define their resources. These steps will help them identify and rank alternative actions, select actions to implement, develop an implementation timeline, begin to implement, and follow-up by monitoring the process.

#### Successful Planning

Successful watershed planning includes cooperation by all interested parties and a comprehensive understanding of watershed processes and problems. Individuals and organizations involved in the planning process should be in constant communication, to ensure collaboration and coordination throughout, eliminating the potential for implementation problems down the road.

Participants should address all areas of the watershed, including land and water, upper and lower, and freshwater and saltwater, and prioritize prevention of further problems. In addition, participants should consider all types of problems or threats, specific stressors and their pathways, and sources or causes of problems throughout the watershed.

#### Local Motivations

In the Carpinteria Creek Watershed, several objectives brought about the impetus for watershed planning:

- Concern for clean water, including our drinking water as well as our beaches and streams that we rely on for recreation, tourism and livelihoods.
- The recovery of the southern steelhead trout, a federally listed endangered species.
- The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (SCWRP) Task Force, organized to integrate concerns about water quality, steelhead recovery, and habitat restoration. Visit the SCWRP website for more information: [www.scwrp.org](http://www.scwrp.org).

Local residents, government agencies, and community organizations came together under the leadership of SCWRP to form the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition. The Coalition has worked to develop goals, objectives and projects to improve and protect the Carpinteria Creek watershed. These ideas are outlined in the Draft Carpinteria Creek Watershed Assessment and Management Plan. Your ideas, concerns, and comments are also welcomed.

The Draft Plan is available for public comments. You can view the entire plan or sections of the plan online at: [www.carpinteriacreek.org/watershedplan.html](http://www.carpinteriacreek.org/watershedplan.html).

Address comments regarding the plan to Tom Lockhart at [cachumarc@ca.nacdnet.org](mailto:cachumarc@ca.nacdnet.org).

For more information contact Mauricio Gomez, Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition Chair, at 963-0683, ext. 111. ♦

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to be between 25,000 and 30,000. The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) distinguishes between three CA black bear populations: the North Coast/Cascade, the Sierra, and the Central/Southwestern.

The Central/Southwestern subpopulation extends south and east from Santa Cruz County to San Diego County, and contains less than 10% of the statewide black bear population. This population is relatively new; prior to 1950, black bears were excluded from this habitat range by the California grizzly bear. After the grizzly bear became extinct, black bears began to appear in the Transverse Mountain Range of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties.

### Preferred Habitat Areas

Black bears are often found foraging for food in riparian areas, and move up to the oak woodlands for acorns during the fall. Black bears have specific habitat preferences based on quality for reproduction, cover and feeding habits. Black bears have been found in mixed conifer forests, mountain hardwood and chaparral, as well as valley foothill hardwoods and even annual grasslands. They use these different habitat types seasonally to supply sufficient food, cover and water.

### Management Strategies

While black bears were once considered an undesirable nuisance, today the black bear is a valued member of California's fauna. The

Department of Fish and Game closely monitors and manages the bear population through strict hunting regulations, including bag limits and maximum reported takes, and biological research projects, such as age structure and sex ratio studies.

### Bear Encounters

To prevent a bear confrontation, never leave any food, waste or other scented objects within reach of a bear, even if they are unopened. If you happen to come across a bear while you are hiking or camping, the most important thing to remember is to keep calm. Avoid coming between a mother and her cubs, as a mother will attack if she fears they are in danger.

The U.S. Scout Service Project provides additional tips to avoid a bear attack (from [www.usscouts.org](http://www.usscouts.org)):



Black bear getting into trouble, courtesy of WI Dept of Nat. Resources.

1. Leave the bear an escape route by making a wide detour or completely leaving the area.
2. Do not run or make sudden sounds or movements, as this can trigger an attack. Instead, keep still or move away slowly, and speak in deep tones.
3. Do not throw anything or taunt the bear.
4. Watch the bear for aggressive behavior, such as jaw-snapping, making a "whoofing" sound, or keeping its head down with ears back.
5. Distract the bear by removing your pack and setting it down. ♦

## KILLION (continued from page 1)

48-foot trimaran from the San Juan Islands in Washington to Ventura Harbor. While Lisa was looking forward to a relaxing boat trip down the coast, the trip quickly became a genuine test of patience and endurance for each of its seven-person crew.

Among other problems, the group encountered unexpected gale-force winds and high seas, a boat motor that would not start, swamping of the sleeping quarters, and constant septic system backup problems. The rest of the trip was wonderful, although still challenging. According to Lisa, this was one of the most important trips of her life, a life-changing experience putting her uncertainties of the future into perspective.

During this period, Lisa was also able to pursue her interest in renewable energy. She began attending California Energy Commission meetings in Sacramento and researching energy distribution issues. While she has enjoyed her time off, Lisa admits that her "sabbatical" is reaching its end—she is actually beginning to miss working! She hopes to be contracted independently in the renewable energy field and is studying effects of wind energy on avian mortality. She has also become interested in alternative building

methods that have potential to conserve energy usage.

Lisa also became involved in the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition over the past year. Carpinteria Creek provides a great opportunity for birding, one of Lisa's hobbies; but what she enjoys most about the Creek are the hundreds of frogs for which her condominium complex, Singing Springs, was named.

Lisa is drawn to the Coalition because she enjoys being associated with people whose ideals are aligned with hers and bettering their world. She also believes that real solutions are found through community-based organizations such as the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition rather than command-and-control regulations. As a Singing Springs stakeholder with concerns for the environment, she naturally has an interest in the Creek's quality and visioning process.

When asked about her visions for Carpinteria Creek, Lisa mentioned the problems of non-native invasive species near her complex. Near her property, she hopes to make progress with *Arundo donax* and Cape Ivy. She recognizes the need for volunteers due to funding constraints and the long-term

commitment required to accomplish real changes, and hopes to see increased participation with her neighbors. To get involved in any issue, Lisa recommends residents find other people who share similar interests and start attending meetings. If more people become involved in an issue, less work will be required out of each person.

On a larger scale, Lisa is concerned with people's perspective of what constitutes an attractive lifestyle. Demands of cultural aesthetics are not necessarily congruent with environmental sustainability. New technologies such as solar and wind energy may provide opportunities to reduce dependence on oil and gas, but are widely regarded as unsightly or simply too expensive to implement. While people often support programs that have little impact on the environment, the Not-In-My-Backyard factor prevents them from being implemented locally. Lisa hopes in the future this perspective will change, and people will realize the implications of their decisions.

In the mean time, if anyone has a question with regard to environmental permitting and/or regulations, she would be happy to assist you! ♦



Volume 2, Issue 4, Winter 2005  
NEWSLETTER

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#### **Publishing Information:**

**This newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition. For information, please contact Katie DeLeuw at (805) 963-0583 x116.**

## **Watershed Update**

**by Mauricio Gomez, Community Environmental Council**

In the upcoming year, there will be some exciting projects to restore Carpinteria Creek. Through efforts by the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition projects ranging from removal of invasive non-natives, designs of fish barrier alternatives and bank stabilization projects will be taking place. Stay tuned for further information on how the Coalition is helping to restore Carpinteria Creek and improve water quality. If you are interested in participating and learning more about the coalition and I invite you to attend the next meeting on January 20th.♦



Lower Carpinteria Creek in the springtime, photo courtesy of CCWC.

### **Calendar of Events:**

#### **Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition Meeting**

**Thursday, January 20 10 am - Noon**, Carpinteria City Hall 5775 Carpinteria Ave. Join Coalition members to discuss the Watershed Plan and other current projects.

*The Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition was created in 2001, when a partnership of local landowners, community groups, resource agencies, and individuals joined together to restore and protect the resources of the creek. Inspired by a shared sense of responsibility for our community, we're working together to create conditions that will allow a healthy steelhead trout population to return to the creek.*

**[www.carpinteriacreek.org](http://www.carpinteriacreek.org)**