



PRESS RELEASE

Date: March 25, 2022

Contact: Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

Brin Greer (530) 727-1295

Subject: RBHS Students Help Restore East Sand Slough

RED BLUFF, CA - The Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (RCDTC) organized a student revegetation planting day at the East Sand Slough Side Channel Reconnection Project (Project) site on Wednesday, March 9, 2022. Red Bluff High School students from its Honor Society as well as Eco and Key clubs joined the effort in restoring vegetation in the project's post-construction footprint.

Over the past year the slough has undergone substantial improvements in successfully creating rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids. Nearly 106,000 tons of material from the slough was excavated to allow water to pass through its entire length year-round, even during low Sacramento River flows.

Reconnecting the side channel with the river drastically reduces the odds of fish stranding in the slough, particularly the threatened winter-run Chinook salmon. Construction started for the multi-partner, inter-agency Project in late summer 2021 and was successfully completed by winter. The final step for the now functional side channel was to revegetate the project area to provide habitat for fish and other riparian species.

Brin Greer of the RCDTC coordinated the restoration day as an educational, stewardship, and career exploration opportunity for the students. In coordination with RBHS counselor Margaret Gambetta, Greer met on campus with students interested in helping with the revegetation component of the project and presented a project overview, insight into our state's water infrastructure, and why we all should care about salmon. The following week, Greer paired the students in the field with natural resource specialists as mentors for the planting day.

The team mentors included Ali Meders-Knight and Meleiza Figueroa representing the Mechoopda tribe of Chico Rancheria, who contributed Traditional Ecological Knowledge including but not limited to the value in local, native plant communities and keystone species. Rob Irwin, biologist for the Sacramento River Forum showcased the ecological habitat zones and the elements that directly impact fish populations while Greer highlighted stewardship activities that support habitat and noted the various careers that complement conservation. The mentors highlighted the importance and interaction of native flora and fauna as well as how to successfully plant.

Equipped with pruning shears and trowels, the students were able to put their newly gained knowledge in reading the landscape to identify habitat zones and propagating native plants to good use. With guidance from the mentors, students successfully propagated and planted willow as well as sedge, soap root, grasses and other native plant starts in the slough. Their work complements the large scale seeding and planting effort throughout the project footprint.

At the close of the field day, students shared what they learned during the experience. Many noted that propagation was a new concept and others mentioned that they didn't realize how important many local plants are for both animal habitat and human health. The RCDTC was able to provide students with this experience through Tehama County Fish and Game Commission funding. The RCDTC brings grant and other funding sources into our community for projects that manage, conserve, and improve the natural resources of Tehama County.



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For more information regarding the East Sand Slough project and similar side channel reconnection projects here in Tehama County, visit the Wildlife and Habitat Restoration webpage at tehamacountyrcd.org. Donations welcome.