



# City of Carpinteria

## Environmental Review & Monitoring

### Status Report

### 2012



**Prepared For:** The City of Carpinteria  
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**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT**

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## ***1.0 Introduction***

This report documents the Environmental Review and Monitoring work conducted during 2012 by Mr. Vince Semonsen the Consulting Biologist to the City of Carpinteria. As the City Biologist Mr. Semonsen participates in the review of development projects for biological impacts, identification of appropriate mitigation measures, is a voting member of the Environmental Review Committee (ERC), helps formulate conditions of approval related to biological resources, and provides oversight monitoring of construction projects ensuring the implementation of all mitigation measures.

The largest oversight project for the year was the creek restoration portion of the Lagunitas Development Project. Other projects included the Kittie Bailard 1 oil seep project on the bluffs property and the Maulhardt remodel project along Carpinteria creek. Long-term revegetation monitoring was conducted at a number of sites throughout Carpinteria, with the largest being the Chevron/Venoco Soil Remediation Project. Lastly, a number of smaller surveys were conducted throughout the City dealing with short-term impacts such as nest surveys prior to vegetation clearing and snowy plover surveys prior to any sand berm work on Carpinteria beach.

## ***2.0 Construction Monitoring***

### ***2.1 Lagunitas Development Project***

The Lagunitas project continued into 2012 with additional site preparation, the building of homes north of the drainage and the creek restoration and revegetation. The creek restoration began in July with the trenching for the irrigation lines and laying out the DG pathways. In mid August an onsite meeting was attended which included the project botanists Mark de la Garza and Melodee Hickman. Both the City Biologist and the project botanists raised concerns about the native plantings, and not adhering to the planting specifications. Mark and Melodee had noted that the number of plants called for in the plans were much higher than the numbers brought onsite, also not all of the plants were purchased from local sources. A number of meetings and discussions, requiring impute from the City biologist and City planners, resolved the issue of the planting numbers and the genetic origins of the plants. A number of planting specifications were also not being implemented such as, not ripping the soil prior to planting, not excavating a large enough hole for the plantings, not adding the specified soil amendments, and not adding the specified amount of mulch. Again, numerous discussions and some intensified oversight eventually resulted in the proper adherence to the planting specs.

By early October the creek restoration had been completed and it looked good. Oversight will continue, checking on the health of the plantings and watching for any weed invasion; this will continue until the established performance criteria is attained. Outstanding issues include the eventual removal of the bougainvillea along the entrance road – to be replaced by native vegetation.



***Preparation of the stream channel –  
installation of the irrigation system.***



***Decompaction of the restoration area  
prior to planting.***



***Adding soil amendments prior to  
planting the native trees and shrubs.***

*City of Carpinteria: 2012 Environmental Review & Monitoring*



***Lagunitas riparian restoration work.***



***Lagunitas Creek restoration nearing completion.***

## **2.2 Kittie Bailard 1 Project**

The Kittie Bailard 1 project began in July out on the Carpinteria Bluffs property where an old oil well – the Kittie Bailard 1 – was located. The well location had been leaking/seeping thick crude oil out onto the ground; the projects intent was to investigate the situation, try to seal the oil leak, and clean-up the site. The project was scheduled to start during the bird nesting season so a pre-construction bird survey was conducted by the City Biologist. The nesting survey report was generated in early August with a wide variety of birds and raptors (white-tailed kite, Coopers hawk, turkey vultures) seen in and around the project site, however no active nests were noted within 300 feet of the site. A vulture roost was documented within the large eucalyptus windrow that runs along the bluff but it too was over 300 feet from the project site.

The project had a few starts and stops based on their findings but the old well was eventually sealed, the site was restored and the final hydroseeding was applied in early January 2013. Day-to-day monitoring was not conducted by the city biologist however site visits and recommendations included controlling mud tracked onto the public roadways and oversight of the final restoration and revegetation.



***Vulture Roost***



***Excavation of the old Kittie Bailard oil well.***



***Final Hydroseeding of the Kittie Bailard site.***

### ***2.3 Maulhardt Construction Project***

The Maulhardt Residential Remodel began in the late fall of 2012. The project is located next to Carpinteria Creek and the 8<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge at 5481 Calle Ocho so there were some biological concerns with the project. The City Biologist provided the environmental oversight as required by the conditions of approval and conducted an environmental training for the owner who is acting as his own general contractor. The project has gone smoothly with excellent cooperation by the landowner and compliance with all the project conditions.

## ***3.0 Creek Surveys & Monitoring***

### ***3.1 Carpinteria Creek Committee***

Creek Committee meetings were regularly attended by the City Biologist, participating in the planning and upgrade of the Carpinteria watersheds. The City Biologist acting as a private consultant conducted preconstruction sensitive species surveys and provided the environmental monitoring on the Widdoes fish barrier removal project. The removal of this barrier opens up most of the Carpinteria Creek watershed to steelhead.



***New Widdoes bridge over the restored stream channel.***

**3.2 Flood Control:** The City was notified by the Santa Barbara Flood Control District that they would like to remove a gravel berm, about 100 cubic yards of material, from an area just downstream of the Carpinteria Avenue bridge. A onsite meeting with Andrew Raaf from Flood Control, Steve Orosz and Nick Bobroff from the City of Carpinteria and the City Biologist took place in late August to discuss the timing of the work, project access, impacts to the flowing stream, and the placement and revegetation of the removed materials.

The work began in early September with a hand crew clearing the existing vegetation and setting up a pumping system to divert the creek flow around the impact area. The City Biologist gave the crew a brief environmental training before they got started. There was quite a bit of willow growing on the gravel berm, which were cut into smaller “cuttings” and used in the revegetation of



the site. An excavator was brought in to dig out the gravels, placing the material in the upper stream terrace along a cut bank. Stream flow was very low and with the additional water diversion system the equipment was able to stay out of the creek flow and avoid any sediment issues. The City Biologist asked that several of the larger willow root balls be carefully dug out of the berm and replaced/replanted within the newly recontoured stream terrace. The City Biologist monitored all of this work.

***Flood Control hand crews removing vegetation.***



***Excavator brought in to remove the gravel berm within Carpinteria Creek.***



***Carpinteria Creek after the gravel berm was removed by Flood Control crews.***



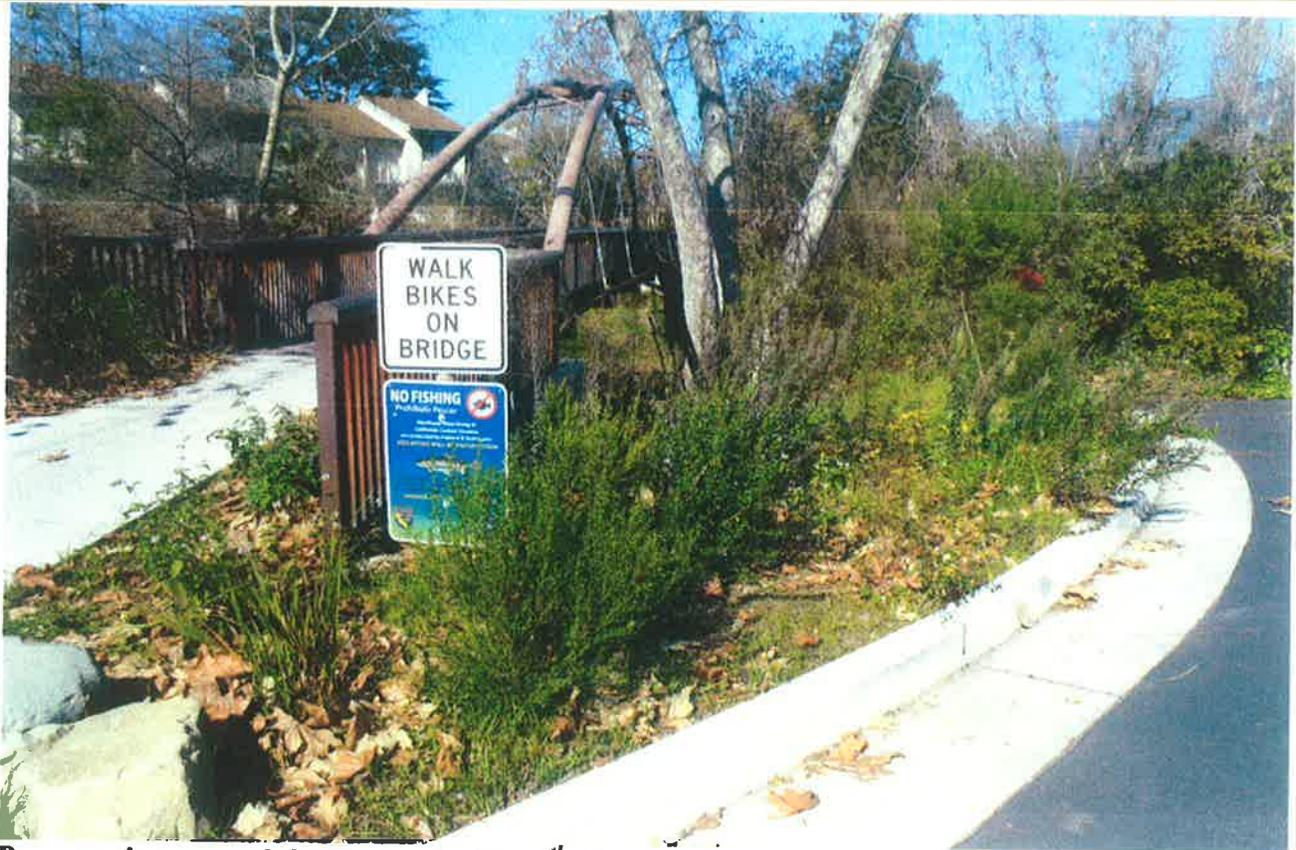
***Restored creek bank following the Flood Control work – note willows resprouting.***

One interesting revegetation note is that the willow root balls removed and replanted by the excavator did not take – fortunately the willow cuttings did really well. The site will need to be monitored since the low rainfall over the 2012/13 winter may not have allowed the willow cutting to establish good, deep root systems.

## 4.0 Long-term Revegetation Monitoring

**4.1 8<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Replacement Project:** Weeding and some additional plantings were undertaken in 2012. The restoration effort looks good with most of the weeds being removed from the impacted area and with a nice variety of well-established native plants. The willows and sycamores are getting tall and the native understory looks healthy with even a small patch of native orchids growing under the west side of the bridge.

The energy dissipation rocks placed around the end of the new culvert along the western end of the bridge were blocking the flow of water and debris from the pipe. A call was placed to the Public Works department to realign the rocks so that the pipe would drain properly and not get clogged. The realignment was completed.



**Revegetation around the East end of the 8<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge**

**4.2 Carpinteria High School, Safe Routes to School Project:** The restoration effort along the pathway looks good with a nice number of outplanted natives growing well and the willow cuttings now reaching up a good 15 feet high. The restoration between the pathway and Highway 192 is struggling because of the impacts from weed eradication work and mulching the area. Some castor bean and Kikuyu grass persist within the drainage corridor. The continued health of this restoration effort would benefit from the removal of these non-native species.

**4.3 Chevron/Venoco Soil Remediation Project:** The Chevron Soil Remediation Project was completed in 2011 with the restoration plantings and hydroseeding finished in the fall/winter. A post project walk through was lead by Padre biologist Chris Dunn in late January 2012 with Jackie Campbell, Dave Durlfing and the City biologist in attendance. At that time recent rains had begun germinating the hydroseed mix and the container plantings looked good. The native plantings were hand watered until March when a drip irrigation system was installed. The area was regularly visited throughout the year to check on the restoration effort – in particular the planting and weeding. The eradication of the English Ivy is expected to require numerous applications of Round-up.



***Restoration within the Chevron/Venoco Soil Remediation Project.***

The large, smooth pipe installed for the Chevron/Venoco Remediation Project looked like it would act as a movement barrier for smaller critters. It was recommended that some soil be placed over the pipe at one or two locations to allow animals to cross over. A soil bridge was not considered feasible so a compromise measure was implemented - stacking wood on either side of the pipe.

**4.4 Creek Park project:** A large Oak tree came down near the Creek Park, it was growing along the slope between the mobile home park and their vehicle parking area. The incident was evaluated by the City Biologist and it was determined to have fallen from natural causes, it did not damage anything of significance.

**4.5 Bermant Project (Venoco Office Building), The Meta-Creations Bluff Restoration, and the Teamsters Project:** The restoration and revegetation of all three of these projects have done quite well over the years. Invasion by invasive weeds is an ongoing concern with Cape Ivy an issue for the Teamsters Project and iceplant and non-native trees continue to be a problem along the Meta-Creation Bluff. Some sewer line upgrades took place in 2012, which impacted a small portion of the revegetation near the Venoco Building – this area should be checked in the future.

## **5.0 Wildlife**

The City Biologist routinely looks for wildlife and nesting birds during all site visits. No new records of sensitive species within the City limits were recorded during the year. We are still

hoping that CA red-legged frogs return to the Carpinteria creek system. Steelhead exist in Carpinteria creek but we are still waiting for those large “sea run” steelhead to return to the watershed.

**Monarch Butterflies:** Monarch butterflies continue to utilize the one significant winter roost within the City of Carpinteria, known as Carpinteria East or site 100. The roost is located within the Venoco Buffer parcel and looked to support several thousand butterflies. Monarchs have not returned to the Carpinteria West site located within Carpinteria Creek near the Salzgeber meadow.



*Carpinteria East Monarch Roost site (Site 100) within the Venoco Buffer parcel.*

## **6.0 Miscellaneous Consultation**

**6.1 Frack-out in Carpinteria Creek:** The City Biologist got a call from Charlie Ebeling (Director of the Carpinteria Public Works Department) at 3:30 pm on April 24<sup>th</sup> saying there had been a “frack-out” in Carpinteria Creek, just under the Carpinteria Ave. bridge. Crews had been directionally drilling under the creek to install new sewer lines and drilling muds had come up through the alluvium “fracking out” approximately six feet from the stream channel. The muds flowed down into the creek; fortunately there wasn’t much stream flow and the muds settled out (approx. 6 inches deep) in the ponded areas under the bridge. The water downstream of the frack-out was cloudy from the muds, but most of the material seemed to have settled out in the pools.

The City Biologist met with Mr. Ebeling and Steve Orosz and discussed the impacts and the clean-

up effort required. The City biologist had received training as a Horizontal drilling inspector and was somewhat familiar with frack-outs and drilling mud. A call was placed to Natasha Loomis, a CA Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist, but she could not be reached.

The drilling mud is naturally occurring clay like substance that is not toxic but can impact plants and animals when it settles out and smothers organisms, particularly egg masses. It was important to get the material out of the creek and with a storm predicted for later in the evening a vacuum truck was brought onsite ASAP. A quick survey of the two ponded areas was conducted looking for any sensitive species (i.e. steelhead & tidewater gobies) that might be impacted by sucking out the muds. A single species of common fish called a sculpin was the only animal found in the ponds, so crews were given the OK to begin vacuuming up the muds from the bottom of the ponds. A number of truck loads of water and mud was hauled off, with crews continuing to work until it was too dark and the water too murky to evaluate the clean-up effort. The site was evaluated again the next morning with the assistance of Natasha Loomis. Several inches of mud still remained in the upper pond and a decision was made to continue the removal operation. At least one more vacuum truck load was pulled out before it was agreed that the clean-up work could stop.



*Crew sucking drilling mud out of Carpinteria Creek.*



*Drilling muds remaining in the creek several weeks after the Frack-out – note the raccoon tracks and the moss already growing on the mud.*

**6.2 Sand Berm:** The fall and spring beach surveys continued in 2012 prior to the building and flattening of the sand berm on the Carpinteria beach. Monitoring of the work was also conducted by the City Biologist providing some environmental training to the bull dozer operator and checking the equipment for leaks. The surveys focus on snowy plovers, Pismo clams and globose dune beetles but none have been seen to date. All of the work has gone smoothly with good communication between the contractor and the City Biologist and no violations noted.

May 2012 met with a painting crew along Padaro Lane where they are repainting pipes that cross the creek corridors. The crews needed to clean and grind the piping prior to repainting so they have hung heavy plastic under the pipe to capture the rusty metal and splattered paint. They set up an excellent catchment system – see the attached photo.



March 2012 – The sewerline work (lateral line installation) was checked as it was trenched in along the Carpinteria Bluffs near the Veneco Building.

The City Biologist looked at a number of trees throughout the city limits for nesting birds prior to trimming or removal by the Public Works Department. Also, consultation was provided on the manhole removal work along the “Bluffs” trail.

## **7.0 General Recommendations**

- Conditions imposed on future projects should clearly describe the removal of all non-native species prior to the planting effort with continued eradication and monitoring until the City Biologist has deemed the restoration effort a success.
- Continued weed eradication should be considered for Carpinteria Creek in particular the widespread Cape Ivy. The photo at the right shows Cape Ivy growing over the dead Arundo – one invasive weed replacing another.
- Weed eradication should be considered for the bluff areas east of the Teamsters building, especially along the bluff trail and in Lagunitas Creek.
- Spring steelhead surveys should be conducted within Carpinteria Creek looking for sea run steelhead and redds.

