

## Get a Big Picture Look at Monitoring and Restoration Efforts in the Morro Bay Watershed

Join the Morro Bay Volunteer Monitoring Program for a community workshop to learn how volunteer monitoring efforts can help determine the effectiveness of habitat restoration projects throughout the Morro Bay Watershed.

The program will summarize a variety of habitat restoration efforts that have been implemented since the early 1990s and juxtapose these projects with the results of volunteer-conducted monitoring by local citizens. Photos, maps and monitoring data

will all be used to paint a picture of habitat improvement efforts in the Morro Bay watershed.

**Who:** Morro Bay Volunteer Monitoring Program

**What:** Free community workshop

**When:** Saturday, June 3rd, 1-3 pm

**Where:** Morro Bay Community Center at 1001 Kennedy Way

For more information about the workshop or the Volunteering Monitoring Program, please contact Ann Kitajima or Annie Gillespie at the MBNEP office at 772-3834.



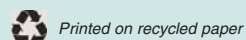
*A volunteer measures the flow of a healthy Morro Bay Watershed creek.*



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The Morro Bay National Estuary Program is a local non-profit working to protect, preserve and restore the Morro Bay estuary and its watershed. The MBNEP is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"Turning the Tide" is a free quarterly newsletter. To subscribe, call the MBNEP office or visit our website.



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A NEWSLETTER of the MORRO BAY NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

SPRING 2006

## Cal Poly Student Volunteers Conquer Cape Ivy at the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve Restoration Site

Community oriented Cal Poly students recently volunteered to help with restoration work at the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve. The students were taking part in Cal Poly's Annual Day of Service that aims to partner Cal Poly attendees with local organizations in need of volunteer labor. The students concentrated on two projects at the Ecological Reserve: debris cleanup near the ranch's historical dairy and Cape ivy removal along Chorro Creek.

Cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*) is an invasive plant species introduced to the U.S. during the 19th century from Europe, as a Victorian-era

houseplant. Cape ivy is originally native to the Cape region of South Africa and is now a serious problem along the coasts of California. The plant pest takes over riparian areas, often choking out native trees and shrubs and degrading healthy, open wildlife habitat.

Cape ivy spreads asexually through the spread of stolons (horizontal runners). As the plant reproduces through a vegetative method eradication can



*Fraternity members of Sigma Phi Epsilon came out to help with Cape ivy removal at the Chorro Creek Ecological Reserve under Hollister Peak.*

be difficult. Because this site is a CA Dept. of Fish and Game

*Continued on page 2*

## Youth Invited to Learn about Estuary at Day Camp

If you know a child that likes to hike, learn about wildlife and explore the outdoors, consider having them attend the Morro Bay Nature Camp this summer.

The week will offer a variety of activities, including several walks and hikes, hands-on activities at the Morro Bay Museum of Natural History, a visit to the Elfin Forest in Los Osos, a boat ride on the bay and much more. For a full itinerary visit [www.mbnep.org](http://www.mbnep.org) or contact

Cheryl Lesinski at the MBNEP via phone at 772-3834.

This one week day camp is a new collaborative project of Morro Bay State Parks, SLO County YMCA and the MBNEP.

**To register a youth for the camp,** parents should contact Steve Thayer at the SLO County YMCA at 543-8235 x108 or visit their website at [www.sloymca.org](http://www.sloymca.org) and click on "programs."

### Morro Bay Nature Camp

**When:** June 26th-30th  
**Where:** Base camp is at the Morro Bay Natural History Museum  
**Time:** 9am-4pm  
**Age:** 9-12 year olds  
**Cost:** \$145 per child

## Marine Protected Areas and the Morro Bay Estuary

The Morro Bay Estuary may soon be designated as a California Marine Protected Area (MPA) when the CA Fish and Game Commission acts this fall to establish a network of Central California MPAs. The Commission will decide among at least three different alternatives, each would mean changes for commercial and sport fishing in the estuary, and up and down the Central Coast.

While there are different types of MPAs, all are intended to protect marine resources and habitat. Some MPAs are 'no take' areas, where removal of fish or other marine life is not allowed. Some prohibit certain types of fishing and allow others. Restrictions on recreation and other non-fishing uses are possible in MPAs if the CA Dept. of Fish and Game determines they are necessary for resource protection; none of the current MPA proposals call for

such restrictions. For the Morro Bay Estuary the three options are very similar: much of the bay would be open to sport fishing but closed to commercial fishing with the exception of the existing oyster mariculture leases and the live baitfish sales. Each would also prohibit all fishing and invertebrate take in the Back Bay south of Pasadena Pt. The salt marsh delta would be a 'no-take' area under two of the three proposals. The relative consensus between proposals for the estuary reflects the common understanding of the rare and important habitats and resources in the bay.

The proposals currently being evaluated by CA Dept. of Fish and Game are the result of a labor intensive process of diverse stakeholders working together over the past 18 months. The process began in 1999 when the state enacted the Marine Life

Protection Act (MLPA). The MLPA directs state agencies to reexamine and redesign California's system of marine protected areas with the goal of increasing its coherence and effectiveness at protecting the state's marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems, and marine natural heritage, as well as to improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems. An eight-member MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force was formed by Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman to oversee the initiative process.

For detailed and up to date information including maps see [www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/centralcoast.html](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlpa/centralcoast.html).

The MBNEP has actively shared our knowledge about the resources and uses of the estuary with CA Dept. of Fish and Game and other stakeholders.

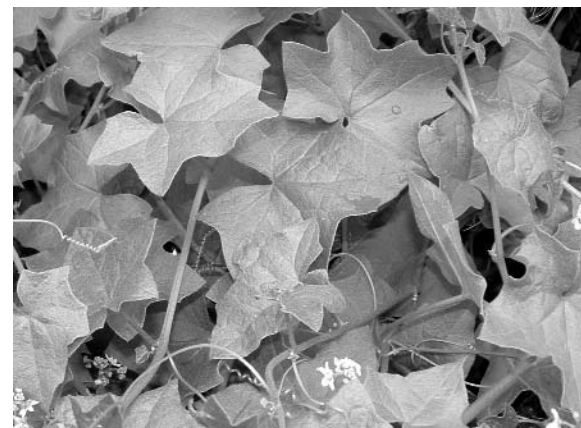
## Cal Poly Volunteers Conquer Cape Ivy *continued*

Ecological Reserve, the use of herbicide for invasive weed control is prohibited. Mechanical methods of removal include pulling the vines from tree trunks and branches and lifting and rolling up thick carpets of vegetative matter. Thorough removal of all roots and stolons is important in controlling this rapid-growing pest.

The Cal Poly students worked hard and with many hands made short

work of removing a major stretch of Cape ivy, along with accomplishing significant debris removal.

The MBNEP would like to thank Cal Poly and the California Conservation Corps for donation of tools and labor, as well as CA Dept. of Fish and Game staff member, Mike Hill.



*Cape ivy, an invasive non-native plant found in the watershed.*

## Committee Member Input Key to MBNEP Progress

The MBNEP is a cooperative program that depends on the efforts of many partners, including non-profits, businesses, volunteers, and agencies, to accomplish our shared goals of protecting and restoring the Morro Bay estuary and watershed.

Though the MBNEP is the recipient of federal funding through an annual grant from US EPA, the organization is not a government agency. The MBNEP instead operates as an independent non-profit organization.

This unusual collaboration relies on a small full-time staff and a network of committees to move the program forward. The Executive Committee provides the general policy direction for the program, monitors its activities, assesses its progress, and approves grant requests. The Executive Committee has thirteen seats filled by a full range of community members and interests.

The Executive Committee is advised by the Implementation Committee, which includes representatives of dozens of agencies and community organizations. Implementation Committee members also serve on three 'working groups' that focus on science and technical issues, financial planning and funding, and education projects.

Quarterly meetings of the MBNEP are open to the public with agendas and meeting dates posted under "News and Events" at [www.mbnep.org](http://www.mbnep.org).

### MBNEP Executive Committee Members

Ruth Ann Angus, Friends of the Estuary Boardmember  
*Friends of the Estuary*

Shirley Bianchi, Board of Supervisors  
*San Luis Obispo County*

Linda Chipping, Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District  
*Non-local Government*

Henriette Groot, Coastal Alliance on Plant Expansion  
*Implementation Committee Chair*

Cheryl McGovern, US EPA  
*Federal Government*

Marla Morrissey, Partners for the Conservation of Los Osos Dunes  
*Environmental Interests*

Joel Neel, Bay Foundation President  
*Bay Foundation of Morro Bay*

Janice Peters, Mayor of Morro Bay  
*City of Morro Bay*

Dominic Roques, Central Coast RWQCB  
*State Government*

Lisa Schicker, LOCSD President  
*Los Osos CSD*

Steve Soderstrom, Local Rancher  
*Agricultural Interests*

Dean Sullivan, Los Osos Chamber of Commerce  
*Tourism/Recreation Interests*

Mark Tognazzini, Fisherman  
*Fishing Interests*

## 2006 State of the Bay Conference is Coming... Friday and Saturday, October 13th and 14th.

Please mark your calendars for this free community event. A program guide listing presentations and field trips, along with registration information, will be mailed to all newsletter subscribers this fall.