

Watershed Education Summit Project
El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts

Since its inception in 1998, this collaborative adventure, a service learning project, has been very successful. Students, teachers, and resource professionals work together to complete the following tasks: stream cross-sections, stream gradient and stream water flow, velocity measurements, discharge, substrate pebble counting, benthic macroinvertebrate sampling, shade measurement, Global Positioning Satellite data collection, water chemistry testing, riparian vegetation measurement, pool tail measurements, forestry surveys and large woody debris location. Many students that have participated are now going to college and majoring in science and/or environmental fields. Benefits of the project extend to the USFS, District, SWRCB, and community members. This experience provides an opportunity for students to learn watershed monitoring techniques, and to be exposed to natural resource career choices. Students are asked to apply their practical classroom learning in real world challenges, significantly reinforcing their learning experiences. Participating teachers gain from the project, becoming familiar with professional scientific practices and methods of involving these lessons in daily activities on the school site.

WES participants monitor and collect physical and biological data regarding the creeks and their immediate watersheds; the data is then used by the Eldorado National Forest (ENF) in their stream survey database. Data collected thus far has been used by natural resource managers to make informed management decisions. For example, WES data was used during the mid-2000's, hydropower relicensing of the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District involved much data collection by their consultants and review of all data by resource specialists of federal and state agencies, as well as non-governmental groups. WES data was also included in the data review to determine health of the South Fork Rubicon River, where a diversion dam lies upstream of the WES monitoring site. The pebble counts, water quality, and large woody debris data was especially helpful to determine downstream effects from the diversion of water and effects from the dam on substrate and large wood downstream, and lower flows potentially causing water quality effects. As a result, downstream flows were increased and large wood caught by the dam was placed downstream back into the river rather than piling it and burning it.

For more information visit the website <http://www.watershedsummit.org/>