

Yuba River Watershed - Upper

Monitoring and improving water quality in the Deer Creek Watershed

Butte, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sierra and Yuba Counties; State Senate District 1, State Assembly District 3

FRIENDS OF DEER CREEK



The Watershed Coordinator grant allowed the Friends of Deer Creek the opportunity to develop the Sierra Streams Institute (SSI). SSI is a scientific research facility, laboratory, and outreach center that now plays a regional role in environmental leadership.

The Coordinator organized comprehensive water monitoring and completed a watershed assessment. The Friends of Deer Creek is one of the first watershed groups in the state to use algae as an additional stream bioindicator along with macroinvertebrates.

SSI has become a leader in the field of heavy metal remediation, focusing on abandoned mine sites. The Watershed Coordinator worked to investigate the transport of mercury over a dam (including a massive storm sampling effort through three winters), assess soil at abandoned mine sites, and developed a plan to remediate three of the assessed sites. The Coordinator also surveyed recreational users of the watershed to assess metal exposure, collaborated with partners to develop a regional plan for heavy metal remediation, and implemented a pilot phytoremediation effort to determine the effectiveness of native plant uptake of heavy metals.

For more information visit the Sierra Stream Institute's website at <http://www.sierrastreamsinstitute.org>



- Completed the Deer Creek Restoration Plan
- Completed a study of the transport of mercury over Lake Wildwood Dam on Deer Creek and received \$600,000 in funding to clean up heavy metal contamination at 3 mine sites along the creek
- Conducted over 1,000 mercury sample and analysis tasks every year of the grant
- Revegetated and restored 26 acres of native creek habitat
- Coordinated 245 community volunteers for conservation project implementation
- Worked with Nevada City to reduce 75% of the chlorinated by-products released into the watershed
- Established an algae monitoring program
- Provided hands-on science instruction to 150 students

“The most significant result is nothing less than the total transformation of our organization – from a small ‘friends’ group to the regional scientific institute that we are today.”
- Jane Sellen, Watershed Coordinator

PARTNERS INCLUDED: City of Nevada City • Nevada County • Nevada Irrigation District • American Rivers • The Sierra Fund • Bear Yuba Land Trust • Wolf Creek Community Alliance • Central Valley RWQCB • Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program • Nisenan Tribal Community of the Nevada City Rancheria • The California Wellness Foundation • CABY IRWMP (Cosumnes, American, Bear, Yuba) • Bella Vista Foundation • Sierra Nevada Conservancy • US Environmental Protection Agency • California Dept. of Toxic Substances Control • Bureau of Land Management