

Ulistac Natural Area Fall Newsletter



Ulistac Natural Area
Restoration and Education Project

High school students conduct research at Ulistac

A group of Wilcox High summer school students spent time at Ulistac Natural Area this summer collecting data on 50 native oak saplings. The students' project focuses on determining the relationship between soil quality and native oak growth rate. They collected data including Phosphate, Potassium, Nitrates, and pH levels in soil at the base of the saplings, sapling height, and sapling location. Sapling location, recorded using a GPS device, will be plotted on an aerial map of Ulistac using a Spatial Geography computer program (Arcvue).

The funding of the GPS and Arcvue computer programs are made possible by the Northern California Environmental Student Net-



Oak sapling in a protective tube

work, a consortium of High School environmental clubs run by Mark Epstein. Stephen Guygi, a sophomore at Wilcox High School, will analyze the data and present the results at this year's Synopsis countywide Science fair.

Fall '06 Restoration Work Days

- Saturday, 10/7. 9 am–1 pm
- Sunday, 10/15. 9 am–1 pm
- Saturday, 11/4. 10 am–2 pm
- Sunday, 11/19. 10 am–2 pm
- Saturday, 12/2. 10 am–2 pm
- Sunday, 12/17. 10 am–2 pm

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New and improved field trip curriculum

The Ulistac Outreach Center recently announced its expanded field trip program. Teachers can now register for free, 60-minute docent-led field trips for kindergarten through 8th grade classes.

The field trips consist of grade-level appropriate science and environmental studies curriculum, based on California Content Standards.

Ulistac's field trip activities provide

academic structure as well as allow students to spend time outdoors, appreciating nature.

Each grade level's field trip theme is different – students are ensured new experiences each time they visit Ulistac throughout their years in school. Besides a free hour of guided environmental education, the Ulistac Outreach Center provides themed pre- and post-trip activity ideas for teachers

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A super summer for volunteers!



Volunteers make it happen!

Wilcox High School's Montebello Ridge Bay Ecology class spent two mornings at Ulistac in July. An energetic group, headed by Steve Sanders, cleared and cleaned up the amphitheater, which was completely overgrown with poison hemlock, bristly ox tongue, and eucalyptus shrubs. Their pile of debris was over six feet high!

Youth in the Green Team (from the Children's Discovery Museum's Summer of Service program) provided much needed water for the Bird and Butterfly Garden's newest plants. Each of the four teams finished off their workdays with a water fight that left everyone soggy. Thank you to the members of the Green Team and to the CDM!

Volunteer recognition BBQ

Volunteers, be recognized!

Join other Ulistac Natural Area Restoration & Education Project volunteers for Ulistac's Fall 2006 Recognition BBQ. The fun begins at the end of the restoration workday on **Saturday, November 4th**. Individuals who have volunteered for 3 or more workdays this year will be awarded a 2006 Ulistac t-shirt. *There's still time to qualify!*



Artistic rendering of t-shirt

... Field trip curriculum

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to integrate field trip themes into their classroom curriculum. Age-appropriate children's books related to each grade level's theme are also recommended.

For more information about field trips to Ulistac, or to schedule a field trip for your class, contact the Outreach Coordinator for Ulistac Natural Area: ulistac@scu.edu.

University students gather data, insights at Ulistac

Given its physical proximity and close relationship with Santa Clara University, Ulistac is ideally placed for university student field trips and faculty research. Last spring you may have noticed a roped-off section of unplanted grassland, across the trench from the Bird and Butterfly Garden, being swarmed by students from Dr. Virginia Matzek's restoration ecology course. The students spent 3 weeks doing field labs and collecting data from the experiment, which is designed to see if changes to our current mow-

ing practices can help encourage the native perennial grasses to regenerate. The experiment will continue for three years.

Also last spring, Dr. Keith Warner's course, "Spirituality and Sustainability," visited Ulistac for an evening walk, the highlight of which was a huge skink sighted on the trail.

This fall, Ulistac welcomes Dr. Janice Edgerly-Rooks's insect biology course, whose students will be counting and collecting insects and other invertebrates.



California bunch grass

Student research helps prepare for fall planting

Three Bay Ecology students at Wilcox High School have collected cuttings of successful native plant residents in the Bird and Butterfly Garden.

The students spent parts of their summer vacation at Ulistac, collecting cuttings from mature shrubs. They treated the cuttings with rooting hormone and grew them in water until they had enough roots to be moved into a pot with soil.

Paul Bargouth, Deleys Hamm,

Michelle Houser, and Amna Ahmad hope those cuttings will grow successfully in their current homes: one gallon pots. When ready, the cuttings will be planted in the Fall, as the newest members of the Bird and Butterfly Garden.

This project not only provides a research opportunity for students, but also results in free, local, and successful native plants to further enhance the Bird and Butterfly Garden.



Verbena (*Verbena lilacena*)

Plant spotlight: Collecting native oak acorns

Acorn collection season is here!

Help us gather acorns from oak trees local to Santa Clara County.

Here are some helpful guidelines if you would like to contribute:

- Collect acorns from **valley oaks** and **coastal live oaks**.
- Collect acorns only from trees in **Santa Clara County**.
- Place acorns in **labeled** bags indicating the species of tree and its location.

Details...

- Collect acorns **from the tree**, not the ground.
- Hold the acorn in your fingers and turn it lightly. If the acorn does not pop out of its cap, leave it on the tree.
- Discard any acorns with holes or damage.
- Collect brown acorns, not green
- Bring your collection to a restoration work day this fall!



Valley oak (*Quercus lobata*)

Animal spotlight: Nuttall's woodpecker

Last year, a Nuttall's woodpecker and its young were spotted in a branchless pine tree trunk between the northern most trail and the wetlands. This year, they have been spotted further down the trail, towards the levee.

A careful and quiet observer might be able to watch them.

Although most volunteer efforts at Ulistac focus on planting, weeding, and watering, it is important to remember other factors that are involved in the habitats and ecosystems at Ulistac: a dead tree may look like nothing special, but it could be a home for many animals.



Nuttall's woodpecker

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Ulistac Outreach Center

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Ulistac Natural Area is a native habitat restoration and education project, connecting people to the natural and human history of Santa Clara Valley, and serving as a model for urban open space and community action.

VISIT US ONLINE AT
[HTTP://WWW.SCU.EDU/ENVS/ULISTAC](http://www.scu.edu/envs/ulistac)

I'd like to support the Ulistac Natural Area Restoration & Education Project!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Please check here if you would like to receive our semi-monthly e-mail updates.

Enclosed, please find my
donation of:

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___ \$75 ___ \$100

___ Other (\$____)

Please make checks payable to: Ulistac Natural Area c/o SCU ESI

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