



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 7, 2013

CONTACT: Brian Trautwein, EDC, 963-1622

Removal of Diversion Pipes Protects Arroyo Quemada Creek Plastic pipelines diverted water away from creek habitat for rare fish and frogs

Gaviota Coast, CA – The Environmental Defense Center’s (“EDC”) proactive work has resulted in the removal of several water pipes that had diverted water from Arroyo Quemada Creek, a “Critical Habitat” for endangered steelhead trout and the home of important wildlife on the Gaviota Coast. EDC had identified the plastic water pipes connected to small cement dams in the Creek as a threat to Creek flows, which are necessary to provide habitat for several rare animals. As part of a cooperative effort, the Santa Barbara County Public Works Department removed the pipes that had been installed by the prior property owner. As a result, the Creek flows more freely through its many pools which support federally threatened red-legged frogs and many other important wildlife species.

Arroyo Quemada Creek flows from the Los Padres National Forest through Baron Ranch, which was purchased by Santa Barbara County in 1993 to serve as a buffer to the County’s Tajiguas Landfill on the Gaviota Coast. The County is currently working on a comprehensive project to restore over 50 acres of creek and wildlife habitat as well as continuing to cultivate avocados and cherimoyas on the ranch. Additionally, the County worked with local trail organizations and opened the Baron Ranch Trail in 2010, allowing public access three days a week (Sat – Mon).

“Water diversion projects in local creeks can completely dry out the creeks, leaving no water for the fish and wildlife that inhabit them. Our thanks to the County for cooperating with EDC to remove the water diversions and for restoring the creek,” said Brian Trautwein, EDC’s Environmental Analyst and Watershed Program Coordinator.

“Restoring the Arroyo Quemada Creek habitat is a high priority for the County. In addition to removing the pipes, we’ve planted thousands of native plants to improve habitat for wildlife along the stream,” according to Leslie Wells, Program Leader, Resource Recovery & Waste Management Division, Santa Barbara County Department of Public Works.

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The Environmental Defense Center protects and enhances the local environment through education, advocacy, and legal action and works primarily within Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties. Since 1977, EDC has empowered community based organizations to advance environmental protection. Program areas include protecting coast and ocean resources, open spaces and wildlife, and human and environmental health.