

Restoration Project Updates

May 20, 2019

Phase 3 came through the prolonged high flows with only minor scouring. Tree cages loaded up with debris and some leaned a bit but most are intact. Peak flows reached 9,000 cfs, higher than two years ago and in the range of a ten-year recurrence interval flow. The floodplain at Phase 3 remained flooded longer than most sites along Lower Putah Creek due to the low elevation. Inundated floodplains provide exceptional fish rearing habitat and add to aquatic invertebrate habitat which is the base of the food chain. Gravel continues to migrate through the Neil property, filling an upstream pool between Bertinoia and Neil and creating a new riffle near the site of the temporary sheet pile dam in 2011. Gravel from Dry Creek is moving toward Winters Putah Creek Park where it will allow the channel to be self-forming with alternating gravel bars and pool-riffle sequence. Almost all of the trees and shrubs planted in the fall are leafing out. Torrent sedge is sprouting along the edge of the flow channel and is being lightly grazed by Canada geese. As weather allows we are continuing to dig test holes on the floodplain and selecting trees and shrubs to match soil and hydrology. We are staging compost to add to the planting holes. Beavers are foraging heavily west of the Winters Car Bridge on unprotected trees and shrubs. The forest has nearly filled in but some additional caging may be needed to protect favored species like cottonwoods.

SCWA has contracted with UCD hydrology/soils/civil engineering professor Mark Grismer to install, monitor and interpret data from shallow groundwater monitoring wells along Putah Creek including two locations at Winters Putah Creek Nature Park as part of long-term hydrology studies. SCWA is proposing to amend our agreement with the City to include these monitoring wells.