

Carpinteria Creek Coalition is Awarded \$42,500 to Control *Arundo*

By David Chang, Agricultural Commissioner's Office

The County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office has been awarded \$42,500 to conduct an *Arundo donax* weed removal project on Carpinteria Creek. The grant was awarded by the California Department of Fish and Game's Adaptive Watershed Improvement Program. The Agricultural Commissioner is working with the Carpinteria Creek Watershed Coalition as part of a program to enhance and restore the creek for steelhead habitat, erosion control, and clean water purposes.

Arundo donax, or Giant Reed, is a significant weed pest of rivers, creeks, and beaches as it can grow up to thirty feet tall and form impenetrable clumps hundreds of feet across. *Arundo* can overrun native habitat, create a flood and fire hazard, lower wildlife habitat quality, and increase erosion and property damage.

The Agricultural Commissioner will be seeking landowners' permissions to conduct the work and gain access to infested properties. If your property sits on the creek nearby a patch of *Arundo*, then you will soon be receiving, or should have received, a letter requesting written permission for access. Those within 300 feet of the project will be receiving a notice of the project's activities later this year.

David Chang, project coordinator, hopes that all the landowners see the value in this project and grants their permission. "It is important to get everyone's permission," notes David. "This is a local eradication project, where I hope to remove all the *Arundo* in the stream corridor. We will do our best to limit extraneous impacts to your landscape and daily activities."

The removal of *Arundo* will entail the use of crews of perhaps a half dozen or more workers who will use chainsaws and loppers to cut the *Arundo* down and haul the cut *Arundo* out of the creek bed, to be chipped for eventual disposal either at the Tajiguas Landfill or used as mulch at a nearby orchard, outside of the stream corridor. A second smaller crew will then re-cut the *Arundo* closer to the ground and carefully hand apply a small amount of glyphosate herbicide to each cut stump. Some sites will be replanted with native vegetation.

This first phase of the project is expected to begin in late summer or early fall of 2005. Not all properties may be visited in the first phase. Replanting with native vegetation where applicable will begin on some sites in the winter of 2006.

A meeting is scheduled to explain the project and answer questions from involved landowners on Thursday, March 24th at 7:00 P.M., at the Veteran's Memorial Building Auditorium, at 941 Walnut Ave, Carpinteria. The public may attend; however, involved landowners will be given priority seating. For more information, contact David Chang at (805) 681-5600.

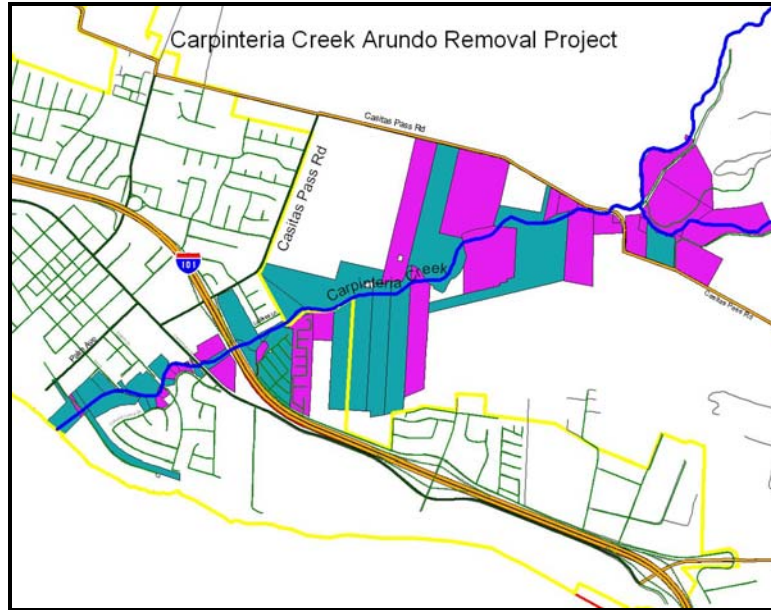


Figure 1: The shaded properties along Carpinteria Creek indicated on the map contain or are adjacent to a patch of *Arundo*.



Figure 2: The large, bamboo-like plant on the left is *Arundo donax*, growing along the railroad tracks in Carpinteria.