Solano County California

SUPERVISOR MONICA BROWN NEWSLETTER

Students present findings to Solano County Water Agency Board

Layo Ogunleye, Jada Cuffie, Kenzie Jacobs and Mia Zabat presented the results of their class's biomonitoring survey of Laurel Creek to the Solano County Water Agency Board at its May meeting.

The four students and their classmates in Jennifer Ault's Advanced Placement Environmental Science class at Vanden High School participated in a community science effort to monitor stream health throughout Solano County as part of the four-week Solano County Biomonitoring Program, a program provided by Solano Resource Conservation District.

The 15-year-old community science program offers a hands-on field trip at a nearby creek to high schools in Solano County. This unique long-term data set generated by students is part of a regional study conducted by our partner Dr. Patrick Edwards of Portland State University. Dr. Edwards and his team are working to develop ways in which participating students can better share their results with biomonitoring professionals and publish their findings in a scientific journal.

Jennifer Ault, AP Environmental Science teacher at Vanden, said, "The Biomonitoring Program meshes perfectly with the AP curriculum, and it gives students a chance to participate in meaningful environmental science in their own watershed. We do real work on the creek, which the students take very seriously, but we also really enjoy being outside in one of the wild parts of the County. Solano RCD's program is really special."

In their presentation, the students offered the Board a well-organized and very engaging recap of their work this spring, focusing on the science learned during the program and the lessons they took away by participating. They discussed the sense of community and the understanding of the importance of human actions they gained from their experience. Furthermore, they explained the lessons they had learned about the differences between appearances and the reality of a healthy creek, and how that knowledge supported a more environmentally-conscious mindset going forward. Some students talked about coming away from the experience with a greater sense of how they can include environmental science in their futures, and others spoke of the impacts humans have, even unintentionally, on our local waterways.

The Solano County Biomonitoring Program is free to participating schools and is made possible with support from the Solano County Water Agency, Solano County Department of Resource Management, City of Benicia, Vallejo Flood and Wastewater District and the Fairfield Suisun Sewer District.

The RCD also offers free, hands-on, place-based watershed education throughout Solano County to third graders and sixth graders. These programs rely on the support of local donors, including Solano County Water Agency.

For more information, please email education@solanorcd.org.