

Land-use forum on soil erosion

Workshop to address watershed problems

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Santa Cruz Mountains property owners who had soil wash away during recent storms can learn how to prevent future losses at two different stream-care meetings set for the next two weeks.

On Thursday, the Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District will host a land-use forum to address soil erosion and water issues in the San Lorenzo Valley.

Watershed issues

On June 3, the conservation district will team with the volunteer-run Soquel Watershed Group to host an informational workshop addressing watershed issues in the Santa Cruz Mountains above Soquel.

Speakers at the Soquel forum will present practical information on how streams and watersheds operate, and what steps landowners near streams and creeks can take to prevent future storm damage and enhance water quality.

How to get permits

A spokeswoman from the Department of Fish and Game will explain when projects near creeks and streams require permits and how property owners can obtain them. The program will include a talk about streamside habitat and a field trip to Soquel Creek.

Workshop planners are encouraging representatives from local agencies and organizations working on specific projects within the watershed to attend. Organizers hope to identify projects undertaken by different groups to improve stream beds, water conditions and fishery habitats, and to

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prevent erosion within the Soquel watershed.

"Everyone who would have any interest or concern in the watershed is invited to participate," said Karminder Aulakh, a soil conservation aide with the resource district. "The more (cooperation and communication), the less chance for conflict or misunderstanding."

The Soquel Watershed runs from the Summit and Monterey Bay between Arana Gulch to the north and Porter Gulch to the south. The watershed is laced with Amaya, Morrell, Bates, and Hinkley creeks, and other seasonal tributaries that drain into Soquel Creek, which empties into Monterey Bay in Capitola.

Landowners in other areas, especially those along waterways, could benefit from the information presented at the workshop, Aulakh said.

"It's just as relevant for people living in the San Lorenzo Valley watershed, or the Aptos watershed," Aulakh said.

The San Lorenzo Valley forum will be followed with additional

workshops to address land-use and water-use concerns identified by residents at Thursday's meeting.

The June workshop is the second of three stream-care seminars planned by the Resource Conservation District, a non-regulatory agency that works to promote local stewardship of the county's natural resources, and by the Soquel Watershed Group, a clearinghouse organization comprised of individuals, businesses and agencies committed to enhancing the watershed environment. The first workshop, held in February, attracted more than 50 property owners.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

The San Lorenzo Valley Watershed informational meeting will be held Thursday from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Zayante Fire Department, 7700 East Zayante Road in Felton. The Stream Care Workshop is set for Saturday, June 3, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Mountain Elementary School, 3042 Old San Jose Road in Soquel. The workshop's \$10 registration fee includes educational materials. For information on either meeting, call (408) 688-1562.