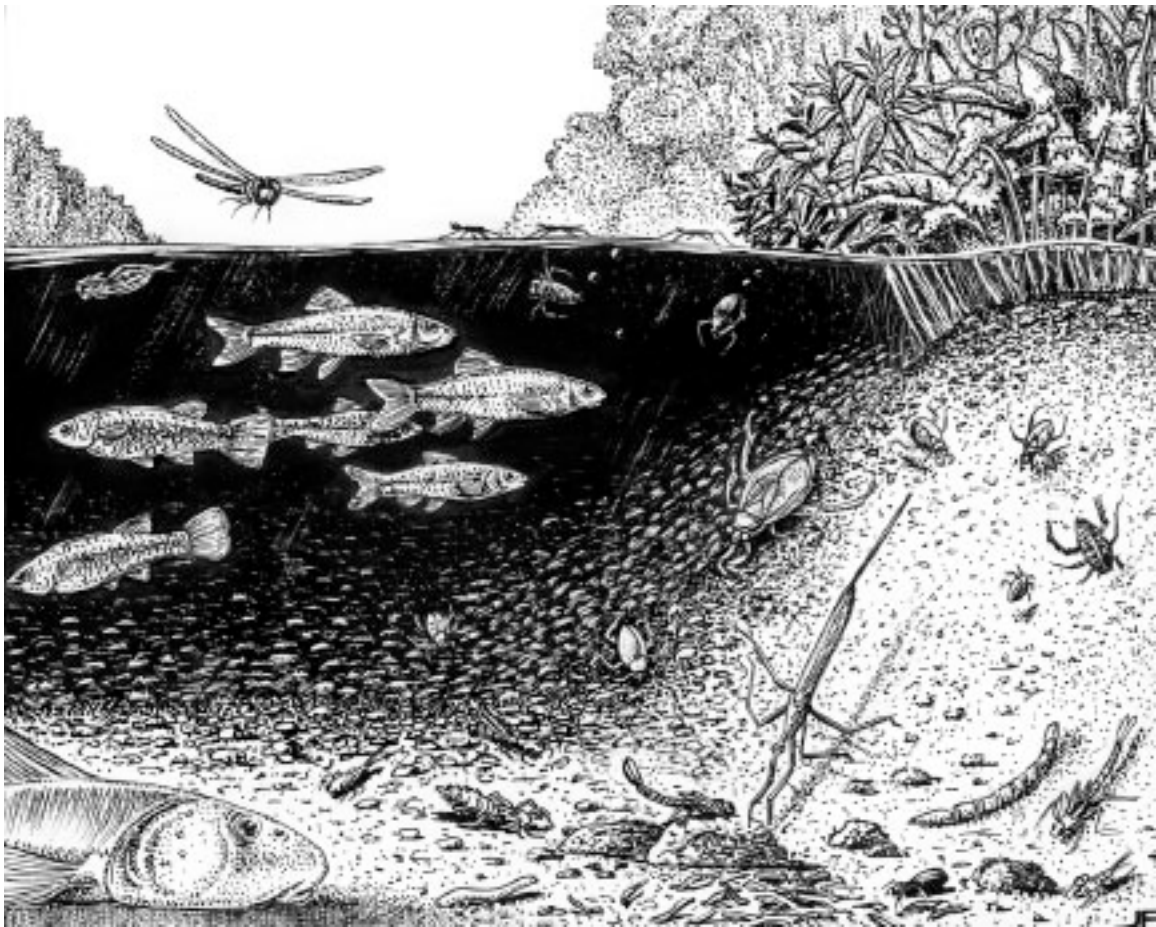


Celebrating the Return of the Fish

Sherry Sass



Go fish! Even if they're only three inches long, those longfin dace are a lovely sight. As a former fisheries biologist, I was especially thrilled to see the little critters zipping through the clear water once the upgraded sewage treatment plant in Rio Rico came on line. It had been at least two years (probably many more, as no one had sampled fish in the river for quite a while before 2007) since native fish had been documented in the Santa Cruz. (See the river health assessment article in this issue for more on the sad state of its water quality before the upgrade)

We should all celebrate a victory here! It took over a decade of advocacy and partnership (and a lawsuit as the 'stick') to get the plant's effluent up to par, but it has happened! Many groups and agencies helped make this enormous binational project a reality, and now we should rejoice to see the return of the fish. Their presence should be an inspiration to FOSCR, also a tiny entity, but one that will endure, like the river, as long as we continue to care.

Speaking of which, we can always use more active volunteers, especially in the arenas of public outreach and membership. New Board members are also

needed, especially from the south county area. So if you're interested, please contact FOSCR (or call Patricia, our Volunteer Coordinator at 668-2535 or me at 398-8269).

Thanks for caring about the river! This bountiful heart of our community will not survive unless we continue to work to keep it healthy and flowing.

[Sherry Sass is a co-founder and current president of Friends of the Santa Cruz River, an all-volunteer nonprofit dedicated to protecting the flow, water quality and riparian habitat supported by the river, through monitoring, education and advocacy. Visit our website at www.friendsofsantacruzriver.org.]