

Red Rock Spring - Final Conservation Project for Midland 101

By Ben Munger '79

For the final conservation project for Midland 101 in 2009-10, the freshman class completed the process of protecting Red Rock Spring from trampling by cattle. The water quality will be improved for wildlife and cattle and the native grasses protected in the wetland below the spring. The project includes an exclusion fence that protects half an acre of wetlands. In another location on Midland's property, the protection of Pistol Spring in 2001 produced an extensive wetland area and permanently protected a prolific source of clean water for wildlife and cattle. To get to Red Rock Spring there is a ten minute walk into the site where freshman dug post holes and placed corner posts for a fence around the wet area of the spring. In two block periods the freshman accomplished much of the work needed to finish this project. The work was completed in March 2010.



Left-Right: Chloe Calder, Irvin Alvarez, Callie Bryan, Savanna Cooley

Red Rock Spring is located above Birabent Canyon behind Serpentine Mountain. It has long been a source of water for wildlife and cattle. The spring is unique because it supports a dense population of Deergrass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*). This type of Deergrass is important to the Chumash for basketry. Within half a mile of the Chumash village of Soxtunocmu, Red Rock Spring was probably an important plant collection area for the Inezeno Chumash.

The freshmen dug out an area below the head of the spring to place a collection box for the spring water. They dug a pipeline trench from the collection box to the location of a new trough to allow cattle and wildlife access to clean water. Another trench was dug to return the water to the wet area below the spring. In some areas the ground was too hard

and rocky and we had to build rock gabion boxes to stabilize the fence posts. In digging the area for the trough gravel was quarried and carried to the spring head to act as a filter for sand and mud.

To pay for the materials for this project Midland partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation District and received an EQUIP contract that shares half the cost. There are several other projects yet to be completed on this EQUIP grant between now and 2011. Projects like these at Midland help students learn while doing - to connect what they are learning in the classroom to the real world. **Any parents or community members that are interested in working on these conservation projects should contact Ben Munger at bmunger@midland-school.org.**