

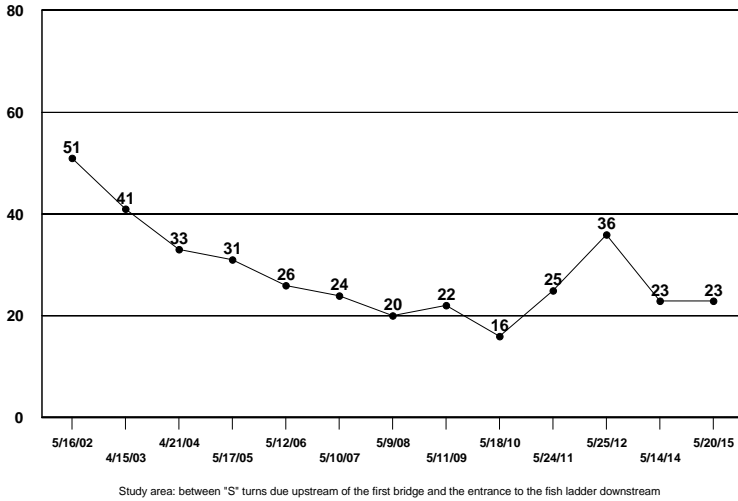
2015 STONEFLY EXOSKELETON COUNT

FAUNTLEROY CREEK

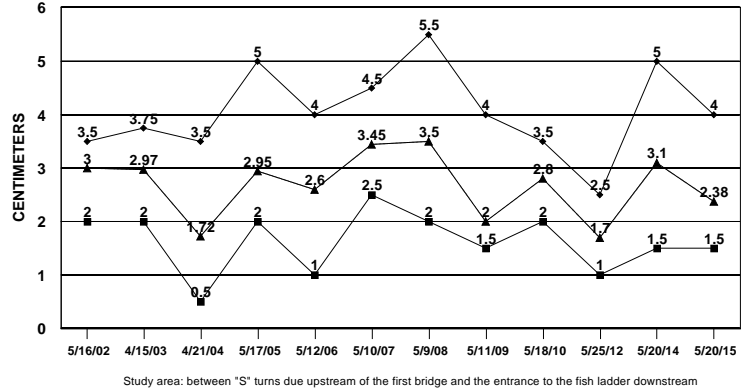
Sixth-grade science students from Our Lady of Guadalupe School conducted the annual stonefly exoskeleton count on May 20, following established protocol. Teams counted all stonefly exoskeletons they could find on trees, on bridges, on the wooden fence adjacent to the creek, and on the ground beside these structures in the study area. The measuring team measured 10 torsos to find longest, shortest, and mean (average) size.

FINDINGS

NUMBER OF STONEFLY EXOSKELETONS
FAUNTLEROY CREEK



LENGTH OF STONEFLY EXOSKELETONS
TORSO LENGTH AND MEAN
FAUNTLEROY CREEK



In about 15 minutes of search time, students were able to locate 23 exoskeletons – 15 on trees, 8 on bridges, and none on the fence or ground. Most were at the bridge and large tree at the entrance to the fish ladder. Compared with other years, size was typical, with no very large or very small.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

In the fall of 2014, 19 spawners came into the creek between the fish ladder and the next street (45th Ave. SW). Nutrients from those carcasses would have been available to stonefly and other aquatic larva in the study area. In benthic sampling conducted just prior to spawning season, this same class of students found only six macroinvertebrates, a number that could not be considered abundant. Volunteers checking in early 2015 found no home hatch from fall spawning, which meant that (likely) no fry would have been feeding in the study area.

OBSERVATIONS

Factors that may have contributed to this year's findings:

- Volunteers checking the smolt trap at the entrance to the fish ladder observed that early spring weather drew stoneflies out of the water sooner; by May 20, many of their exoskeletons could have disintegrated
- Given the low number of stonefly larva found in the fall, the number molting in the spring would predictably be low.

SUGGESTIONS

- Schedule the count in late April/early May.
- Continue engaging older students in this research to reduce the likelihood of error.