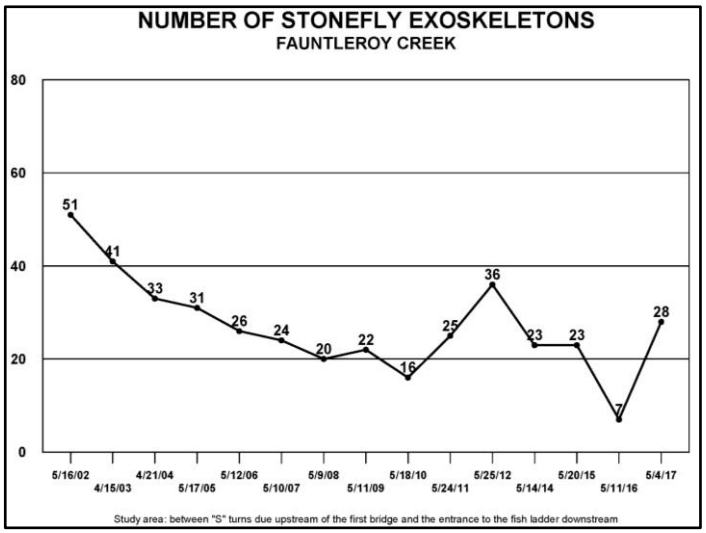
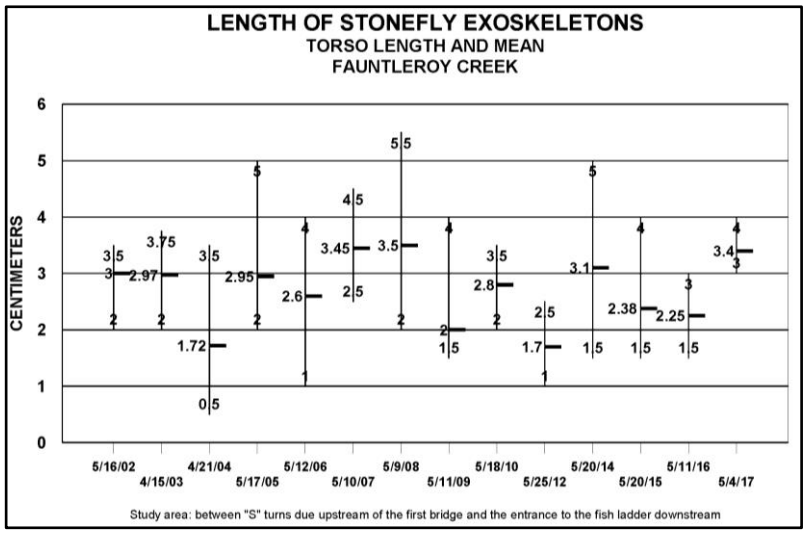
2017 STONEFLY EXOSKELETON COUNT
FAUNTLEROY CREEK

Sixth-grade science students from Our Lady of Guadalupe School conducted the annual stonefly exoskeleton count in the designated study area on May 4, following established protocol, with teacher Michael Stein-Ross. The count coincided with the school's annual salmon release in the upper creek. Teams counted all stonefly exoskeletons they could find on trees, on bridges, and on the ground by trees, bridges, and fences adjacent to the creek. The measuring team measured all torsos to find longest, shortest, and mean (average) size.

FINDINGS





In about 15 minutes of search time, students located 28 exoskeletons- 14 on one tree, 14 on the underside of the three bridges over the main channel, and none on the ground or fencing. Mean size was comparable to other years, with a narrower range from smallest to largest.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

- Only seven coho spawners came into the creek in fall 2016. Nutrients from their carcasses would have been available to stonefly and other aquatic larva in the study area.
- In benthic sampling conducted by this same class in October 2016, just before spawning season, they found just seven macroinvertebrates. All were aquatic worms; no stoneflies.

OBSERVATIONS

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

- The presence of spawner carcasses in fall 2016 would have increased nutrients in the reach over the prior, correlating with an increase in aquatic larva.
- Volunteers spotted the first documented stonefly exoskeleton on March 17, suggesting that they began exiting the creek seven weeks before the count.

SUGGESTION

Consider unlinking the count and release so the count can be done by mid April. If taking time away from the classroom then isn't feasible, consider designating a few students to do the count after hours.