

2016-2017 Creek Stewardship Program Summary

Prepared for City of Santa Rosa Waterways Advisory Committee by Dylan Gallagher and Alistair Bleifuss

About the Creek Stewardship Program

For 16 years, the Creek Stewardship Program (CSP) partnership of the Sonoma County Water Agency and the City of Santa Rosa has helped the public learn about the benefits of creeks while encouraging their assistance to protect water quality and wildlife habitat, improve the creek trail system, and enhance public safety along the 100 miles of creeks within the City's Urban Growth Boundary.

Outreach

Educational outreach materials are distributed at events, available at libraries and more than two dozen City facilities, and sent out upon request. 5,000 copies of the new *Creek Trails of Santa Rosa Map and Guide* were distributed. Other outreach highlights include Creek Stewardship T-shirts for volunteers, *the Urban Creek Care Guide*, creek updates to 1,100 contacts through the City's GovDelivery email system, colorful 'Ours to Protect' signage where streets cross creeks, and mileage and education signage at creek trailheads.

Partners and Activities

The CSP supports individuals and groups as Creek Stewards who take care of creeks and report situations that need attention. The Program worked with 48 community groups and 50 youth groups, reaching 10,380 residents, including 8,673 youth.

Volunteers contributed 6,108 community service hours during 87 creek cleanups. Also, volunteers helped with 60 creek restoration and monitoring activities. Envirichment, an environmental education consultant, led most of the 260 education and stewardship activities for youth.



Planting sedges at Flat Rock Park

Creek Cleanups

The CSP utilizes volunteers, Supervised Adult Crews (SAC) from the County Probation Department, Sonoma County Youth Ecology Corps (SCYEC), and City staff to clean, maintain, and enhance Santa Rosa creeks and the creek trail system. During the year:

- In 67 workdays, SAC cleaned up 750 yards³ of trash from creeks.
- In 66 workdays, SCYEC cleaned up 131 yards³ of trash, removed 69 yards³ of vegetation encroaching upon creek trails, and enhanced 60 access points to the trail system.
- Storm Water and Creeks staff removed 98 yards³ of trash and responded to 49 MySantaRosa citizen reports regarding trash in creeks.
- Volunteers cleaned up 104 yards³ of trash.



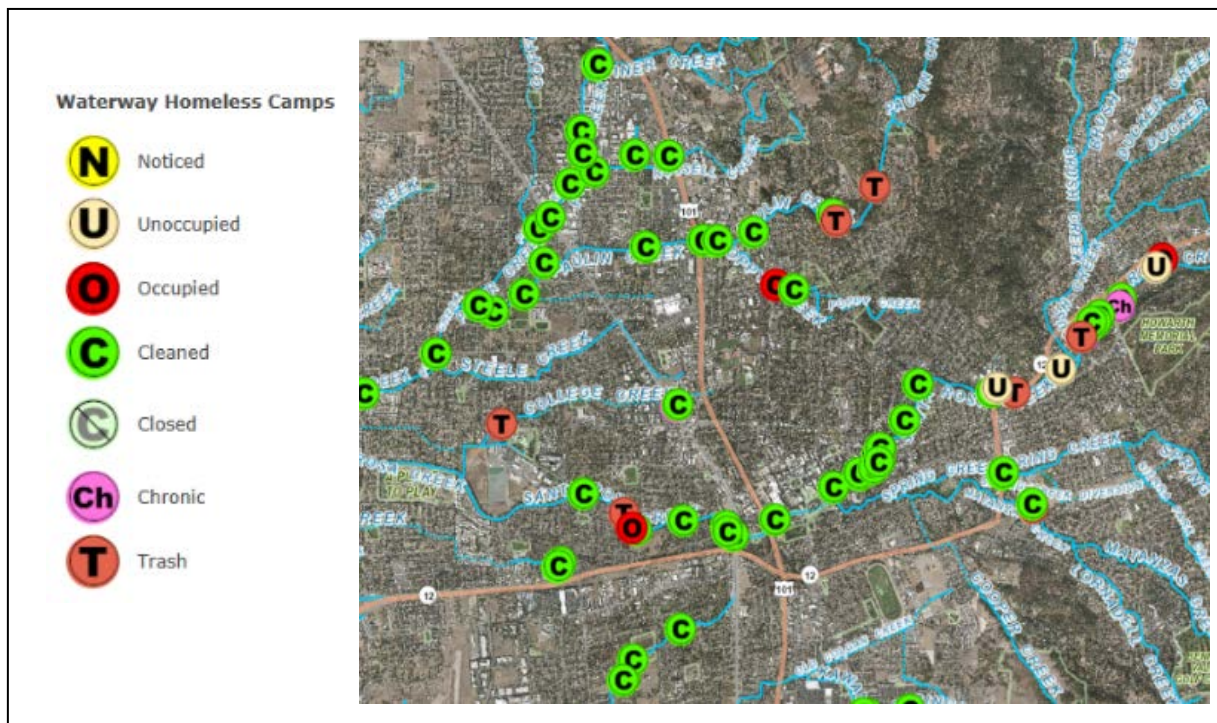
Monthly First Saturday Cleanup on the Prince Memorial Greenway

In total, 1,083 yards³ of trash was removed from waterways. Most of the trash is attributable to the 173 active and 409 abandoned camps that were cleaned up with assistance from Police and Catholic Charities.



OUR FUTURE IN EVERY DROP





The Water and Police Departments developed an ESRI Collector App for Waterway Homeless Camps to track and communicate the progress in identifying, noticing, and cleaning up camps and other trash sites. The Collector App significantly improved the efficiency of creek cleanups.

Pollution Reduction

Along the creek trail system, the CSP worked with SAC and SCYEC to manage vegetation to improve visibility, clear encroaching growth, and reduce fire fuel loads. To mitigate for litter and pet waste resulting from the public's trail usage, the CSP installed and oversees the servicing schedule of 80 trash bins (4,160 service stops per year). Creek Stewards refill 33 pet waste bag dispensers at creek trailheads (90,000 pet waste bags were stocked this year). Pollution prevention signage was posted to address problems of dumping, dog waste, dogs off leash, homeless camps, sharing the trail, littering, and vandalism of creek trees.

Security fences under bridges and at storm drain outfalls were monitored and maintained to reduce the environmental impacts of camping. A Special Trash Assessment in collaboration with the Russian River Watershed Association gathered data on the probable sources of trash in waterways. This information will help guide Santa Rosa's efforts to meet State requirements to reduce trash in waterways.

Acknowledgements

In conclusion, the CSP sincerely appreciates the Sonoma County Water Agency and City of Santa Rosa for their dedication to care for our creeks, our 98 community and youth partners, and every exceptional Creek Steward and volunteer, all of whom contribute to the cleanliness and health of our creeks, which are truly 'Ours to Protect.'

