

CHEER up your Creek!

COASTAL HABITAT EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION
(CHEER)

NEWSLETTER OF THE PAJARO RIVER WATERSHED 12/31/2018

OUR MISSION

Coastal Habitat Education and Environmental Restoration, also known as CHEER, is a registered 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization with a fresh take on environmental programming. It's mission is to restore coastal ecosystems but to do so in a way that safeguards resource based local economies. CHEER recognizes that varied interests are represented in local economies. It believes that assessing and reconciling these interests so that each group profits by cooperation in restoration efforts, is the key to more effective environmental programming.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- 1) Clean watersheds that once teemed with wild Steelhead Trout but where Steelhead Trout are now listed endangered or threatened due to environmental impacts.
- 2) Restore Steelhead populations to renewed watersheds.
- 3) Involve the community in each step of the process to improve chances of attaining and preserving project results.
- 4) Find ways for people to profit by cooperation and collaboration with CHEER objectives.
- 5) Provide for CHEER's financial sustainability.

CHEER BOARD

President: Eleanor Villareal—February 18, 1948—October 28, 2018

Eleanor was a Founding Board Member of CHEER. She was instrumental in developing the name, by-laws, goals, mission and vision for CHEER. She will be missed by all that knew her energy, friendship, commitment and sense of humor.

CEO/Executive Director: Herman Garcia

Chief Operating Director: Irma Batrez

Secretary: David Hamblin

Treasurer: Steve Guerriero

Board Member: Mike Sanchez

Board Member: Chris Gonzalez



Protest March

Garlic Capital to State Capital

To save our Steelhead Trout!

163 miles were walked in protest of California Department of Fish and Wildlife policy suspending fish rescue permits for non-governmental organizations and non-profits. The march began with a rally in Gilroy at Christmas Hill Park. Following the rally, the marchers began walking north with the objective of reaching Sacramento in twelve (12) days. The leader of the marchers was, current CEO and Founding President, Herman Garcia. The walking route was carefully mapped by Aaron Garcia, criss-crossing the state back and forth while heading north and avoiding highways, using city streets and county roads. Volunteer marchers used only city streets and Herman travelled the remote county roads.



Protest March....Cont'd

He was followed by the CHEER truck which was transformed into a welfare vehicle while towing a porta potty.

Rallies were scheduled in six cities along the route starting in Gilroy, Morgan Hill, Milpitas, Fairfield, Rocklin and Sacramento. Volunteers collected more than 2,500 signatures of support along the route.

Historically, CHEER has received permits for the rescue of federally protected Steelhead Trout listed as threatened on the Endangered Species Act. CHEER in partnership with the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Marine Fisheries Service single-handedly saved our fisheries and water quality, we were on the road to recovery! State regulations have now had negative impacts on our water and fish.

The state cannot duplicate the service CHEER volunteers provide at **ZERO COST**. Volunteers are the **first responders** when rescues are required. The CHEER truck is the fish ambulance. State and Federal staff are welcome to join CHEER when available, unfortunately state funding and resources are not available on a daily basis during the dry back season.

Raising taxes on Californians to pay for a service already provided for free by NGO's is ludicrous. Has CDFW gone mad? The fight will continue until this irresponsible policy is changed!

Thank you to the Planning Committee Members, Volunteers, Donors and Board Members, for your ideas and support.

Thank you to Sportsman's Warehouse for the Rally locations in Milpitas, Fairfield and Rocklin!



Heartland Interpretive Signs

CHEER consulted with the Heartland Development during build-out on protections for Uvas Creek. Additional environmental controls were installed as needed during severe storm events. Heartland project manager, Jon Caucus, responded promptly to all environmental situations. Jon also



approved and installed 5 environmentally informative and educational signs that feature the Pajaro River Watershed. The trail begins at Santa Teresa bridge & 3rd st and extends into the Heartland development to Hecker Pass Highway! Now, the trail is complete and exhibits 9 signs which contain a variety of information from environmental concerns to the history of our valley!



The first 5 signs were suggested and designed by CHEER!

Water Resource Management—Tank Update

Unbelievably, June 16th marks the 10 year anniversary of our off-channel water storage project on Little Arthur Creek!

The goal: Create year-round Steelhead Trout rearing habitat in the upper reach of Little Arthur Creek.

Phase 1 is nearly complete, discussions and planning for Phase 2 are now underway. Phase 2 will enhance what has already been done and move our goal line further downstream. A large source of new water was explored and discussed. The planning stage will soon begin and the potential to create new rearing habitat is very exciting. Specific details will be made available as the planning phase is implemented.

Thank you to all the CHEER partners: National Marine Fisheries Service, Ca. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Trout Unlimited and all the participating residents of Redwood Retreat Rd!



We're **TIREd** of this!



Tire extraction and disposal are up again! 2015 had a record number of tires (1030) removed from local waterways. The tire count, so far, has spiked with more than 500 tires removed this year. Out distancing all other waterways, is the Pajaro River.

Just recently, a local farmer reported to CHEER he witnessed someone tossing a mattress and about a

dozen tires over the bank into a Pajaro River drainage. The response time was quick, with hopes of catching the perpetrator. Upon further investigation, the mattress and dozen tires were found. Evidently, this location is a historic dumping location, an additional 166 tires were found buried and were removed. For a one day total of 178 tires, plus the king sized mattress.

One day of pick-n-shovel extraction and placing tires on top of the bank for hauling. The second day consisted of loading and transporting to the San Martin transfer station at Recology South Valley.

It took 3 truck load round trips to complete the entire job.

Special thanks to Recology South Valley, HappyBoy Farms and John Graffigna!

This project was supported by Graniterock funding.



12 Cubic Yard dump on Pajaro River Drainage & Sgt. Ranch Wetland



After spending 3 weeks working on illegal dump sites along the county line (Santa Clara / San Benito) on the Pajaro River and thoroughly cleaning it up, ouch!

Some fool from San Jose, with a 12 cubic yard dump truck rolled into the area at the old beet loading station; raising the lift dump as he rolled through spread the debris over a large area.

A Pajaro River drainage and the Sgt. Ranch wetland were impacted. Cleanup could not start until a series of storms had passed. Meanwhile, 2 redlegged frogs, listed as "threatened" on the Endangered Species Act, took up residence in the garbage pile.

When the cleanup began, the frogs were relocated into wet habitat. The struggle continues to reclaim, restore and protect our natural resources.



Gavilan College

March 10th 2018



Youth Stewardship

November 10th 2018



The Debell Preserve at Christmas Hill Park was the target of TWO Gavilan College Creek Cleanups. Environmental Science and Life Science classes participated in partnership with CHEER, City of Gilroy and Recology South Valley. Abandoned homeless encampments were cleaned up and habitat in the riparian corridor of Uvas Creek was reclaimed and restored. The area between Miller Ave (Silva's Crossing) and Santa Teresa Bridge on both sides of the creek were worked on.

Common items removed were tents, bedding, shopping carts, bicycles, batteries, tarps, hand tools, electronics, tires (auto/bike), strollers, car seats, toys, paper and plastic products etc.



More than 60 cubic yards of garbage equivalent to 12 dump trucks were disposed of at the San Martin transfer station of Recology South Valley. Hundreds of garbage bags were filled!



Thank you to the partners for continuing to care for the protection and preservation of our natural resources!



Go Rams!!!

