

Community Creek Cleanups

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Over the past year, Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful has hosted a dozen cleanups with an average of 100 volunteers each to remove over 40 tons of trash from Coyote Creek. Participants range from 8-year-old Girl Scouts to seniors from the Vietnamese-American neighborhood group. Students from K-12 and colleges have all pitched in to “make new friends and getting the satisfaction of cleaning the creek”. Volunteers come out repeatedly because the “most rewarding part is knowing that I made the creek slightly cleaner”. We’ve hauled out legacy trash that has been in the creek for 30 years or more and trash from homeless people who cannot afford to live in Silicon Valley. This poster will highlight the successes from the cleanups and the myriad of partners who make these events happen to cleanup Coyote Creek.

Keywords: creek cleanups, volunteers, trash

Poster Topic: Partnerships for a Healthy Coyote Creek

Ebb and Flow: Connecting Creek and Curriculum at SJSU

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Over the past academic year, faculty and students at San Jose State University (SJSU) put energy into Coyote Creek as a focal point for academic endeavors. Students from advertising and journalism created articles, videos, and social media tools to help people learn more about and to participate in improving Coyote Creek. A climate action project focused taught students how to communicate the message of volunteering to heal the creek through incentives in partnership with local sports teams. SJSU hosted the Coyote Creek Howl conference in April, and faculty and students created the public relations for the conference, and developed and moderated sessions. A public, interactive ensemble performance capped off the academic efforts by students pairing homelessness and the creek. Also, students came out in force to the creek cleanups, including volunteering as photographers. This collaboration between the university and community groups continues to expand into the next academic year.

Keywords: university, curriculum, education, students

Poster Topic: Partnerships for a Healthy Coyote Creek

Coyote Creek Mural Project

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In April 2015, children and adults from Olinder Elementary School in San Jose and neighbors came out to unveil the Coyote Creek Mural. Olinder School is adjacent to Coyote Creek, so the creek was the inspiration for the mural. Through a collaboration between the City of San Jose's Clean Creeks, Healthy Communities project, CommUniverCity San Jose, the school and the surrounding communities not only determined the content of the mural, but also painted it back in December. One boy at the unveiling commented that he "painted the beaver and it looks so good". By participating in the process from design to implementation, the community takes pride and ownership over the mural and will continue to value this beautiful art as a reflection of their neighborhood. The mural also impacts the residents and visitors to the park who may have been unaware of the creek and the importance of the watershed.

Keywords: mural, school, neighborhood, creek community

Poster Topic: Partnerships for a Healthy Coyote Creek

Beautifying Neighborhoods with Creek-themed Public Art

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Over the course of the past four years, the Clean Creeks, Healthy Communities project in San Jose, CA, has engaged the neighborhoods and schools to take pride in their community. One of the most colorful ways to do so is by painting creek-themed art throughout the various neighborhoods that Coyote Creek winds through. These boxes are inspired by scenes in and around the creek, from water scenes, animals and birds, and people interacting with the creek. These beautiful works of art, designed and painted by professional artists, are available for viewing through a self-guided art walk. This collaboration between the City of San Jose, the neighborhoods, and professional artists reflect the pride of partnerships to beautify communities.

Keywords: art, creek, neighborhood, art walk, San Jose

Poster Topic: Partnerships for a Healthy Coyote Creek

Project Study on Clean Creeks, Healthy Communities

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The Clean Creeks, Healthy Communities (CCHC) project was created to improve water quality in Coyote Creek by preventing and removing trash resulting from littering, illegal dumping, and homeless encampments along the creek. The project area was a three-mile segment of Coyote Creek between Tully Road and Williams Street. This effort, led by the City of San José Environmental Services Department (ESD), partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Downtown Streets Team, Destination Home, the eBay Foundation, and San José State University's Urban and Regional Planning Department. The project successfully met all of its targets, including removing tons of trash from Coyote Creek and surrounding neighborhoods at numerous cleanups. Also, since the program's inception, staff has participated in or organized 109 outreach events to engage the community with activities such as litter collection, community outreach and public art and reached an estimated 13,417 residents and students with watershed protection and anti-litter messages. A mural and six utility boxes in the project area have been painted with watershed themed images. Structural barriers were erected in five locations within the project area to limit access.

The success of the project will be ultimately measured by its ability to create a tipping point whereby the community is able to maintain the creek with volunteer efforts and deter trash-generating behaviors through passive and active monitoring. By working together, SJSU Urban Planning students and faculty and the City of San José staff learned a lot about the neighborhoods and residents living along the project area of Coyote Creek, such as the language diversity of the neighborhood, and the relative awareness and perceptions of Coyote Creek.

Keywords: creek study, urban planning, university students, neighborhood, trash

Poster Topic: Partnerships for a Healthy Coyote Creek

The Coyote Creek Howl - A Community Conference

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In April 2015, San Jose State University hosted the Coyote Creek Howl, a one-day community conference focused on the ecology and human issues related to the Coyote Creek Watershed, the largest watershed in Santa Clara County. The conference culminated in actions that participants can take to help restore the creek. Attendees joined panelists in discussions about the creek's pollution problems, wildlife struggles and neighborhood concerns. Speakers inspired and motivated the community to work with representative groups to heal the creek. Success stories by agency and community groups identified potential collaboration opportunities. The publicity and published materials for the conference were the result of a SJSU public relations class project. Coyote Creek-inspired student projects were showcased, including art, journalism, advertising, and communication. Many of the 130 attendees, including 50 college students, are now collaborating and learning more about creating healthier South Bay creeks. New connections were forged, and collaborations are gaining momentum.

Keywords: university, conference, students, posters

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