

# Pinole Creek Unhoused Stewards Pilot Project

Transforming lives through ecological restoration and workforce development in West Contra Costa County



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# Project Background

## Part of a Larger Vision

- This transdisciplinary project, led by our PI at UC Davis, is part of the **Resilient and Equitable Urban Stream Corridors Project**, a California Climate Action Grant recipient addressing the intersection of climate change hazards, urban waterways, and housing instability.

## Research Foundation

- SJSU conducted interviews with streamside encampment residents and rapid trash assessments

- ✓ This project bridges environmental science and grassroots community engagement to create potential job pathways for those often underserved by environmental workforce development.





# Reaching Out to Similar Programs

**Pacific  Gateway**

**Pilot Program at  
Willow Springs Park**

**Long Beach, CA**

 **King County**

**Green Start Program**

**King County, WA**



**ECO: Environmental  
Career Opportunities**

**San Diego, CA**



**First Fridays at  
Ledgewood Creek**

**Fairfield, CA**



# Safe Organized Spaces Richmond

SOS Richmond serves the West Contra Costa County unhoused population. 85% of the staff is currently or recently unhoused. Our peer accompaniment model guides people "from tent to home" through partnerships with public agencies and nonprofit organizations.

## We Provide:

- **Engagement services** - in-encampment outreach, showers, laundry, trash cleanup
- **Wellness & Care services** - harm reduction, wellness centers, care advocacy
- **Workforce Development** - work experience, job training, 1:1 coaching, employment, referral







# Project Elements

## Innovative partnership

Collaboration between SOS Richmond and CCRCDC combines expertise in homeless services with environmental restoration.

## Lived Experience Focus

Centers participants with lived experience of homelessness, including those in urban creeks.

## Holistic Approach

Designed as a win-win for people and creeks, combining ecological literacy education with practical green jobs training.





# Program Breakdown

## **8 Week Ecological Literacy Training**

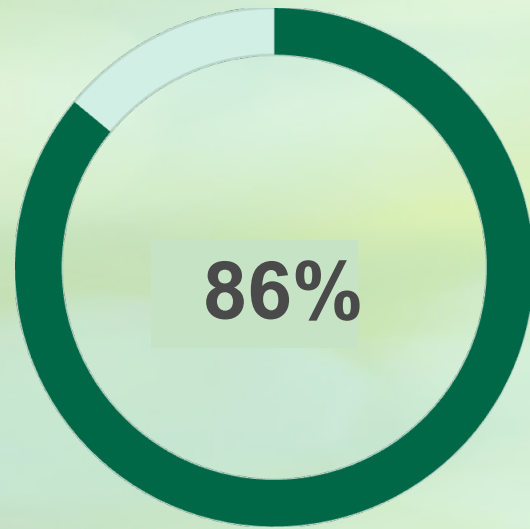
Nine participants engage in holistic environmental education covering watersheds, ecosystems, environmental justice, and practical restoration skills including native plant identification and water quality assessment.

## **12 Week Enhanced Work Experience**

Four participants selected from the training cohort receive hands-on experience in habitat restoration at Pinole Library site, learning herbicide safety, pruning, irrigation, and invasive species removal.

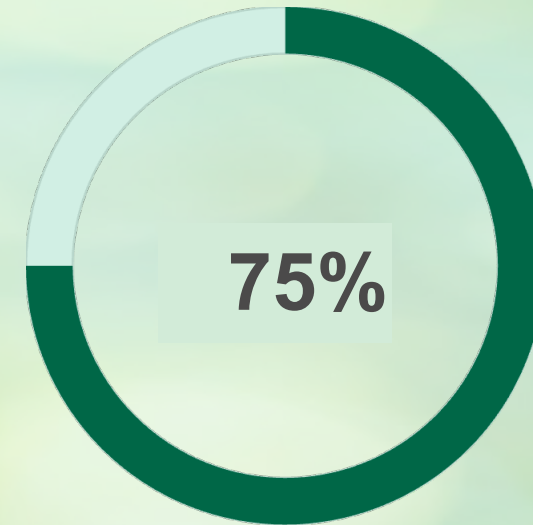


# Measuring Success



## Strong Satisfaction

6 out of 7 respondents "strongly agreed" that the program satisfied their expectations



## Knowledge Gained

Scores improved in 6 of the 8 fact-based questions from pre to post survey

✅ **Career Pathway Progress:** One 12-week program participant has recently interviewed for a green job training apprenticeship





# Benefits to Participants



## Career Development

Participants build valuable resume experience and gain specialized knowledge in ecological land management, opening doors to habitat restoration, landscaping, and environmental maintenance careers.



## Pathway to Stability

The program serves as a crucial stepping stone toward stable employment and housing, providing both practical skills and professional networks in the growing green jobs sector.

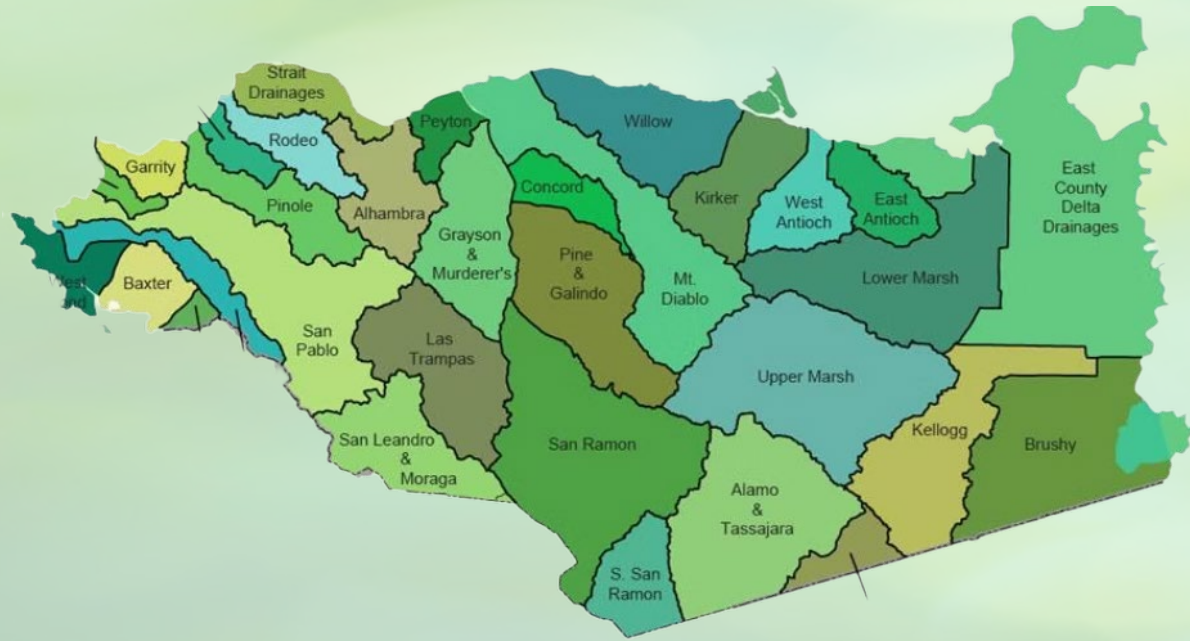


## Community Connection

Participants develop meaningful relationships with environmental professionals and community groups, while contributing directly to their local ecosystem's health and resilience.



# Growing Impact



**Join Our Mission:** Partner with us to create more opportunities where environmental stewardship meets social justice, building resilient communities.



## Geographic Expansion

Scaling the program throughout Contra Costa County to reach more communities and watersheds in need.



## Workforce Capacity

Building SOS Richmond staff's capacity for land management, creating a sustainable program



## Livable Wages

Establishing clear and achievable pathways to living-wage careers in environmental restoration and related green industries.



# Participant Feedback

“Keep up the good work and save the world one creek at a time”

“I love that you work with almost everyone, that can support the team...”

“I really enjoyed the program ... I realize I can help out and improve on keeping the water clean. It takes time and trust that others will follow.”

“I had a lot of fun and met a lot of new people ... Overall I understand more about the ecosystem—it's basically the circle of life.”

“I think the program was great. It's a great way for us to learn about our environment. Teaches us how to help keep our community clean.”



# Thank you!

## Contact us:



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