

CHEER up your Creek!

COASTAL HABITAT EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION
(CHEER)

NEWSLETTER OF THE PAJARO RIVER WATERSHED 12/31/2019

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

CEO/Executive Director: Herman Garcia **Chief Operating Director:** Irma Batrez

President: David Hamblin **Treasurer:** Steve Guerriero

Secretary: Mike Sanchez **Board Member:** Chris Gonzalez



Saving California's Water



January 2020, Herman Garcia met with new Secretary of Natural Resources, Wade Crowfoot, in Sacramento at the Capitol Building. The meeting was hosted by assemblyman, Robert Rivas, as well as Senator Bill Monning. The meeting was scheduled to discuss the handoff between former Secretary John Laird and Wade Crowfoot to ensure the agreements and policies established over 70 years ago are being reviewed, ammended and/or modified to meet the needs of responsible water management state-wide in the 21st century. Originally, Herman met with, then Secretary, John Laird upon discovering that agreements put in place 70 years ago were not allowing water districts to store water in California dams before November 1st each year. In recent years, California has experienced measurable rain fall a month earlier, starting in October. Therefore, the opportunities to capture and store water were available. However, due to antiquated policies and agreements water districts (state-wide) were required to release water into the ocean regardless of current water needs. Both meetings were successful and the process to develop and review outdated policies has began and continues. CHEER will provide updates as progress continues.

Pictured Above: (left to right) Senator Bill Monning, Assemblyman Robert Rivas, CHEER CEO Herman Garcia and Secretary Wade Crowfoot

Pajaro River at San Benito River Confluence

After decades of abuse and illegal dumping, by residents and previous land owners, CHEER finally received access to this area to implement habitat reclamation by the current property owner. As seen in the following pictures, the damage done completely destroyed the riparian habitat and flood plain for both the Pajaro and San Benito Rivers at the confluence location.



2019 breaks all records for illegal dumping in our watershed!

A new record was established for tire removal of 1,220. (previously 1,030 in 2014)



A new record of 420 tires removed from a single location. (Previously 157 removed in early 2019)



Garbage By The Numbers



17 vehicles removed from one location in the San Benito River. (14 cars/trucks, 1 RV and 2 ski-boats)



**Over 2,200 cubic yards of garbage was removed.
(previously 2,000 cubic yards in 2014)**

Unfortunately, majority of the damage has been caused by illegal dumping by local residents and high flows depositing garbage from upper watershed areas into the lower San Benito River and Pajaro River confluence. Typically, garbage retrieved from our waterways is mostly due to homeless encampments. However, this year it is due to illegal dumping from local residents. This trend has to END!

April 19th, 2006 American Rivers, a non-profit watchdog group, listed the Pajaro River as the #1 most endangered river in the U.S.

Thanks to our supporters and volunteers the Pajaro River is now **de-listed!**

Change MUST begin LOCALLY and carry forward GLOBALLY!

Volunteer Partners & Watershed Clean Ups



A lot of what CHEER accomplishes could not be done without the countless support provided by local businesses and volunteers. A special thank you goes out to the following organizations and groups:

Granite Rock, Allstate Insurance, Motive Products, Gavilan College, Rotary Club, Image First, Recology South Valley, Childrens Cancer Funding Group, Moki Smith Tree Service, Homeless Volunteers and CHEER Volunteers

