

# CHEER up your Creek!

Coastal Habitat Education and Environmental Restoration

(CHEER)

Newsletter of the

12-31-2015



Jorge Ruiz & Steve Guerriero

## Short Work of Boats

After months of waiting for the proper time, crew and equipment; the boats



extracted from the Pajaro River were made short work by the Recology South Valley Staff at the San Martin transfer station. Once the boats were removed from the trailer, Recology staff pulverized the craft in the blink of an eye! CHEER CEO, Herman Garcia, Steve Guerriero, and Jorge Ruiz loaded and transported the 20 ft. ski boat, 20 ft. outboard, and 16 ft. sail boat. Earlier in the year, CHEER volunteers staged the craft at Betabel Road. Board member, Bob Brem

smashed huge holes in the two fiberglass row boats to avoid theft. What happened next is predictable, Bob's smashed up row boats were stolen from the staging area.



Recology South Valley Manager & Staff



## Our Mission

Coastal Habitat and Environmental Restoration, also known as CHEER, is an organization with a fresh take on environmental programming. Its mission is to restore coastal ecosystems but do so in a way that safeguards resource-based local economics. CHEER recognizes that varied interests are represented in local economics. 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 up watersheds that once teemed with wild Steelhead Trout where Steelhead Trout are now severely 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's objectives
- 5) Provide for CHEER's financial sustainability

## CHEER Board

President: Eleanor Villarreal

Secretary: David Hamblin

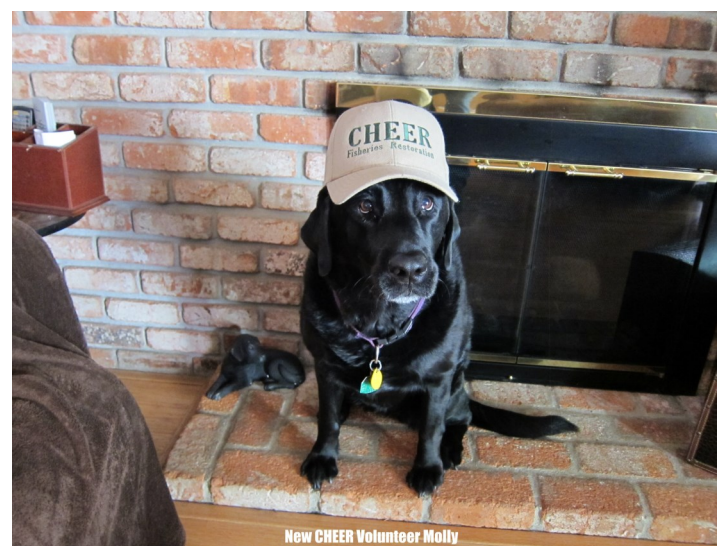
Treasurer: Steve Guerriero

Board Member: Mike Sanchez

Board Member: Chris Gonzalez

CEO/Executive Director: Herman Garcia

Chief Operations Director: Irma Batrez



Coastal Habitat Education and Environmental Restoration  
(CHEER)

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# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

## CHEER'S

### "WORLD FAMOUS COASTAL WATERSHEDS GARBAGE MUSEUM MOBILE EDUCATION EXHIBIT"



COMING TO A SCHOOL NEAR YOU!!! FROM PRESCHOOL TO UNIVERSITY LEVEL!!!

**SCHEDULE  
NOW!!!!**

**THE SOLUTION  
TO POLLUTION  
KEEP IT MOBILE  
FROM LOCAL  
TO  
GLOBAL**





Brownell Middle School



Gavilan College



# World Famous Coastal Watersheds Garbage Museum Mobile Education Exhibit



Luther Burbank



Eliot Elementary



Southside School



SOLORSANO MIDDLE SCHOOL



Renaissance High School

# ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS & COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP



EARTH DAY FAIR 2015

Big Sur, Ca

Henry Miller Library



Memorial Day Parade  
2015

Gilroy, Ca

Downtown to



Earth Day Fair  
2015

Gilroy, Ca

Christmas Hill  
Park



Coyote Creek Howl  
Watershed  
Tour 2015

San Jose, Ca

Hellyer County Park



## Who Would'a Thunk

CHEER CEO/Executive Director, Herman Garcia



Winter of 2008-2009 was exciting, as always CHEER must customize programs, strategies and activities year by year. Each year presents a different set of circumstances that require creative thought to meet the challenges of the time. Such a year was 2009, about the middle of January I received a call from NOAA Biologist, Jonathan Ambrose informing me, "we are out of water". It hadn't started raining that winter and all the creeks were stone dry and Uvas Dam had about 30 days of water at the current release. Bottom line, rain finally came on February 4<sup>th</sup> and fell for nine straight days, a crisis was avoided.

This scare initiated a discussion on water resource management by John and I. He advised me that off channel water storage might be a solution to dry systems in late summer. The preservation of Steelhead Trout rearing habitat during summer months would mean no rescue and restoration required in high priority spawning tributaries. One such stream is Little Arthur Creek in the Redwood Retreat road area of the eastern slope of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Months of discussions, planning and outreach to the residents of Redwood Retreat Road followed. Finally on **June 16, 2009** a meeting was organized! The meeting was held at the residence of Kay Morshead, twenty-eight property owners attended a presentation by the stakeholder team that John assembled. The group included: NOAA, Department of Fish & Wildlife, CHEER, Trout Unlimited, and CEMAR (Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration.) Enough property owner interest was generated to begin the planning process for project specifics.



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

After more than six years of planning, outreach, data collection, engineering and study; the first tanks were installed at the Jack Gifford property increasing his capacity from 5K gallons to 45K gallons of water. Eight new 5K tanks were added to his water supply. All costs were funded by grants from different sources. Cost to Jack (zero) the project paid for tanks, pads (infrastructure), electrical, plumbing, filter, installation, and all other associated costs. To date ten properties are listed for tanks with 70K gallons being installed in November for one lucky property owner and a whole **LOTTA LUCKY** future baby Steelhead.

## Dwarf Steelhead at 1000 Trails Park

NOAA Biologist, Joel “**Shock & Awe**” Casagrande reported a new midget species, foreign genetic strain, extraterrestrial steelhead has invaded Uvas Creek. What’s up with these pint size fish? Joel called in the **Main Enchilada**, the **Burrito Supreme** of NOAA Biologists, Jonathan Ambrose for an assessment and opinion of the situation. With the on-site inspection complete, John determined the non-native Acacia tree canopy over the creek blotted out the sun. A healthy combination of sunlight and shade are required for a sustainable population of Steelhead. The canopy at this location created numerous problems more importantly for the diminutive fish a lack of food. Sun penetration to the wet channel is required for the growth of aquatic plants and vegetation and a hatch explosion of insects and other organisms the primary food source for baby Steelhead! No breastfeeding here little guy, mom is back at sea, you are on your own! The growth rate was very slow in this section of creek for our undernourished little friends.

**Shock & Awe** and the **Burrito Supreme** called in the cavalry to correct the problem. The plan is simple, removal of approximately 500 Acacia trees. CHEER President, Herman Garcia (AKA the “California Kid”) led the way with outreach and buy-in from 1000 Trails Park. Next up, Stacie Ruffoni and Kelli Camara with the Santa Cruz Resource Conservation District; together they wrote the grant and managed the project. The tree removal contract was awarded to Valley Crest Tree Service, and project oversight was awarded to Moki Smith Tree Service, a certified arborist with the technical experience to insure the protection of the Riparian Corridor.

Our Fat & Sassy Fish wish to thank everyone involved with this project and providing the new abundance of food.

**One Fish at a time, No Fish left behind!**



## Sad But True

With the continued illegal dumping of garbage, toxins, and pollutants in the Pajaro River Watershed waterways; CHEER is forced to place NO DUMPING signage in two languages. Locations selected were at high risk dumping areas watershed wide. Surveillance cameras will also be placed in select locations. We have no choice but to resort to such drastic measures.

**The madness must end now!**

To the fool that gets busted, it is punishable by a fine of up to



Mike Sanchez & Steve Guerriero

