

# CHEER up your Creek!

COASTAL HABITAT EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION  
(CHEER)

NEWSLETTER OF THE PAJARO RIVER WATERSHED 10-12-2016



## NO FISH! WHY?

With a “El Nino” winter pattern in full swing and CHEER volunteers monitoring all spawning habitat. No adult Fish were observed. Each year poses a new threat!



Drought conditions in 2014 and 2015 prevented spawning; 2016 with 65% above normal rainfall had all waterways primed for spawning!



As we began to push the panic button by planning a float trip down the Pajaro River to investigate the lower watershed. CHEER was notified by State Fish & Wildlife Game Warden, Byron Jones, of discovery and removal of chicken wire across the river in the Watsonville area (used to trap fish)! With removal of the wire trap, Steelhead showed up at the base of Uvas Dam within days and spawning began! 2 instances of unsuccessful spawning can be traced back to March storms washing away eggs and flood waters causing plugs which halt migration to upper habitat!

# 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 teamed 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.



## BOARD MEMBERS

### EXECUTIVES

President—**Eleanor Villareal**

Secretary—**David Hamblin**

Treasurer—**Steve Guerriero**



Board Members

**Mike Sanchez**

&

**Chris Gonzalez**



CEO/EXEC. DIRECTOR

**Herman Garcia**

CHIEF OPERATIONS DIR.

**Irma Batrez**

# 2016 Gilroy Memorial Day Parade

## “CHEER’S GARBAGE CAN BAND”

Shock & Awe is best way to describe the reaction from parade crowds at the 2015 parade. It was the first introduction to the entire community of the CHEER Coastal Watersheds Garbage Museum. By response, it is safe to say we stole the show!

### Time for an ENCORE



Thanks to the Farley Family Allstars percussion trio and the fabrication talent of CHEER volunteers a Garbage Can Band was created to lead the way in the parade!

### WHAT AN ENCORE IT WAS!



# NO ILLEGAL DUMPING!

## CHEER SIGNAGE!

Late 2015 the sign placement program began with the installation of 10 “No Illegal Dumping” signs at various locations in the upper Pajaro River watershed. August 2016 the final 14 signs were placed all in upper and middle watershed. The signs are having a positive impact to date. Camera Surveillance was also funded, where the area’s with highest risk will take this approach. The final goal is to fund and place signs watershed wide covering 1300 sq. miles and protecting 1800 miles of streams.



Thank you to State Fish & Wildlife biologist Michelle Leicester for development of sign copy and CHEER Volunteers for installation!



# GAVILAN COLLEGE

## CREEK CLEAN-UP

Thirty students and teachers representing The Gavilan Environmental Science and Life Science classes volunteered for a Uvas Creek clean up. Students removed the equivalent of 4 dump trucks of garbage in 4 hours of hard work. Gavilan regularly maintains the waterways with creek cleanups in partnership with CHEER volunteers.



Thank you to students, volunteers, and Gavilan Instructors Jennifer Kurushiima and Rey Morales for our outstanding leadership and stewardship!



# GO RAMS!!!

# CLOSING THE LOOP!

## Ocean Floor Clean-Up & Environmental Mixer

March of 2016

CHEER volunteers are the front line of defense for protection of The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Thousands of cubic yards of garbage have been removed from Pajaro River watershed creeks over the years! If not for CHEER's efforts all of that refuse, toxins, and pollutants would have had a severe negative impact on sanctuary habitat and marine life.

The time has arrived to "Close the Loop" by identifying what type and how much garbage is making it to the bay!



***Did you know that approx. 8 million tons of plastic garbage reaches the ocean each year and that number could be increasing!***



# Little Arthur Creek Tank Update!



Installation of 40,000 gallons of water tanks located at the Jack Gifford property is complete.

The second location on the Bate's Family Ranch began, with county permits momentarily delaying the project. Upon completion, one 50,000 gallon tank was installed. Next, is the Dennis Starkovich property which will receive 10 tanks of 10,000 gallons each, totaling 100,000 gallons of water. To date 10 property owners in the targeted upper reach of Little Arthur Creek have signed on to participate! Community stewardship at it's best!

**TANK YOU VERY MUCH TO THE REDWOOD RETREAT RESIDENTS!**

---

## SAVING STEELHEAD HABITAT!

A bridge will be constructed to remove a wet crossing for farm equipment at the Dorcich Family Vineyard on Uvas Creek. The idea was suggested to CHEER by NOAA biologist Jonathan Ambrose. CHEER partnered with Trout Unlimited to project manage. Tim Frahm of T.U. has supervised the planning and soon construction begins at a project ycost of approx. \$500,000.

A second bridge will be built across the lower reach of Uvas Creek on Willoughby Farms!



# VEHICLE EXTRACTION

*OUCH! WE HAVE CARS IN THE RIVER FROM HEAD TO TOW!*

Late fall, in preparation for the predicted “El Nino” winter storms, CHEER Volunteers extracted 1 S.U.V, 2 pickups, and 3 autos! Removal of all 6 vehicles occurred on the Pajaro River.



In the United States alone there are approx. 12—15 million cars that reach their end of use each year. This means that it is vital that we change the way we dispose of our vehicles in order to preserve our natural resources, mainly our water quality.



# BANK RESTORATION

Illegal dumping of 4 dump truck loads of construction type soil and concrete mix. This occurred on lower Uvas Creek down stream of fish ladder area. This type of debris typically carries one or more containments that if introduced to our habitat won't only affect the local fisheries but our water supply as well!

