

Adopt-A-Levee Program

City of Santa Cruz and Save Our Shores Partnership



Photo by Janet Fardette, April 2012

Keeping our River and Monterey Bay clean and healthy!

The San Lorenzo River drains the largest watershed in our County and flows through the heart of downtown Santa Cruz. In December 2011, the City and Save Our Shores (SOS) launched a new volunteer-based “Adopt-A-Levee Program” to help keep the San Lorenzo River clean and healthy. Through the Adopt-A-Levee Program, a community group or local business can “adopt” a specific section of the river levee between Highway 1 and the San Lorenzo River mouth. Each group then commits to doing three or more cleanups annually in coordination with SOS. These dedicated volunteers help keep trash, cigarette butts and other pollutants out of the river, which also helps to prevent these pollutants from reaching the river estuary, our beaches and Monterey Bay!

The City funds SOS to organize and lead the cleanup events and provide trash bags and other materials to the volunteer groups, using Clean River, Beaches, and Ocean funding from the Measure E parcel tax approved in 2008. City staff or a SOS subcontractor then hauls the collected debris and recyclables to the City’s Resource Recovery Facility. During the first year, there were five adopting groups and 215 volunteers participated in cleanups. The five groups were: **Albert’s Organics, Homeless Services Center, Rotary Club of Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz Sunrise Rotary and the Tannery Arts Center.**



Albert’s Organics

From December 2011-June 2012, the Adopt-A-Levee volunteers removed a total of **2,321 pounds of debris** from the San Lorenzo River banks and levees **including 1,925 pounds trash and 371 pounds of recyclables!** The City and Save Our Shores would like to thank these hardworking volunteers for preventing this debris from washing into Monterey Bay or onto our local beaches!

In addition to the environmental benefits, the Adopt-A-Levee Program encourages community involvement and stewardship. According to Homeless Services Director Monica Martinez, “the program has been a terrific opportunity for Homeless Services Center participants, volunteers and staff to give back to the Santa Cruz community. Those who volunteer to cleanup the levee develop a renewed sense of pride and responsibility for their surroundings, and the project helps build self-esteem and fosters teamwork.”

This year, the **Homeless Services Center, Santa Cruz Sunrise Rotary and the Tannery Arts Center** are continuing their great work to clean up their adopted stretches of the river!



Homeless Services Center



Santa Cruz Sunrise Rotary



Tannery Arts Center

Your group can participate, too!

If your group would like to participate in the Adopt-A-Levee program (or one of the four seasonal volunteer river cleanups run every year), please give SOS a call at (831) 462-5660 or visit the SOS website at: <http://www.saveourshores.org/>. You can also call Suzanne Healy, City of Santa Cruz, at (831) 420-5131.

