

Press Release

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FIRST-EVER PITCH IN CLEANUP EVENT REMOVES 1,500 LBS OF LITTER, WASTE

Successful communitywide event brought together dozens of community groups, students, nonprofits, businesses and hundreds of volunteers

The May 11 first annual Pitch In All Santa Cruz Cleanup Event had a significant community impact, with more than thirty organizations and 431 individuals holding cleanups from Davenport to the Pajaro Valley, including the cities of Scotts Valley, Capitola, Santa Cruz and Watsonville.

“This was a terrific community effort that brought us together to help make Santa Cruz County the cleanest in California. Litter and illegal dumping are a scourge on our landscapes, wildlife and natural resources, and these community cleanups help raise awareness so that we all ‘Pitch In’ every day of the year to keep our county clean,” said Sally-Christine Rodgers, who spearheaded organization of the first annual Pitch In event.

In total, 1,548.5 pounds of litter were picked up during the one-day event, which was held at more than two dozen sites across Santa Cruz County. Nonprofits including Watsonville Wetlands Watch, Ecology Action, Monterey Waterkeeper, Save Our Shores, O’Neil Sea Odyssey, Downtown Street Teams, Watsonville Works and The Volunteer Center were joined by business groups including the Santa Cruz Association of Realtors, Rugged Coast, Driscoll’s, the Adventure Gift Store, and members of the Pajaro Valley, Aptos and Capitola Chambers to help make the Pitch In All Santa Cruz Cleanup Event a smashing success. Volunteers from Freedom, Sunrise and Watsonville Rotaries participated as well as church groups from Twin Lakes Christian, The Watsonville Buddhist Temple, and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

School groups from UCSC, Watsonville and Pajaro Valley high schools, Lakeview Elementary and Pajaro Valley Middle School picked up litter on and near campuses.

Neighborhood groups like Davenport/North Coast Association, San Lorenzo Park Neighbors, Friends of County Parks and others joined in.

“This is what happens when a community comes together. Our goal is to make Santa Cruz the cleanest county in California!” said Ramon Gomez, an analyst with Supervisor Felipe Hernandez who organized a cleanup along Salsipuedes Creek. They were joined by The County Administrative Officer Carlos Palacios, representatives from Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas’ office, Claudia Mejia from Environmental Innovations, Watsonville Works volunteers and community members.

Supervisor Hernandez along with Supervisor Justin Cummings put forth the resolution designating the second Saturday in May as a countywide cleanup day as part of the Pitch In Initiative to eliminate litter and illegal dumping. The Santa Cruz County Department of Community Development and Infrastructure offered free use of the Buena Vista Landfill for participating organizations and individuals.

Next year’s Pitch In All Santa Cruz Cleanup Event will be held May 10th, 2025. Mark your calendars!