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San Pedro Creek gets a big clean up

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Pacifica is known for its beautiful beaches, but often times the creeks that wind throughout the whole city are overlooked. These creeks, including the San Pedro Creek, make their way behind backyard fences, through school grounds, under city drainage systems and out into the Pacific Ocean. Students and the Pacifica Beach Coalition have been working for some time now in order to maintain the cleanliness of this creek, an important part of our city, and to keep it clean and running smoothly. Recently, Terra Nova students have been visiting the creek on weekends to attempt to clean up any garbage or other unnatural objects found in the creek waters or surrounding areas. On Saturday the 29th of January, the Pacifica Beach Coalition, San Pedro Creek Watershed Coalition and a large group of about 80 students and teachers from Terra Nova High School gathered down in the San Pedro Creek Basin to see what they could do.

Early that morning, the group of volunteers headed out in various directions walking alongside the creek and nearby streets picking up anything that did not belong in or was not eco-friendly to the creek. A few hours later, the group reassembled and shared what they had discovered in the creek area. Many people were surprised at how much trash and how many other random objects had accumulated in the brush and mud surrounding the creek bed. Although there had been previous creek cleanups held in the same location, this particular Saturday morning cleanup produced around 495 pounds of waste. Regrettably, around 200 pounds of this consisted of plastics or other would-be recyclable materials. Paige Jefford, a senior at Terra Nova High School, commented, "There was so much trash but there were also a lot of recyclable bottles, which really surprised me." Many children's toys were also found among the collected waste. This included forty toy balls, a Tonka Truck, and a snowman lawn decoration. All of these aforementioned items pose potential threats to the creek environment and to the water that feeds into the ocean. Anyone can help by simply being more careful about throwing away your trash in the proper containers.

Anyone interested in successfully keeping the creek system clean can visit PacificaBeachCoalition.org (<http://PacificaBeachCoalition.org>) or pedrocreek.org (<http://pedrocreek.org>). These websites holds valuable research done by groups whose main concern is protecting and preserving Pacifica's natural environment. Even the smallest precautions help, so make sure to think before you throw something on the ground.

A way that you can combat a major cause of pollution in the creek water is by keeping motor fluids from draining into the storm drains marked. Tires, yard waste, paint, car wash detergents and concrete have also posed problems to the creek, as they disrupt the water's natural state and harm the creatures that live in it.

Every large accomplishment begins with a few people trying to make a difference, so keep in mind that the little things you do can help, too. Throwing away a plastic bag will prevent it from being blown by the wind into the creek, which will feed into the ocean, making it a health hazard to sea life who might mistake the plastic bag for food. Overall, taking part in small events like beach, street or creek cleanups will make a difference; thanks to the Pacifica Beach Coalition, San Pedro Creek Coalition and the Terra Nova High School students, the waters and shores of the San Pedro Creek just became a little bit cleaner.

Alejandra Alcaraz is a Terra Nova student

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