



Volunteers Unite for a Trash-Free Otay River Valley

More than 140 volunteers came out to the Otay River Valley for Coastal Cleanup Day this past Saturday. These volunteers removed about a thousand pounds of trash, as well as 14 shopping carts that were found in the river valley. This cleanup was part of a countywide effort, coordinated in partnership with I Love a Clean San Diego and San Diego Coast Keeper, to achieve a trash-free and healthy San Diego.

Volunteers worked to clean up the western portion of the Otay Valley Regional Park, starting at the recently built staging area at Saturn Avenue. More than a mile of recently built trails, near the mouth of the Otay River Valley and the South Bay National Wildlife Refuge, was scoured for trash. Some of the most interesting items found included a refrigerator door and an artificial Christmas tree.

After the cleanup, students from High Tech High School held an environmental education fair for members of the community. The students taught about predators and prey, watersheds, pollution prevention, native and invasive species, and history of the Otay Valley Regional Park through fun and interactive games and presentations.

A million thanks to all the volunteers who donated their time and energy to work towards the vision of a restored Otay River Valley.

A very special thank you to those who made the event possible, including:

- Senior Park Ranger John Barone who served as the co-captain of the site;
- High Tech High Chula Vista Teachers Valerie Root and Jenny Morris who lent us their smart and motivated students;
- Irene Barajas and San Ysidro Girl Scout Group 5912 who volunteer event-after-event to help the Otay Valley Regional Park;
- Sarah Chai with Montgomery Middle School and Patricia McGregor with Mater Dei Catholic School who inspired their students to participate in the name of service;
- Albert Fulcher, writer for the *Southwestern Sun* and the blog *Where The SUN, Southwestern College meets the WILDCOAST* who has provided continued coverage and support
- Horacio Rentería with *El Latino* who covers our work for the Spanish-speaking community

- Gustavo Cardenes with California Burrito (7754 Starling Dr) who donated the delicious post-cleanup burritos

This event is part of WiLDCOAST efforts to work collaboratively with government agencies, nonprofits, community groups, local businesses, and educational institutions to conserve and restore the Otay River Valley.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead