

APRIL 2024

Office of Civic Engagement Monthly Update



CREEK STEWARDSHIP

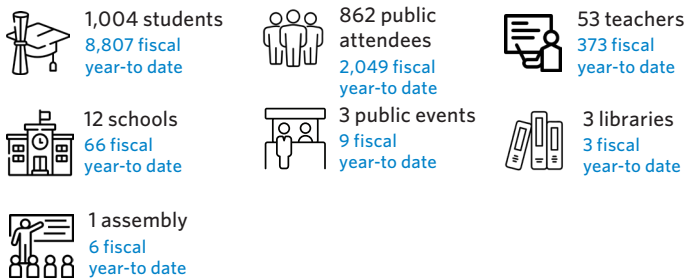
Throughout April, nine Adopt-A-Creek partners removed 586 pounds of litter from local waterways. This month's cleanups included volunteers from dedicated individuals, faith-based organizations, scout troops, local businesses, and university clubs.

Creek Stewardship staff is working with the Creek Connections Action Group to coordinate National River Cleanup Day on Saturday, May 18 from 9 a.m. - noon. Those interested in volunteering can learn more and register to participate at one of the 50 sites throughout the county by visiting cleanacreek.org



EDUCATION OUTREACH

In April, the Education Outreach (EO) team reached all seven districts through classroom lessons, assemblies, public events, and library visits. Students learned about hidden water usage, ways to conserve water, and how to support our endangered steelhead trout. The EO team also hosted four story times at three different San Jose Public Library locations.



Students at St. John School in Milpitas listen to the story of the Little Blue Hen to discover ways to conserve water.

YOUTH COMMISSION

The Youth Commission held its last quarterly meeting of the fiscal year on April 17 with fourteen commissioners in attendance. Director John Varela welcomed the commissioners and gave words of appreciation. Melissa Luu,

Senior Management Analyst from Santa Clara County's Office of Children and Families Policy attended in person to invite the commissioners to attend the free Youth Leadership Summit event in April. The meeting continued with a presentation from the Watershed Stewardship and Planning Division to explain how Valley Water balances water supply and environmental stewardship. To conclude the meeting, staff held a certificate ceremony to recognize nine outgoing Youth Commissioners who will be graduating from high school this year.

WATER SUPPLY OUTREACH

In April, Water Supply Outreach (WSO) announced the release of their advanced purified demonstration water for educational purposes. The effort to bottle water from the Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center began in 2019. Valley Water is the second agency in California to bottle purified water and the first under the new direct potable reuse regulations set by the California Division of Drinking Water.

Additionally, staff from the WSO team and Water Conservation Unit participated in San Jose State University's (SJSU) annual Earth Day celebration hosted by the Environmental Resource Center. Staff interacted with 200 individuals and conducted taste tests of purified water. WSO hosted two public tours and 8 private tours and presentations for community organizations and academic institutions, including Kaiser Permanente, The Forum at Rancho San Antonio, the SJSU chapter of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and the California Water Environment Association.



Purification Center staff answer technical questions from members of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers during a tour.

WATER 101 ACADEMY

The 2024 Water 101 Academy held its first session on April 4. Chair Nai Hsueh, Vice Chair Richard Santos, and Director Barbara Keegan provided opening remarks. Since this was the

first session, the presentations included an overview of Valley Water, the Central Valley Project, and the State Water Project which was presented by Maggie Macias from the California Department of Water Resources.

The second session was held on April 18 where 19 of the 21 participants attended and Vice Chair Richard Santos provided opening remarks. The topic for the night focused on “Where does your water come from?” and staff from the Water Supply Division gave four presentations that covered the Water Utility Enterprise, Water Supply Planning, Water Conservation Programs, and the Purified Water Project.

COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM

On March 26, Valley Water hosted the first of two Santa Clara County CRS Users Group/Program for Public Information (PPI) Committee meetings. There were 21 participants, with staff representing 14 local jurisdictions, Valley Water, and the California State Department of Water Resources. This meeting focused on program updates, flood-preparedness outreach initiatives, and kicking off the PPI Annual Report process. The next meeting will be held in May.

In April, Valley Water participated in two emergency preparedness events to share the “Get Flood Ready” message. Staff hosted a booth at the Eggstravaganza Family Event organized by the Strong Neighborhood Initiative Program Mayfair Neighborhood Advisory Council in San Jose, which had more than 350 attendees. Valley Water also participated in an educational workshop with 40 attendees at The Links, Incorporated “Emergency Preparedness: Safety Now, Peace Later” event at the African American Community Service Agency in San Jose.



Valley Water provided flood-preparedness materials at the Eggstravaganza Family Event in San Jose.

Grants Program: On April 17 and May 2, Valley Water hosted virtual Mini-Grant and Refill Station Grant Programs workshops. The first workshop included an additional session on how to write a strong scope and budget. Attendees received information about year-round funding opportunities and useful tips for successfully completing a mini-grant application. Workshop recordings are available at valleywater.org/grants.

Mini-Grants

Closeouts: In fiscal year 2023, Valley Water awarded Marshmallow Minds a \$5,000 Safe, Clean Water Program F9 Mini-Grant for their A Tough Trek - Salmon Migration in a Warm Planet Project. It funded a pilot environmental STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) education

program for elementary school students from Title-1 schools in Santa Clara County.

Refill Station Grants

Valley Water awarded Silicon Valley Academy Project, a nonprofit educational organization, a \$5,000 Refill Station Grant to increase drinking water access and help promote reusable water bottles for elementary and middle school students in Sunnyvale.

Closeouts: In FY 2024, the Sunnyvale Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa used its \$5,000 refill station grant to fund a new water bottle refill station at its facility in Sunnyvale. The refill station saved over 100 plastic water bottles within one month of installation.

Standard Grants

On April 17, Marshmallow Minds hosted its Migratory Birds STEAM Design Program field trip at Alviso Marina County Park in San Jose. This field trip was part of their Safe Birds, Safe Water Project, which was funded by a \$58,880 Safe, Clean Water F9 Standard Grant. The event included a nature hike and garden restoration with Franklin Elementary School sixth graders and was co-hosted by the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory.



Students from Franklin Elementary School learn about the ecology of salt ponds at Alviso Marina County Park in San Jose.

LOOKING AHEAD

Education Outreach Programs

- MAY 15 Lakewood Elementary
- MAY 30 Eaton Elementary
- JUN 3 Glen View School
- JUN 10 Levin Clubhouse, Boys & Girls Club
- JUN 17 Alviso Clubhouse, Boys & Girls Club

Creek Stewardship

- MAY 18 National River Cleanup Day

Grants and Partnerships

- MAY 11 Saved By Nature's Headwaters to the Bay - Almaden Lake Hike Event
- JUN 1 Grassroots Ecology's Coyote Creek Habitat Day
- JUN 21 Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition's Solstice Family Fun Ride

Water 101 Academy

- MAY 2 Session 3
- MAY 16 Session 4
- JUN 1 Session 5
- JUN 4 Graduation