

# Cleanup day a total success

On April 19, Monterey County held its third annual Earth Day Cleanup Event, inviting community groups and individuals to pick up litter and haul illegally dumped trash from roadsides, creeks and beaches throughout the county.

The SVSWA coordinated several cleanup sites, among them Del Mar Beach, where SVSWA team member Jenny Mitchell and 80 volunteers got their hands dirty. Braving strong winds and chilly temperatures, they collected more than 2,700 pounds of debris including cigarette butts, broken glass and lots and lots of plastic bags and bottles.

At other locations, groups picked up litter from roadsides and empty lots, and pulled illegally dumped tires, broken furniture and even appliances out of creek beds. A big thank you to everybody who pitched in!

## Stop waste before it happens

Fighting litter is good, but what if we didn't create so much garbage in the first place?

Take a family picnic, for example. Have you ever noticed how much waste there is afterward? Disposable plates, cups and utensils, napkins, wrappers, empty chip bags and beverage containers, single-use plastic tablecloths ... the list goes on, and it all gets thrown out after just one happy gathering.

Consider investing in cloth napkins and a set of lightweight yet durable plastic tableware. Reusable cups, plates and utensils don't only look better on the picnic table, they're also less likely to get picked up by the wind.

Repair is another one of my favorite waste-prevention tips. Right here in the Salinas Valley we are lucky to have repair services available for almost everything, from computers to appliances, furniture and even tools. The next time you're about to head to the store to replace a broken item, consider getting a repair estimate first. For local



repair businesses, check the Yellow Pages or call the SVSWA at 775-3000.

## Discarding bulky items

At some point we all have items that simply have reached the end of their useful lives. Appliances, old mattresses, broken toys, strollers or pieces of furniture beyond repair — you have several options to dispose of bulky items responsibly.

All haulers in the Salinas Valley offer residents at least one annual collection of bulky items and recyclables, usually in spring or early summer. Only certain materials are accepted and some limitations apply. Contact your hauler directly for details. In Salinas, BFI's spring cleanup day is scheduled for May 17.

Throughout the year, you can drop off bulky items for disposal and recycling at any of the SVSWA's facilities. For hours, directions and fees, call 775-3000.

Anybody who's participated in a volunteer effort like the countywide Earth Day Cleanup Event in April knows how satisfying it is to see our communities free of unsightly — and often dangerous — litter and illegally dumped waste.

You don't have to wait for next year's event. The county offers free disposal vouchers year-round to individuals or groups willing to clean up roadsides and public lands. Simply call the county's Health Department, Solid Waste and Recycling Services (755-4579) or Public Works Department (755-4925) to request a free disposal voucher valid at any Monterey County landfill.

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