

**Fact Sheet for Grant Project**  
**ReThink Disposable: Preventing Riparian Trash at the Source**

**Funding Years and Agreement Number: #A3751R (2014-2016)**

**Funding Program: 2014 Safe, Clean Water Priority B Grant Program**

**Project Start Date: January 1, 2015**

**Project Completion Date: December 31, 2016**

**Project Location(s):** Various creeks and commercial districts in the cities of San Jose, Cupertino, and Sunnyvale

**Lead Agency and Partners:**

Cheri Donnelly, Environmental Program Manager, Public Works Department, City of Cupertino

Elaine Marshall, Environmental Programs Manager, Environmental Services Department, City of Sunnyvale

Napp Fakuda, Deputy Director, City of San Jose Environmental Services

**District's Funding Contribution:**     \$82,133     **Total Project Cost:**     \$174,036    

**Project description:**

Clean Water Fund (CWF) is a national Section 501(c)(3) that has been working since 1974 to protect our nation's waterways in 13 state offices and our headquarters in Washington, D.C. In 2011, the California program launched *ReThink Disposable*— an award winning and results driven program that works in partnership with municipal stormwater and zero waste agencies to engage food businesses, institutions (academic and corporate campuses), and consumers to minimize disposable take-out food and beverage packaging at the source. With funding from the Santa Clara Valley Water District, this project supported the expansion and pilot of the ReThink Disposable program in three cities of the county of Santa Clara—San Jose, Cupertino and Sunnyvale. This *upstream* pollution prevention approach conserves resources, prevents waste and greenhouse gas emissions, saves businesses money, and reduces plastics and trash that enter the San Francisco Bay and the ocean. *ReThink Disposable* is grounded on research conducted by CWF and five local government partners that found that 67% of the trash entering Bay Area trash hot spots (creeks and storm drains) is food and beverage packaging- most of it related to take-out food service.<sup>1</sup> To learn more about the program, please visit [www.rethinkdisposable.org](http://www.rethinkdisposable.org).

**Key outcomes or benefits achieved or deliverables completed (with Key Numbers):**

1. Three Local Government Partners- Successful Coordination with the cities of San Jose, Cupertino and Sunnyvale.
2. Ninety-one food businesses and eight institutions in the County received outreach and promotional materials to participate in the free ReThink Disposable audit and technical assistance.
3. Eight presentations were delivered to various business associations and corporations in the county to promote the program to the target food business.
4. ReThink Disposable coordinated with the Green Business Program on outreach and adoption of waste *prevention* best management practices for food businesses, not just *diversion* by way of compostable and recycling single use food service ware.
5. Twelve food businesses and one institution successfully completed the ReThink Disposable audit to minimize and eliminate wasteful and litter-prone single use disposable food and beverage packaging with full data audit and impact results quantified. Three of these businesses were designed into final case studies and uploaded to our website.
6. The twelve business participants in Santa Clara County yielded the following ANNUAL impact numbers:
  - 1,424,038 pieces of disposable food ware items eliminated
  - 24,265 pounds of waste prevented
  - \$5,963 average cost savings after payback period was met
7. CWF hosted four creek cleanups with 127 volunteers removing almost 4,000 pieces of trash and debris (mainly plastics) from "hot spots" on Calabazas and Coyote Creeks.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cleanwateraction.org/sites/default/files/Exec%20Summary%20Taking%20Out%20the%20Trash%20R11-press.pdf>

8. CWF hosted one ReThink Disposable Free Community Workshop and Training with almost 60 attendees from watershed and creek groups, teachers, and local government staff.
9. CWF developed a new public education tabling pop-up display including researching, developing and designing two new life cycle impacts info-graphics on Disposable Cups and Straws.
10. CWF engaged almost 30,000 residents in the County with the new ReThink Disposable Source Reduction Pledge.
11. San Jose's Hauler, Republic, promoted ReThink Disposable in a feature article in their quarterly newsletter mailed to 30,000 accounts.
12. CWF's ReThink Disposable wins the 2015 Governor's Award for Environmental and Economic Leadership and the 2016 California Resource Recovery Association's Excellence in Waste Prevention Award.
13. The successful results from the Santa Clara Valley Water District grant in the three pilot cities lead to two new contracts with the City of Palo Alto and the Santa Clara Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission totaling \$230,000 over the next three years. This will fund 60-80 more ReThink Disposable certified food businesses and 3-5 institutions in the county.

**Before and After Pictures (if applicable)**

**Project website:**

<http://www.cleanwaterfund.org/>

[www.rethinkdisposable.org](http://www.rethinkdisposable.org)

**Point of contact:**

Samantha Sommer

Waste Prevention Program Manager

Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund

350 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 200

(415) 369-9174

[ssommer@cleanwater.org](mailto:ssommer@cleanwater.org)