



## Report to Santa Clara Valley Water Board

### Clean Bay Santa Clara County

#### Grant A3752R



#### Summary

**Clean Bay Santa Clara County** is part of Save The Bay's comprehensive effort to protect the health and water quality of San Francisco Bay by mobilizing thousands of residents and city leaders to advance and adopt best practices that will reduce major sources of plastic marine debris and toxic trash. With support from the Santa Clara Valley Water District, Save The Bay is supporting cities in Santa Clara County to meet the regulatory requirement of trash-free stormwater by 2022, with a strong emphasis on reducing tobacco litter.

#### Project Status

Complete

#### Role of Save The Bay

Save The Bay is increasingly recognized as the region's go-to technical resource on reducing trash in stormwater. Save The Bay is unique in that we exercise influential leadership by advocating for strong policies as well as by working in partnership with cities on effective implementation. By being both watchdog and respected advisor, Save The Bay has developed a sturdy matrix of allies across many sectors. Our goal is to ensure that the region will meet the regulatory requirement of trash-free stormwater by 2022.

- Save The Bay successfully advocated for the Water Board to pass an improved stormwater permit, one that would better support cities to reach the goal of trash-free stormwater by 2022, by including interim trash reduction milestones and monitoring requirements, such as 70% trash reduction by 2017; 80% by 2018.
- One way that Save The Bay has supported implementation across the region is by conducting a thorough analysis of each city's annual report on stormwater trash reduction. Both the Water Board and the cities themselves make use of Save The Bay's analysis and recommendations to make targeted improvements in pollution reduction efforts across the region.

## Tasks Completed

### Task 1: Encourage comprehensive pollution prevention programs in Santa Clara County.

- STB advocated for the adoption of an improved stormwater permit. The success of that effort created the most significant opportunity we have to work with cities to reduce the amount of trash flowing through storm drains, which is the biggest source of trash in the Bay. The permit now includes additional trash reduction milestones and monitoring requirements, such as 70% trash reduction by 2017; 80% by 2018 positioning STB to better evaluate future pollution reduction efforts in Santa Clara County by conducting an annual city-by-city analysis of each city's progress on specific annual targets, toward meeting the Zero Trash by 2020 target.
- STB staff presented findings from our city-by-city analysis to the Water Board and regularly meet with city staff to support their efforts to comply with the 2020 target and interim targets like the 70% target for July 2017.



### Task 2: Engage and mobilize local residents in watershed stewardship.



- STB attracted significant media attention to pollution prevention, and launched the Zero Trash, Zero Excuse campaign. Local residents participated in National River Cleanup Day and California Coastal Cleanup Day at Santa Clara County site.
- Volunteers from businesses and students from schools in Santa Clara learned about issues of microtrash and debris; and helped STB scientists with habitat restoration—cultivating native plants and removing non-native plants.

### Task 3: Build cross-sector partnerships.

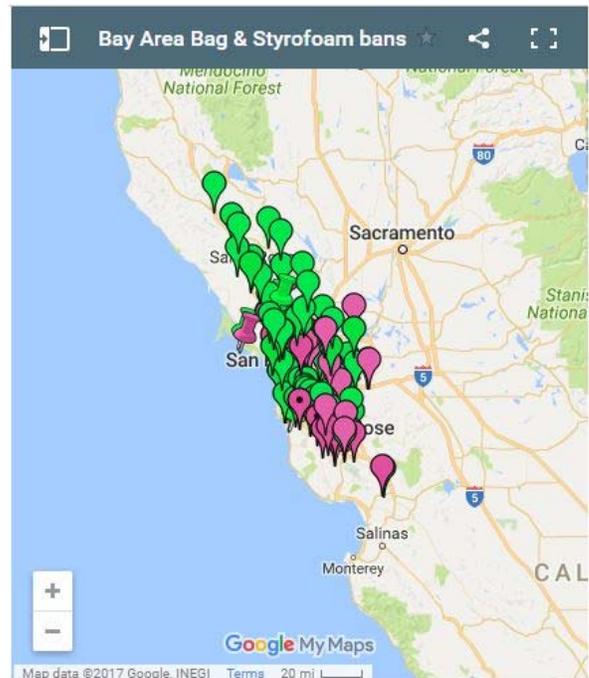
- Save The Bay built on existing partnerships with city leaders, statewide organizations, community-based organizations and business groups to build cross-sector partnerships.
- STB cultivated partnerships with the members of the Santa Clara County Tobacco Coalition (countywide org); identified partners interested in focusing on the City of Santa Clara and Mountain View.

- Save The Bay and Clean Water Action are cultivating cross-sector partnerships as we collaborate with grocers and others on the statewide strategy for safeguarding the plastic bag ban in the November 2016.
- We are also facilitating cross-region, cross-sector partnerships as we support municipalities to actually replicate cutting edge strategies proven to be effective by “early adopters,” like San Jose.

#### **Task 4: Evaluation and monitoring of success.**

##### **Evidence of Success of the Project**

1. We succeeded in removing over 2,200 pounds of micro-trash and debris in Santa Clara County, specifically at Coyote Creek, through community-based restoration and trash removal projects over the two year grant period.
2. San Jose's comprehensive ordinance to ban Styrofoam has now been replicated in most Santa Clara County cities.
3. Sunnyvale adopted and strengthened their smoking ordinance, which places the city on a path to reduce tobacco litter and second hand smoke.
4. After years of advocacy from Save The Bay and other regional groups, the City of Milpitas adopted a bag ban last September. The ban went into effect on January 1, 2016. Paper bags with less than 40 percent post-consumer recycled material are also prohibited.
5. San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Board renewed a much stronger Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit in November 2016.
6. STB has created a Monitoring and Education Tool for Plastic Bag Ban Ordinances (and recently added one for Styrofoam bans). It is a database of all ordinances in the San Francisco Bay Area, from Morgan Hill in the South Bay to Cloverdale on 101 North. The database is accessed through a map interface so you can click on a community and get a popup with information about specific ordinances or progress made toward adoption of ordinances.
7. We read and analyzed data from the 2015 annual reports submitted by 76 cities, counties, and districts holding stormwater permits, and we are using this information to support Santa Clara cities to accelerate their progress towards our Zero Trash 2022 goal.
8. Our ongoing “Zero Trash, Zero Excuse” public education campaign is preparing Santa Clara citizens for the 70 percent mandatory trash reduction deadline of July 2017.



##### *Discussion of project challenges, including public concerns or opposition*

A statewide ban on single-use plastic bags was to take effect in July 2015, but was put on hold, pending the result of November 2016 referendums (Proposition 56 and 67) financed by plastic bag manufacturers to prevent the legislative ban from being implemented. Although the

referendum would not alter the status of bag bans passed by local governments, it would have been a major setback to achieving state-wide trash reduction goals. Save The Bay, Clean Water Action, and many other organizations successfully raised awareness about the issue, and the majority of voters in the state chose safeguard the statewide ban on single-use plastic bags, voting NO on both propositions.

*Community based organizations supporting the Project*

Save The Bay partners with several county tobacco prevention and education coalitions. Coordinating with these groups has helped us to more effectively convey both the health and environmental benefits of outdoor smoking ordinances and appeal to decision makers who are more focused on the health aspects of smoking restrictions. Partners include the Tobacco-Free Coalition of Santa Clara County, Tobacco Education Coalition of San Mateo, Alameda County Tobacco Control Coalition, and the Tobacco Prevention Coalition of Contra Costa County.



Other Partners: California League of Conservation Voters, Clean Water Action, Environment California, Surfrider, Story of Stuff, and California Grocers Association.

*Newly identified stewardship opportunities in the Project vicinity*

Enhancement and stewardship opportunities along Byxbee Park and Adobe Creek Trail and in the Palo Baylands complex continue to expand as we complete restoration work in nearby areas.