Program Application: 81649311

Linked Pre-Application Form - DO NOT DELETE
Creek Cleanups in San Jose

Grant Amount Requested
$55,000.00

Organization Name
South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition

Urban Grant Program Application Questions

Overview

Type of project (check all that apply)

Grant category (check all that apply)
Environmental Stewardship and Restoration, Parks, Trails, and Public Access, Environmental Education

Project Location: Address / Neighborhood

What is the physical location of the project? If there is no physical location, please enter "N/A." If the project will be in multiple locations, please list all. Note: project location(s) must be within the Authority's jurisdiction.
San Jose, California
- Guadalupe River
- Los Gatos Creek

Project Location

Open Space Authority District of Project Location(s)(check all that apply)
Authority District 3, Authority District 4, Authority District 5, Authority District 6

Who does the project serve? Please indicate which Open Space Authority Districts are served (where do the people served by the program live) (check all that apply)
Authority District 3, Authority District 4, Authority District 5, Authority District 6

Project Abstract
River and creek cleanups are vital community efforts meant to reclaim, restore, and revitalize our urban wildlife areas. As one of the largest metropolitan areas that host a variety of large mammals and aquatic species, we need to ensure that human interference in these natural corridors is minimized. Areas where we have conducted volunteer cleanups have seen a resurgence in use not only by native plants and animals but also by the citizens that previously viewed the pollution as a barrier to activity. South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition has provided safety and accessibility to the communities and wildlife that want to use the parks and recreational areas in San Jose through the removal of 1.5 million pounds of trash and want to continue to expand the safety and accessibility that these public spaces deserve.

Project Planning

Describe the proposed project.
Our project consists of three Tasks: Outreach, river and creek surveys, and cleanups

Outreach (10)
Outreach is for the purpose of engaging the community and invigorating them into action. Outreach will take place on social media and in person. Social media outreach is meant to engage our online communities through updates on volunteer opportunities, updates on the conditions of our creeks, and the outcome of our cleanup events that will describe the event, how it went, and how much trash was removed. In person outreach will be done through tabling events conducted in either school, public, or private settings. These tabling events will engage these communities by displaying wildlife pelts, a canvas photo of salmon nests, and our other various engaging presentation materials. These tablings will be held for a minimum of two hours at a total of 10 tabling events across a 10 month period from April 1st to January 31st. We will also be supplying visitors with literature material describing our creeks, cleanups, salmon monitoring, and our research. We will also be gathering emails for the purpose of subscribing them to our email list which sends updates and upcoming event details on a monthly basis.

River and Creek surveys (10)
10 river and creek surveys will be conducted in order to assess the health of the creeks and rivers and to determine the level of pollution. With volunteers, we will walk sections known for their typically large levels of trash and assess if the volume of trash is substantial enough for a volunteer cleanup. If we determine a site with the potential for a large-scale trash cleanup event we mark it. These surveys are conducted at least a month before we schedule a cleanup event. The areas that the surveys cover are the lengths of the Los Gatos Creek and Guadalupe River. A site that would be scheduled for a cleanup will typically be determined to hold at least one ton of trash. Sites will also be scheduled if they exceed this amount and could be scheduled repeatedly. The cleanup events will then be scheduled on Eventbrite complete with details and sent on our newsletter to mail recipients (>3,500). We will also broadcast the upcoming events on our social media accounts Instagram and Facebook with over 7,000 followers combined.

Cleanups (15)
15 Cleanups will be held for two hours. We provide the pickup sticks, vests, gloves, trash bags and every other tool for the volunteers to use. Once they arrive at the cleanup they will be asked to sign in through a qr-code that includes our waiver and asks for their basic information. This sign-in process ensures that they sign the liability waiver and allows us to gather attendees and metrics of that event's volunteers. Once they are signed-in, they are directed to our supplies where they are able to put on gloves and vest and are provided a pickup stick. We will then give a short presentation meant to educate our volunteers on the history of our waterways to include the history of Chinook salmon, beaver, and human development. The cleanups are started by our safety speech. The safety speech is meant to provide important information about the site and ensure that the cleanup is conducted with everyone's safety in mind. Once the safety speech is provided, we then walk the volunteers to the designated cleanup site. Here they will be able to go at their own pace and pick up the trash in the manner that is easiest for them. We start wrapping up events 15 minutes before the two hours are up to ensure we gather all the volunteers, tools, and capture a group photo. Once the cleanup ends, we lead people back to the designated parking area and take back our tools and equipment. The city is then called in to remove the bagged up trash from the garbage staging area. This group will then send us the weight of the garbage we have removed. All of the information from the day's event including the weight will then be posted to our social media accounts, and newsletter, meant to update and inspire volunteers to attend and continue this effort with us.

Describe key project deliverables and estimated completion dates.
Outreach Deliverables to include:
1. Tabling to include:
- Date
- Location
- Photo of Community Engagement
2. Social Media Post
- Date.
- Platform
- Post Made
3. Newsletter to include
- Date
- Newsletter sent
Quantity: 10
Amount per event: $300
Total: $3,000
Expected completion date: 11/30/2026

River and Creek Survey Deliverables to include:
1. Survey conducted to include
- Date
- Location
- Surveyors
- Photos of Trash at location
- description of trash
Quantity:10
Amount per event: $200
Total: $2,000
Completion Date: 11/30/2025

Cleanup Event Deliverables to include:
1. Cleanups to include:
- Date
- Location
- Number of Attendees
- Weight of Trash removed
- before and after photos and videos
Quantity:15
Amount per event: $2,500
Total: $37,500
Completion Date: 12/31/2025

2. Post Cleanup Update Post
- Date
- Platform
- Post made
Quantity: 15
Amount per event: $100
Total: $1,500
Completion Date: 12/31/2025

Indirect: Administrative Support, Transportation, maintenance
Total: $11000

Completion Date: 12/31/2025

Does this project require permission, permits, or other approvals? If so, please describe the status of these.
An "Adopt-A-Creek" Permit by Santa Clara Valley Water District is required to enter and access these areas for the purpose of trash removal. We have obtained this permit and it is valid for the years of 2025-2027.

What is the lifetime of this project? If applicable, describe plans for operating and maintaining the project in the future.
This project has a start date of April 1st, 2026 and an end date of December 31st, 2026

April will trigger the first types of Tasks to include Creek and River Surveys and Out Reach events.
-10 Surveys will be conducted throughout the project timeline to facilitate cleanup site scheduling. Up to 4 surveys can be completed a month.
-10 outreach events will be conducted throughout the project timeline.

Once surveys are complete, social media outreach will be conducted.
-20 Social media outreach posts will be designated for completed creek surveys and completed cleanups

May will be the month of the first cleanups and the first social media outreach encompassing our completed cleanups.
-15 volunteer cleanups will be conducted throughout the project timeline. Up to four cleanups can be scheduled a month.

Surveys will be conducted in May to schedule cleanups in June. Social media and outreach events will also be conducted as stated previously.

Further funding will be based on donations or future grant funding.

Describe the project's readiness for implementation.
All aspects of the project are ready for implementation.

Project Budget

Budget Summary - Grant Request & Budget Summary - Matching Funds

Grant request: Personnel
$44,000.00

Grant request: Contracted Services
$0.00

Grant request: Supplies / Materials
$0.00

Grant request: Other Direct Costs
$0.00

Grant request: Indirect Costs
$11,000.00

Total Matching Funds
$0.00

Total Budget
$55,000.00

Please upload a detailed version of your budget by accessing the link below:
Appendix D - Creek Cleanups In San Jose.pdf

Materials and Budget Template (item #9) found here: https://www.openspaceauthority.org/programs/grant.html#Materials

Provide a brief budget narrative to explain the expenses listed in each of the budget categories (e.g. Personnel).
Task 1: Outreach Events and Social Media Outreach has solely personnel duties
Task 2: Creek Surveys has solely personnel duties
Task 3: Cleanups and all subtasks has solely personnel duties

Award Amount: The Board reserves the right to award partial funding on projects. If your project were to receive partial funding, what would this mean for your project?
Partial funding if directed towards the cleanup events would be more beneficial as it will support the direct impact section of our project. Supporting the clean up events, a partial funding cost of ($37,500) is the most vital section for our project and our volunteers. Our dedicated volunteers do not want to see creek cleanup opportunities diminish and have actively seeked opportunities to participate in an expanded manner by possibly extending cleanups times or event frequency. Reclaiming, restoring, and revitalizing our riparian corridors and public spaces are the purpose of our nonprofit. Creek and river cleanups are the direct way to connect people back to nature spaces and achieve our nonprofits mission.

Project Goals

Describe the specific problems, issues, or unserved needs the project will address.
The largest problem we want to address is the lack of community connection to the rivers and creeks in San Jose. This lack of attention allows our natural spaces to be degraded and disregarded. By reconnecting our community to our rivers and creeks by direct action we can foster a community that continues to support and interact with their larger nature spaces. Connecting people back to the creek helps plant a seed in our communities that will support restoration and conservation of our nature spaces and community parks. Aside from this main goal, through our cleanups, we will also be able to commit to the conservation of the Chinook salmon, beaver, and other native and non-native species.

Goal #1 : Host 15 Cleanups
Task 1: Traffic supplies to staging area.
Task 2: Check In - Have volunteers sign in to gain attendance metrics and sign waiver. Track attendance.
Task 3: Gear Up - Provided garbage bags, vests, gloves, and pickup stickers to prep volunteers for cleanup activity, Provide safety speech and mission statement.
Task 4: Cleanup - Initiate Cleanup event.
Task 5: End Cleanup - Take a group photo. Reclaim all provided tools. Have services pick up trash.
Task 6: Traffic supplies back to the locker.
Host 10 Attendees per cleanup event
Total Attendees: 150

Goal #2 : Remove 15 Tones of Trash
Task 1: Contact trash removal for weight.
task 2: Track weight of removed trash.

Goal #3 : Conduct 10 Creek Surveys
Task 1: Walk sections of potential cleanups.
Task 2: Take photos of trash in the area.
Task 3: Determine trash pickup, parking, cleanup and staging areas.
Task 4: Submit for scheduling.
Host 2 Attendees per creek survey
Total Attendees: 20

Goal #4 : Conduct 10 Outreach Event
Task 1: Determine tabling location.
Task 2: Traffic tabling material to site.
Task 3: Conduct outreach and track community members' interactions.
Task 4: Traffic tabling back to locker.
Engage 25 community members per event
Total engaged: 250
Collect 5 emails for Newsletter

Goal #5 : Post 15 Event Outreach Posts
Task 1: Once cleanups are scheduled for the month post.
Task 2: Track interactions and signup numbers.
Task 3: Once cleanups are completed post.
Task 4: Track interactions.

How does this project serve the community?

Number of people served
420

Number of youth served
60

Number of programs provided
35

Other Grantee Goal #1 (optional)

Other Grantee Goal #2 (optional)

Impact

Describe the lasting impact of the project. Please include whether the program is open to the public and whether any materials developed will be available to the public.
Our volunteer cleanup events are meant to increase the quality of life not only for the local natural inhabitants but also the local community. By removing large collections of trash, we are reopening these corridors to rewilding and community engagement. Trash removal is also necessary for the proper function of our flood control systems and responsive water diversion infrastructure which ensures a climate resilient community. Climate resilience is also achieved by encouraging revegetation in areas previously degraded by this pollution. Revegetation is essential to prevent erosion and promote biodiversity. Our lasting impact positively affects wildlife, our local river and creek management systems, and our community.

Another impact is the sentiment of reconnecting individuals back to these natural areas. Volunteers develop a sense of connection through volunteering. By helping reclaim, restore, and revitalize their communities natural spaces for the purpose of habitat restoration, they develop a larger responsibility to encourage the use of these spaces and gain satisfaction from laboring in community river and creek stewardship. This has been proven to us through the volunteers that return event after event and the schools that decide to choose us as their community restoration event hosts.

Climate Resilience

How does this project enhance and/or raise awareness about climate resilience? Please include any metrics that can be used to help quantity or understand the climate benefits of the project.
Lasting impacts include the removal of barriers and trash in and around the Riperian Cooridors. The benefits include ease of native animal migration such as Chinook salmon and beaver. Removing the polutants also reduces water contamination from leaking batteries, matresses, tires, and several other large and small trash. The removal of these items also assists with climate resilience through the restoration of flood channels and reduced sedimentation which damages these habitats. Recovery from pollution includes native plant growth, reduced erosion, and clean (less sedmented and contaminated) water.

Removing trash also ensures that our emergency flood systems are working efficiently and are unobstructed during the raining season.

Community Engagement / Stakeholder Support / Community Building

Describe the community support and/or community engagement process. Please upload any community support letters in the Documents Upload section below.
Every year we ramp up cleanups and prime our volunteer base for the incoming Chinook salmon run. We remind our volunteer base that this is the reason that we conduct our volunteer cleanups, to prime the waterways for the incoming Chinook salmon population. We start with more strategic cleanups that we call Barrier removal and these are areas that tend to be harder to reach and more intense. Our dedicated volunteers assist with this section immensely and have continuously reminded us that they are just as excited as we are about the incoming Chinook. Leading up to the fall run, the few months before we start integrating into our outreach reminders that we will be hosting our Town Hall Meeting soon and subsequently our Salmon Viewing events. Many prospective volunteers sign-up to our Newsletter specifically because of this information and it is our largest driver of new signups.

Our outreach on our social media is just as impactful. We outreach stating that salmon are returning soon. These are also the channels where we will provide basic information on how to attend and where to sign up.

We also have a dedicated communication channel on the Signal platform that maintains communication amongst all of our dedicated volunteers. We are also able to state more information that they may need and better coordinate volunteer needs and address concerns more readily.

Our core group of volunteers has showcased that they are engaging individuals that they know in their daily lives and have recruited them to our monitoring events and cleanup efforts. There have been several instances where our volunteers have outreached on our behalf in informal settings and have inquired into possible collaborations as well.

Aside from our volunteers we are also involved with the Chairs at SJSU and De Anza college in the environmental fields. These stakeholders relay our public events to their students and faculty in an effort to further educate their base on local affairs and wildlife policies and impacts.

Underserved Communities

Describe how the project addresses open space needs for sensitive populations such as residents of park-poor neighborhoods, under-served, or disadvantaged communities, youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, or is located within an under-resourced community.
The larger project location is situated in a region that has a 23% larger portion with contaminated drinking water than the rest of California according to CalEnviroScreen. It also indicates that the larger project location consists of individuals that host a large housing burden (low income and housing cost burdened) with the highest areas connected to our project area being 92% above the state average, decreased education (below high school diploma) is, at its highest, 31% in the regions we are serving , and the waterways that we will be targeting are more impaired (containing pollution) that is roughly 44% higher than the state average.

Organizational Capacity

Briefly describe the organization and its ability to successfully implement this project. This might include successful past projects, key staff qualifications, financial resources, etc.
Since our inception in 2013, our nonprofit organization has conducted over 500 successful creek cleanup events which has contributed to the removal of over 1.5 million pounds of trash. Our founder has been an avid restorer and advocate for restoration work. He has personally owned and operated several successful business ventures and has been advocating for this restoration work for close to 15 years. He has created and drafted this non-profit from his own savings and has amassed a funding stream that at its peak had a cash flow of $200,000. This funded cleanup activities, citizen science initiatives, community/school educational experiences, and salmon monitoring. Our core team of four includes Steve Holmes, our CEO, Carol Szymkiewicz our operations manager, Josh Lopez our event coordinator, and Jordan Almaguer our Project Manager. Several team leaders made up of our dedicated volunteers help us conduct events and manage groups throughout events.

Leadership & Innovation

Describe how this project employs innovative approaches or encourages collaboration and partnerships.
Our volunteer cleanups encourage collaboration and partnerships amongst several stakeholders in San Jose to include San Jose City government, BeautifySJ, and Santa Clara Valley Water District to name a few. San Jose's BeautifySJ group is the group we communicate with for almost every cleanup we conduct as they are the individuals who take away the trash we collect from the creek. San Jose City Council members also work closely with us and occasionally attend our events to show their support and contribute during our cleanup efforts in their districts. Santa Clara Valley Water District is also a very important group that we work very closely with. They are the group that provides us permits to enter for the purpose of conducting cleanups with.

Documents Section

Document Uploads (please combine into one file if possible)
Creek Cleanups In San Jose.pdf

Additional files (if needed)
Education Material.pdf

Additional files (if needed)

Submitted Date - Internal

Summary Field:

Name: Average Score (no bonus)

Form: Staff Review

Summary Type: average

Field: Base Score Total

Decimal: 2

Currency: No

Description/Help Text: NONE

Short Name: NONE

Field Purpose: NONE

Filter:

- ALL:
  - isComplete | is | true

Summary Field:

Name: Total Count of Submitted Reviews

Form: Staff Review

Summary Type: count

Field: NONE

Decimal: NONE

Currency: No

Description/Help Text: NONE

Short Name: NONE

Field Purpose: NONE

Filter:

- ALL:
  - isComplete | is | true
  - Folder | is | Submitted

Program Application: File Attachments

Please upload a detailed version of your budget by accessing the link below:
Appendix D - Creek Cleanups In San Jose.pdf

Document Uploads (please combine into one file if possible)
Creek Cleanups In San Jose.pdf

Additional files (if needed)
Education Material.pdf

Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority | 2025 Urban Grant Program

PROJECT BUDGET

Highlighted cells are automatically calculated.

PROJECT	
Project Name:	Creek Cleanups
Organization:	South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition

PERSONNEL

Estimate employee and volunteer time directly related to the project. Hourly rates for employees can include salarly plus fringe benefits, payroll tax, etc, but can not include indirect costs. Note: please list position titles only.

Position Title	Description of Budget Item	Grant Request ($)	Matching Funds ($)	Total
Program Director	Planning, Permits, reporting, volunteer coordination	$ 19,000.00		$ 19,000.00
Operations Manager	project coordination, scheduling, logistics, administrative, reprting support, communication	$ 5,000.00		$ 5,000.00
Cleanup Leader	Field leadership, event coordination, creek and river surveys, community outreach, tabling, equipment transport, management, maintence, social media, communications support	$ 15,000.00		$ 15,000.00
Intern	fieldwork, event support, creek and river surveys, community outreach, tabling, equipment assistance, social media.	$ 5,000.00		$ 5,000.00
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
TOTAL PERSONNEL		**$ 44,000.00**	**$ -**	**$ 44,000.00**

CONTRACTED SERVICES

Labor, supplies, and materials to be provided by consultants/contractors for project implementation.

Item	Description of Budget Item	Grant Request ($)	Matching Funds ($)	Total
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
TOTAL CONTRACTED SERVICES		**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**

SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

Supplies and materials that are directly related to the project.

Item	Description of Budget Item	Grant Request ($)	Matching Funds ($)	Total
				$ -

				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
TOTAL SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS		**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**

OTHER DIRECT COSTS

Other direct costs that are directly related to the project. This might include travel, service fees for fiscal sponsorship, or newly-acquired equipment.

Item	Description of Budget Item	Grant Request ($)	Matching Funds ($)	Total
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
				$ -
TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS		**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**

INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs are eligible for grant funding only for 501(c)(3) Nonprofits and are limited to 20% of grant funding. Indirect costs cannot be counted as matching funds.

Item	Description of Budget Item	Grant Request ($)	Matching Funds ($)	Total
Administrative Support, Transportation, maintenance		$ 11,000.00	n/a	$ 11,000.00
TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS		**$ 11,000.00**	n/a	**$ 11,000.00**
PERCENT OF GRANT REQUEST		**20.0%**	n/a	n/a

10 site

10 tablings

15 cleanups

GRAND TOTAL

		Grant Request ($)	Matching Funds ($)	Total
TOTALS		**$ 55,000.00**	**$ -**	**$ 55,000.00**

COST SHARE

				Matching Funds (%)
A minimum of 25% of grant request in matching funds may be required. This field is automatically calculated.				**0.0%**

MATCHING FUNDS

Please describe the source of matching funds listed above. The total matching funds listed here should match the total matching funds listed under Grand Total above. This might include cash match (e.g. grantee's own funds, donations, grants, etc) or in-kind match (non-cash contribution such as volunteer time).

Source	Description	Type of Match (cash or in-kind)	Status of match (Secured or Pending)	Matching Funds ($)

TOTAL MATCHING FUNDS				**$** -

Cleanup Sites:

Poster Boards for Tabling and Salmon Viewing: