



PITCH IN Santa Cruz County

Clean California Community Designation Pitch In Initiative Accomplishments

- **Sign the Pledge:** Santa Cruz County's CAO Carlos Palacios signed in the spring of 2024.
- **Advisory Body:** Trash Talkers is a coalition of agencies including staff from Congress members Lofgren, Panetta, Senator Laird, Speaker Rivas, Assemblymember Pellerin, the county, cities, Community Foundation, Farm Bureau, Land Trust, Caltrans, school districts, Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Parks, Santa Cruz Metro, non-profits, chambers and rotaries.
- **Community Input:** Monthly Zoom meeting with guest speakers from many community groups and organizations.
- **Litter Assessments:** Provided by the County of Santa Cruz Department of Community Development and Infrastructure who are active partners in the Pitch In Initiative.
- **Cleanups:** The Trash Talkers organize regular monthly cleanups and annual all county cleanups. We have scheduled cleanups every month with Supervisor Filipe Hernandez' staff in south county. We also work actively on additional cleanups throughout Santa Cruz with non-profits including Save Our Shores, Watsonville Works, and community organizations. We put forth a Resolution that was unanimously adopted by County Supervisors for an Annual All-Santa Cruz County Cleanup Day. We then went to each city and requested that they adopt similar resolutions so that each jurisdiction is engaged and participating. The second Annual Pitch In All County Cleanup Day on May 10th, 2025, engaged over 60 organizations, 750 volunteers and removed 6,000 lbs. of litter.
- **Measure Progress:** Cleanups are recorded with numbers of participants and amount of trash picked up. These and other cleanups are highlighted on the County hosted pitchinsantacruz.org website.
- **Community Education:** The Trash Talkers Coalition members developed the Pitch In logo. We have made significant progress in installing industrial metal signs in all Santa Cruz County parks, at trail head and beaches, all Santa Cruz City parks as well as many Capitola, Scotts Valley and Watsonville City parks, METRO stops, libraries, Watsonville Hospital, Santa Cruz Harbor District, UCSC, Santa Cruz County Fair Grounds, all County office Campuses, over 50 Farms, and many businesses and other locations. These signs have created a uniform message around litter abatement, are in Spanish and English and have a QR Code that links to our county hosted pitchinsantacruz.org website. This website lists community participation, a calendar of events and cleanups, information on how to report illegal dumping, resources for all community members on proper disposal of waste both organic and bulky item pick-up, low-income options and other information.
- **Youth Education:** A coalition of nonprofits: Watsonville Wetlands Watch, O'Neill Sea Odyssey, Coastal Watershed Council and Save Our Shores are funded to collaborate on creating a uniform message of "Litter Literacy," integrating the county-wide Pitch In Initiative throughout their curriculums for in-classroom and after school environmental education. We work with public information officers in Santa Cruz and Pajaro Valley School Districts. We have teachers on the Trash Talkers Coalition board. We are funding a special program for a mosaic artist to go into the schools to highlight the Pitch In Initiative with discussions on the impact of litter on the environment, while creating mosaic art made from campus cleanup litter. We work with the county on in-school green waste programs.
- **Infrastructure:** We partner with the County of Santa Cruz, and with the cities of Watsonville, Capitola, Santa Cruz and Scotts Valley to place signs on trash receptacles, at parks, playgrounds and other locations.
- **Enforcement:** The Pitch In Initiative has partnered with the County of Santa Cruz to install Q-Star cameras in multiple locations throughout the county at "hot spots" of illegal dumping. These cameras are intended to deter illegal activity, and to seek evidence for prosecution. Pitch In was instrumental in highlighting inadequate fines and worked with Supervisor Hernandez to increase fines for illegal dumping to \$2,500, \$5,000, and \$10,000 which was unanimously approved by County Board of Supervisors. This was followed by a media campaign to inform the community as a further public awareness effort of the Pitch In Initiative.
- **Long-term Planning:** The engagement of and support from a broad swath of our community will keep this effort alive. The Trash Talkers Coalition continues to reach out to inform and invite more participation. We are currently working with business councils, chambers and rotaries to seek further long-term participation in the Pitch In Initiative.
- **Greening & Beautification:** We are partnering with Scouts on community service projects in city and county parks for both litter cleanups and beautification. The Pitch In Initiative has partnered closely with Watsonville Wetlands Watch who have received a significant State grant for urban reforestation. We have been significantly involved in marketing the Adopt-a-Tree (primarily fruit tree) programs with local Hispanic community members. We have "saved" trees from a parking lot destined for development and negotiated to have them moved to the Hospital campus. We support Watsonville Wetlands Watch's efforts to expand tree planting on school campuses, within the city limits and throughout south county.
- **Collective Drives:** While we do not have the capacity for "hosting" collection drives, the header pages of the pitchinsantacruz.org website features information on disposal of mattresses and provides information on Bulky Item Pickup Days with specific details for all community members.
- **Partnerships:** Our partnerships have been outlined above. In addition, our business supporters include Aptos Chamber, Big Creek Lumber, Corralitos Woman's Club, Driscoll's Environmental Innovations, Enviroteers, Lakeside Organics, Live Earth Farm, Loaves and Fishes, The MAH – Museum of Art and History, Ozzy's Pizza, Raeid Farhat Real Estate, Santa Cruz County Association of Realtors, Sierra Azul Nursery, S. Martinelli Company, The Boulder Creek Business Association, Twin Lakes Christian Church, Valley Women's Club of San Lorenzo Valley, Watsonville Youth Center, and many others.
- **Cigarette Litter:** The Pitch In Initiative has worked closely with the Santa Cruz County "Ban the Butt" campaign by raising awareness around cigarette waste and promoting the effort to eliminate the sale of filtered cigarettes in the County of Santa Cruz. Information is on the Pitch In website, promoted through our Trash Talkers Coalition and with our community partners.

Make Santa Cruz the Cleanest County in the State