



## FACT SHEET

# PROJECT F5: Good Neighbor Program Encampment Cleanup



Valley Water

**PRIORITY F:** Support Public Health and Public Safety for Our Community

## About the project

The Good Neighbor Program supports Valley Water's independent efforts and ongoing coordination with local cities and agencies to clean up trash, debris and hazardous pollutants generated by encampments near waterways or on Valley Water property. Such encampments contribute to contamination of waterways and damage to Valley Water facilities. This project includes cooperative efforts to partner with local municipalities and other agencies for services related to encampment cleanups and to help provide alternatives to homelessness.

This project will also provide funding for local municipalities' services supporting staff safety as they work around encampments and discourage re-encampments along waterways.

## Background

Encampments can generate large amounts of trash that end up in creeks. There can be environmental impacts resulting from encampments in riparian zones such as streambank erosion, riparian vegetation impacts, fire, poaching and accumulation of human and hazardous waste.

### Benefits of periodic encampment cleanups:

- Reduces the accumulation of trash, debris and hazardous pollutants in local waterways, including streams, wetlands and water utility facilities (e.g., percolation ponds).
- Protects Valley Water facilities and reduces flood risk.
- Improves the aesthetics of creeks in neighborhoods and along trails.
- Trash free riparian zones increase the habitat value for wildlife and fisheries.
- Coordinates Valley Water's efforts with multiple agencies to create lasting solutions to reduce encampments near waterways.

## Working with local partners

Valley Water partners with local cities, agencies and nonprofit groups to clean up trash, debris and hazardous pollutants generated by encampments near waterways. Through this

cooperative effort, local agencies provide police support and social services. At the same time, nonprofit groups also help provide alternatives to being unhoused.

## Key Performance Indicators



Manage 300 acres annually to cleanup trash, debris, and hazardous pollutants generated from encampments and to reduce the amount of these pollutants entering streams.



Provide up to \$500,000 per year in cost-share with local agencies for services related to encampment cleanups, including services supporting staff safety, discouraging re-encampments along waterways or addressing the socio-environmental crisis with the goal of reducing the need for encampment cleanups.



*Encampment cleanup along Guadalupe Creek in San José.*

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## Funding

Encampment cleanup efforts are funded by the voter-approved **Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection (Safe, Clean Water) Program**, under **Project F5 Good Neighbor Program: Encampment Cleanup**. Due to the increasing demand for Valley Water resources to address encampment cleanups from cities and the community, the 15-year Encampment Cleanup project budget under the renewed Safe, Clean Water Program was increased to \$38.7 million.

Valley Water also has partnerships and grants for other agencies and nonprofit organizations to engage with the unhoused and reduce the impacts of encampments on waterways. Furthermore, Valley Water provides grants and partnerships for cleanup, education, outreach and watershed stewardship activities; and supports volunteer cleanup efforts, including National River Cleanup Day, California Coast Cleanup Day, the Great American Pick Up and Adopt-A-Creek. All these efforts, designed to reduce the amount of trash and pollutants entering local waterways, are funded by various Safe, Clean Water projects.



Volunteer cleanup along Coyote Creek in San José.

## Addressing safety concerns

A series on incidents involving individuals living along the creeks, has caused growing health and safety concerns for Valley Water field staff and volunteers. These safety concerns have led to requests for police officer presence during work activities.

Furthermore, in 2019, Valley Water signed an agreement with the City of San José to pay \$200,000 for police to conduct patrols targeting criminal activities along local waterways, including Coyote Creek and the Guadalupe River. This effort is funded by the **Safe, Clean Water Program**.

In 2021, Valley Water signed another agreement with the City of San José to pay \$400,000 for police to conduct patrols along a portion of Coyote Creek trail. This effort is funded by Valley Water's Watersheds Stream Stewardship fund.

## About Valley Water

Valley Water, with a history dating back to 1929, manages an integrated water resources system that includes the supply of clean, safe water, flood protection and stewardship of streams on behalf of Santa Clara County's 2 million residents.

## For assistance

### Access Valley Water Hotline:



Valleywater.org



408-630-2378

A full list of projects in the **Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program** can be found at [valleywater.org/safecleanwater](https://valleywater.org/safecleanwater).

## CONTACT US

To find out the latest information on Valley Water projects or to submit questions or comments, use our **Access Valley Water** customer request system at [access.valleywater.org](https://access.valleywater.org).



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