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October 22 was a good day for steelhead trout and San Pedro Creek. Terra Nova High School science students (Oceana also had a volunteer) and volunteers from Pacifica Beach Coalition and San Pedro Creek Watershed Coalition collected about 350 pounds of trash from the creek floodplain and bike trail near the creek mouth. Some debris might have been left by visitors,

but most of it washed down when the creek was high and was left in the grasses and bushes as the water receded.

Roger Macias and Ralph Larson of San Pedro Creek Coalition spoke to the volunteers about the uniqueness of steelhead trout, which are different from salmon because they can spawn and live in the creek for as long as they wish and then swim back to the ocean. Two other species of fish live in the creek, too.

Volunteers inspected the creek behind the convalescent home and discovered a water dam of brush, wooden pallets, and litter that blocked passage of steelhead to and from the ocean. They were able to clear a small opening. City Public Works Department employees cut a downed tree and freed the blockage so the steelhead could again pass freely.

A number of items like plastic gloves, food bags, and discarded property were found originating from the convalescent home next to the creek. Management at the home will be contacted so it is aware of the problem and can work to eliminate any escaping debris.

Volunteers found 65 cigarette butts under one bench at the start of the trail, a clear sign of smokers using the bench as a smoking station and irresponsibly leaving their litter. At least 1,000 cigarette butts were collected, mostly from the trail, but some originating from upstream. Some 165 toxic chemicals (including, arsenic, cadmium, and acetone) leach out of cigarette butts into the environment.

The next scheduled cleanup for San Pedro Creek is January 28, 2012. Everyone is invited to join cleanup efforts by picking up litter on streets that drain into the creek. Most streets between Fassler and Montara Mountain flow to San Pedro Creek through underground storm drains and tributaries.

<https://picasaweb.google.com/lh/photo/y8UDj39jKaVpyBQeLhwLg?feat=directlink>

L Y N N . A D A M S

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