

REDUCING THE IMPACTS OF HOMELESS ON CREEKS

Experiences from other communities

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Pollution Prevention Program



ZLI Homeless Impacts to Creeks Roundtable

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Presentation Summary

□ Objective

- Identify experiences and lessons learned from other cities

□ Information on 14 Municipal Efforts

- Websites, Newspapers and Articles

□ Focused on strategies other than cleanup

- No camping ordinances
- Sanctioned tent cities
- Relocation programs
- Waste management

Cities and Water Bodies

| City | Water Body |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Colorado Springs, CO | Monument and Fountain Creeks |
| Oahu, HI | Beach Parks |
| Sacramento, CA | American River |
| Redding, CA | Clear Creek (Sacramento River) |
| Santa Cruz, CA | San Lorenzo River |
| San Diego, CA | San Diego River |
| Los Angeles, CA | Los Angeles River |
| Ventura, CA | Ventura River |
| New Orleans, LA | Mississippi River |
| Temecula, CA | Murrieta Creek |
| Merced, CA | Black Rascal and Bear Creeks |
| Nashville, TN | Cumberland River |
| Riverside, CA | Santa Ana River |
| Chico, CA | Little Chico & Comanche Creeks |

No Camping Ordinances



Santa Cruz, CA

- “Camp Paradise” along the San Lorenzo River
 - 30 residents (in 2001)
 - Homeless cleaned up trash in the area
 - Set up a vegetable garden, goldfish pond and bike repair shop
 - Violated municipal ordinance banning sleeping outside from 11pm to 8:30am
- Washed away in a flood

Colorado Springs, CO

- 600 camped along creek beds every night
- City passed a "No Camping" ordinance
 - ▣ Bans the homeless from sleeping on sidewalks or public lands within the city limits.
- Homeless moved into motels as part of transitional programs
 - ▣ Strict rules (i.e. look for jobs)
- Still 100-150 camping
- Long term solution: more low-income housing

Sanctioned Tent Cities



Nashville, TN

- Estimated 4,000 homeless and 765 shelter beds
- City and non-profits servicing a tent city
 - Portable toilets
 - Trash pickup
 - Mobile medical van
 - Visits from social workers
 - Firewood
- Goal is to build permanent shelters and low-income housing

Ventura, CA

- No year-round homeless shelter
- River Haven Homeless Camp
 - ▣ Legal, self-governing, transitional camp
 - ▣ Space for 25 people
 - ▣ Stay for 2 years while looking for a regular source of income and permanent housing
 - ▣ \$250/month rent
 - ▣ Camp host supervises for 20 hours/week
 - ▣ Funded through City and NGOs (Turning Point)
- Long-term solution: more low-income housing

Sacramento

- 2,800 homeless in Sacramento County (2008)
 - 1,194 unsheltered
- “Sacramento Steps Forward” initiative (headed by the mayor)
 - 10 Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness (Fall 2006)
 - Establish and fund 2,400 housing units over three years
- Tent City in the American River Parkway
 - Recently removed by City
 - Safe Ground Sacramento – Sanctioned Tent City
 - 64 person encampment

Relocation Programs



City of Chico, CA

- Homeless Evaluation Liaison Program (H.E.L.P)
 - ▣ Helps homeless who wish to return to their family/support group
 - ▣ Officer will contact the family/support group and determine if they're willing to place this person
 - ▣ A one-way bus ticket
- Funding
 - ▣ Originally through Police Department
 - ▣ Currently through donations
 - ▣ North Valley Community Foundation (www.nvcf.org)

New York City, NY

□ Project Homeless Reconnect

- Assisted 564 families at \$218/person to-date
- One-way plane ticket to return to family
- Certified letter from family

Waste Management



Colorado Springs, CO

- Monument & Fountain Creeks impaired due to E. coli
 - 13 Buckets of human waste
 - Trash and debris along and in creeks
- Real Estate Agent filed a complaint with the USEPA
- Short term solution for human waste
 - Portable toilets – privately funded

Summary

- \$100's of millions spent each year by taxpayers cleaning up trash and waste from homeless encampments in creeks/beaches
- Circular Problem
 - ▣ Cleanup >> Resettlement >> Cleanup
- Need for permanent shelters and relocation services
- Strategies
 - ▣ No camping ordinances – some success if coupled with outreach and housing/shelters
 - ▣ Tent Cities – mixed viewpoints, temporary housing
 - ▣ Relocation Programs – moderate success, but moving the issue to another community?
 - ▣ Waste Management – Limited success