

# Why do people dump their trash in creeks?

You don't have to look far to find trash, lawn clippings, tree trimmings, old shopping carts, mattresses, car parts, bottles, and used motor oil in and around creeks. Unfortunately, dumping trash and

organic waste creates serious problems.

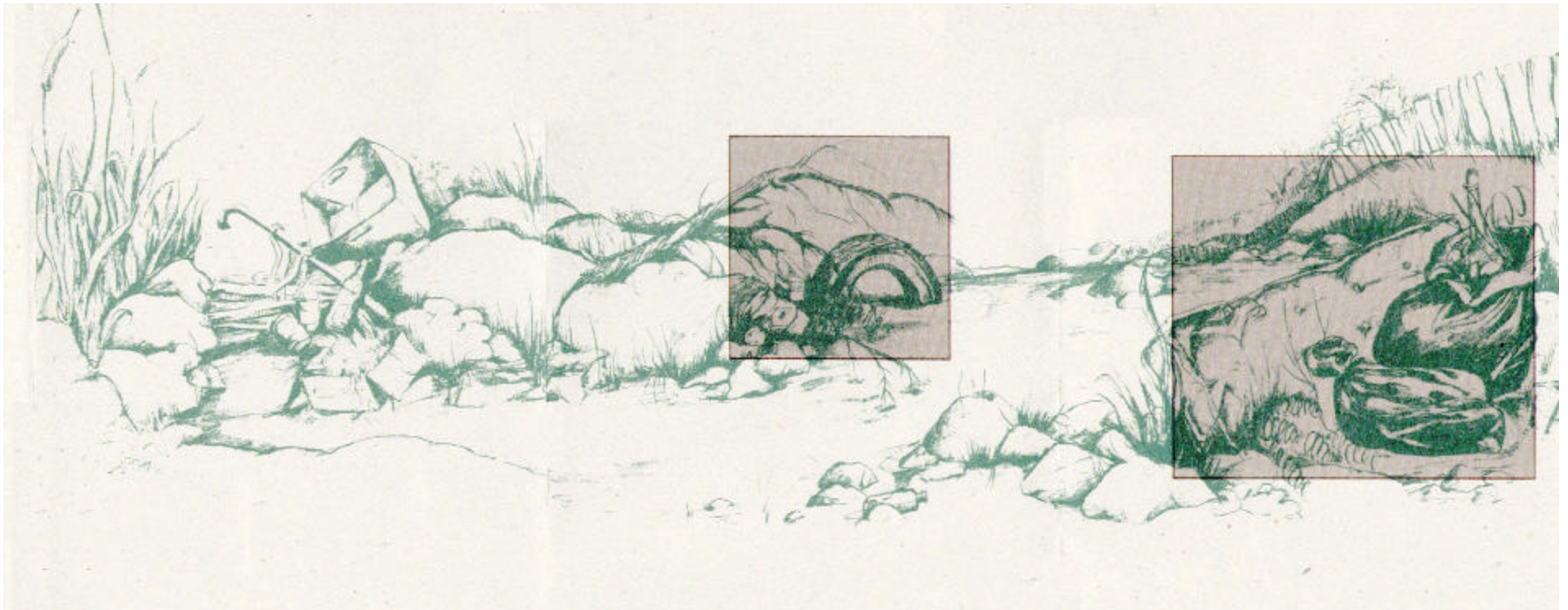
- It's a nuisance.
- It costs taxpayers money to remove.
- It can be a hazard during floods.
- It can become a breeding place for rodents and mosquitoes.
- It creates pollutants which are a threat to our groundwater and the plant and animal communities living in our creeks, the Bay, and the Ocean.

We're concerned with the health of our local creeks, and believe that people should stop using creek areas as dumps.

Sometimes, people whose backyards border creek banks are the worst

offenders. They think that when they toss their trimmings, junk and trash over their fence, it just disappears to become someone else's problem. In reality, it becomes the whole community's eyesore, and expense.

Local public works crews often have to clean up a littered area, instead of doing maintenance tasks such as removing major obstacles in creeks; repairing channel linings, eroded areas, or downed fences; or removing weeds that are a fire hazard. The trash has to be hauled away to a dump site. This ties up workers and their equipment.



Tree branches, shopping carts, and other large objects join together with other debris in a creek and form obstructions to water flow, creating a barrier to storm waters, that can flood out over creek banks and bridge crossings.

How many people dump used motor oil, garden insecticides, paint, or weed killer spray into a gutter or storm drain? It isn't an uncommon practice, and the people who do it probably have no idea



Used oil, antifreeze, paper, aluminum, metals, glass and other materials can be recycled. You can find your local recycling site by calling **1-800-CLEANUP** and entering your zip code.

In San Mateo County, you can compost your yard wastes. For information on composting call 650-599-1412.

where it goes.

In San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, all storm drains empty directly into creeks that flow to the San Francisco Bay, the Monterey Bay, or the Pacific Ocean. When people dump chemicals into the gutter, they are really dumping them into the creeks! Besides being illegal, it is anti-social, and sometimes deadly to fish, crawdads, and other creek dwellers. Oil and other chemicals also pose a threat to our drinking water

In Santa Clara County, contact the Santa Clara Valley Non-point Source Pollution Control Program at 1-800-794-2482.

Learn about Streamkeepers, on the internet at: <http://www.streamkeeper.org>

To report the illegal dumping of hazardous wastes into the environment, call 911.

supply. In stream beds these chemicals can find their way through porous soils into deep drinking water aquifers and pollute them.

There are simple, legal, appropriate ways to get rid of trash and recycle or dispose of household and industrial chemicals. Use the list provided in this brochure.

Call **1-800-CLEANUP** for more pollution prevention information..

Garbage, tree clippings, rubbish, and building materials can be disposed at:

San Carlos Transfer Station, 225 Shoreway Road, San Carlos call: 650-592-0255

Ox Mountain Landfill, 12310 Highway 92, Half Moon Bay, call: 650-726-4718

Palo Alto Refuse Disposal Area, 2380 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto (residents only) call: 650-329-2655

Hazardous wastes such as paints, pool chemicals, and pesticides can be disposed of at your local Household Hazardous Waste Program:

San Mateo County	650-363-4718
Santa Clara County	408-299-7300
Palo Alto	650-496-6980



San Mateo Countywide  
Stormwater Pollution  
Prevention Program  
(STOPPP)  
555 County Center  
Redwood City, CA 94063

A program of the City / County Association of Governments (CCAG)