

Clean Camp Coalition



INLAND EMPIRE WATERKEEPER®
Advocacy • Education • Research • Restoration • Enforcement

Regina Guerre

California State University, San Bernardino

Internship Dates: November 4, 2017 - July 13, 2018

Advisor: Megan Brousseau

Organization: Inland Empire Waterkeeper

Report Submitted: July 16, 2018

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	1
Executive Summary.....	2
Project Objectives.....	3
Project Approach.....	4
Project Outcomes.....	6
Conclusions.....	7
Appendices.....	8

Acknowledgements

My special thanks are extended to the staff of Inland Empire Waterkeeper for their support and inspiration during this internship.

I am also particularly grateful for the assistance given by the Water Resources Institute (WRI) at California State University, San Bernardino.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) and the CivicSpark Fellows.

The Community Water Internship is supported through SAWPA's Disadvantaged Communities Involvement (DCI) Program and Proposition 1 funding from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR).

Executive Summary

The Clean Camp Coalition aims to build partnerships between water agencies and homelessness aid agencies. To facilitate building these partnerships, Inland Empire Waterkeeper will offer a trash collection service to the disadvantaged community of individuals experiencing homelessness in the middle stretch of the Santa Ana River. The initial phase of this program will target the Santa Ana River between Market Street Bridge to Van Buren Bridge in Riverside. The program will provide an opportunity to empower those living in the encampments to keep their camps clean while allowing the water sector an active role in stopping pollution from encampments. Each week, Inland Empire Waterkeeper will work alongside partners including homeless service providers to offer immediate resources to these individuals in the river bed while offering trash services.

This internship focused on developing the foundations of the Clean Camp Coalition through research, training, and collaboration. Research topics included water quality testing and homeless outreach best practices. Training emphasized homeless outreach and programs already in place for individuals experiencing homelessness. Collaboration efforts occurred throughout this internship including, but not limited to: attending the “Understanding Homelessness” training, hosting the “Homelessness and Water in the Santa Ana River Watershed Symposium,” and participating in the “Riverside County Homeless Point-in-Time (PIT) Count.” Further collaboration opportunities continue to develop as the Clean Camp Coalition evolves.

Project Objectives

The Clean Camp Coalition was created in 2017 to develop partnerships between water agencies and homeless resource agencies to coordinate efforts regarding the disadvantaged community of homeless individuals in the Santa Ana River Watershed. The Clean Camp Coalition aims to create an immediate improvement on local waters, the environment, and the health of individuals experiencing homelessness. It seeks to alleviate the water quality issues in our waterways caused by debris from encampments along the Santa Ana River. Furthermore, it seeks to provide individuals experiencing homelessness with resources for housing and employment opportunities. To achieve these broad objectives the Clean Camp Coalition will begin with a trash collection program in the upper Santa Ana River, between Market Street Bridge to Van Buren Bridge in Riverside.

For the duration of the internship project objectives changed as the Clean Camp Coalition evolved in its development. Researching homeless outreach best practices was an initial project objective during the internship. Once an understanding of these best practices was reached, new project objectives concerned the logistics of providing a trash collection service. Mapping homeless encampments, deciding on the necessary materials, and implementing water quality testing are all ongoing project objectives that have helped with the development of the Clean Camp Coalition. Furthering collaborative efforts is another ongoing project objective for the Clean Camp Coalition. Participating in community activities and reaching out to prospective partners was highly emphasized throughout the internship to help fulfill the broad project objective of building partnerships.

Project Approach

Research was ongoing throughout the duration of the internship. Researching best practices for homeless outreach offered a starting point for the Clean Camp Coalition trash collection services. Further research on the state of homelessness in the Santa Ana River Watershed was done in preparation for the “Homelessness and Water in the Santa Ana River Watershed Symposium.” This created context for the project and deepened understanding on how the Clean Camp Coalition could build partnerships in the future. Homelessness in the watershed is a complex issue with many stakeholders involved, and research emphasized the need for training and collaboration.

Attending the training, “Understanding Homelessness” on November 4, 2017 provided multiple perspectives on working with individuals experiencing homelessness. The first session, entitled “The Homeless Experience” was an overview of the state of homelessness in the region, the causes of homelessness, and what a person experiences while homeless. The second session, “Basic Training” covered “must know’s” for those who are interested in volunteering in direct contact with those in homeless situations, such as outreach workers, housing navigators, intake workers, and case managers. Further training was provided in preparation for the “Riverside County Homeless Point-in-Time (PIT) Count.” On January 23, 2018 members of the Inland Empire Waterkeeper staff participated in the PIT Count and surveyed individuals experiencing homelessness in Riverside County. A law enforcement perspective was provided as each PIT team was partnered with an officer from the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department. These trainings displayed that a diverse set of partners is needed for successful homeless outreach in the Santa Ana River.

Collaboration efforts are ongoing and necessary for the success of the Clean Camp Coalition. These efforts were exemplified in the “Homelessness and Water in the Santa Ana River Watershed Symposium” on December 7, 2017. Through partnering with SAWPA, Inland Empire Waterkeeper hosted this event. The first panel discussion focused on the partnerships between water managers and homeless aid agencies. The second panel discussion covered the state of homelessness in the watershed. Future collaboration is planned with the WRI through listening sessions and a conference in September 2018.

Experiences unique to this internship that went beyond research, training, and collaboration included site visits to the Santa Ana River and presenting at the 2018 WRPI Conference. Site visits to the Santa Ana River occurred on December 14, 2017 and May 23, 2018. These visits were mainly to map the homeless encampments and determine a baseline for the Clean Camp Coalition. The WRPI Conference on April 04, 2018 offered the opportunity for me to present on “The Impacts of Changing Waterways on Individuals Experiencing Homelessness.” These unique experiences fostered a deeper understanding for the need to build partnerships through projects like the Clean Camp Coalition.

Project Outcomes

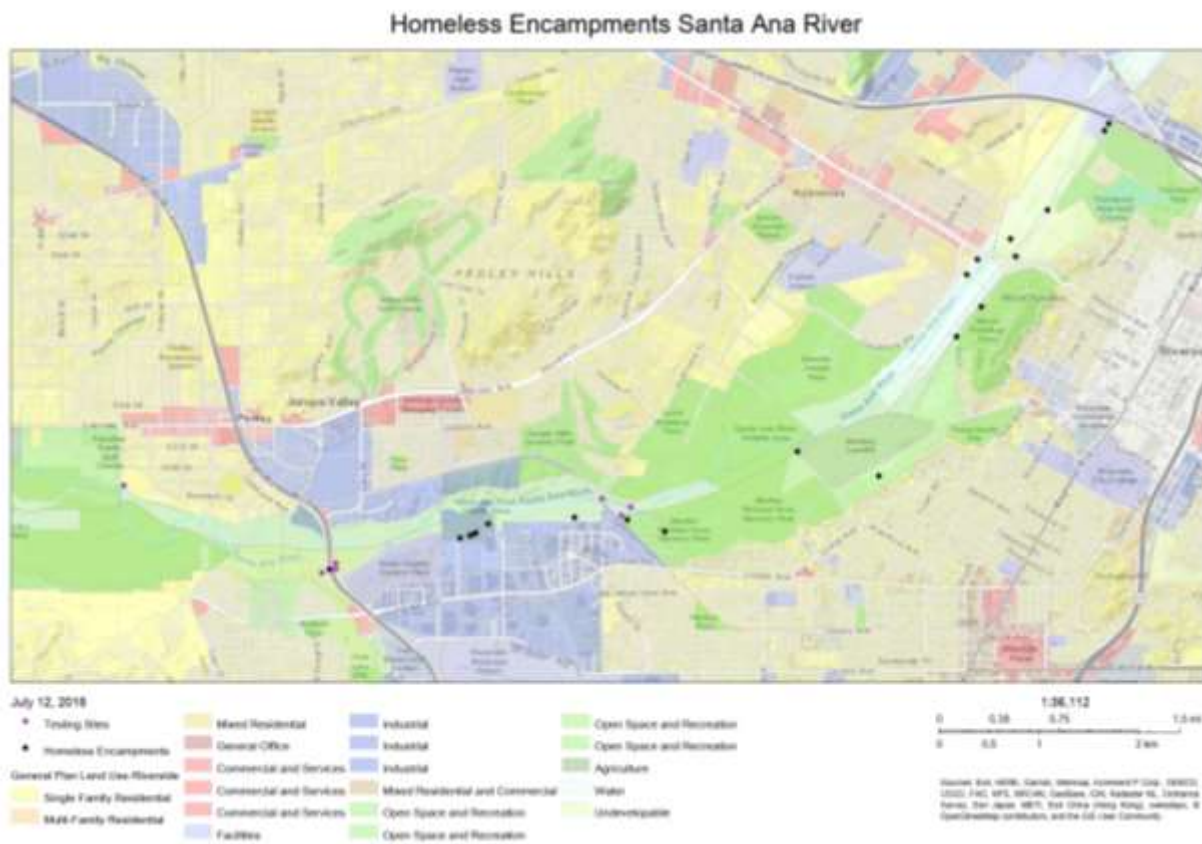
The development of the Clean Camp Coalition will come to fruition in July 2018. The trash collection service will be deployed and possibilities for expansion to other parts of the river will be examined. Mapping the encampments is one concrete outcome of this project. Water quality testing is in the process of establishing a baseline. Partnerships have been created with SAWPA, WRI, Rivers and Lands Conservancy, Riverside County Flood Control, Path of Life Ministries, and the City of Riverside's Homelessness Services program. Deepening these partnerships will continue overtime.

The complexity of homelessness, specifically in the Santa Ana River Watershed, is one of the main lessons learned from this internship. Projects like the Clean Camp Coalition could have an immediate improvement on water quality by removing encampment debris. These projects can also provide the foundations for enduring changes by building partnerships between the diverse set of agencies that deal with the homeless population in the watershed. Homelessness is an issue that requires the collaboration of agencies in the sectors of water, homeless resources, law enforcement, and public health. No one agency can end homelessness in the watershed, but through collaboration long term changes may be possible.

Conclusions

Development of the Clean Camp Coalition and implementation of the trash collection service for the disadvantaged community of homeless individuals will hopefully lead to improved water quality and fewer homeless people living in the Santa Ana River. Post-trash collection water quality testing will be needed to determine project efficacy. Research, training, and collaboration contributed to the foundations of the Clean Camp Coalition. By continuing efforts in each of these areas the Clean Camp Coalition can successfully pave the way for further efforts to decrease the homeless population living in the river. The importance of building partnerships between water agencies and others who interact with homeless individuals is key to long term success. The importance of partnership building demonstrated throughout this internship has reinforced my desire for a future workplace that emphasizes interagency cooperation.

Appendix 1



Map Created by Regina Guerre

Appendix 2

Image from 12/14/17



Appendix 3

Images from 01/23/18























Appendix 4

Images from 05/23/18









