

Published February 28th, 2024

Moraga resident's mission: Keep Moraga clean and beautiful

By Diane Claytor



Just some of the trash Scott Parker found when cleaning up the creekbed at Moraga's new West Commons Park Photos provided

Scott Parker is nothing if not persistent; passionate and stubborn may also be words used to describe the Moraga resident. What began more than three years ago as a way to kill a few hours while his son practiced soccer has grown into a lofty mission: keep Moraga clean.

Parker has been heading out by himself every weekend - mostly during the winter months when the weather is cooler and there is less chance of confronting poison oak - and cleaning up years and years worth of trash throughout Moraga. He estimates that he has removed in excess of 30,000 pounds of litter from the town's open space, watersheds, and creeks. This includes more than 10,000 bottles and cans, 1,000 paint cans, dozens of car tires, TVs, trash compactors, HVAC units, shopping carts, and even toilets. He believes some of this debris has been lying around for decades. In fact, while cleaning up Mulholland Ridge recently, Parker proclaims, "I found Burgermeister beer cans - Burgermeister stopped producing beer in 1971!"

It was never Parker's intention to clean up the town, he says. But everywhere he looked, he saw litter. "The more I see it, the more I have to do something about it," he states. "I can't just leave it." But now, after hundreds of hours of sometimes back-breaking work, hundreds of dollars spent on supplies, gas, and dumping fees - not to mention a few broken toes, occasional dehydration, and a head-first tumble into a creek, Parker is ready to stop. "My body is starting to feel it, going up and down steep slopes, dragging full, heavy bags of trash, not to mention big, bulky items," he explains.

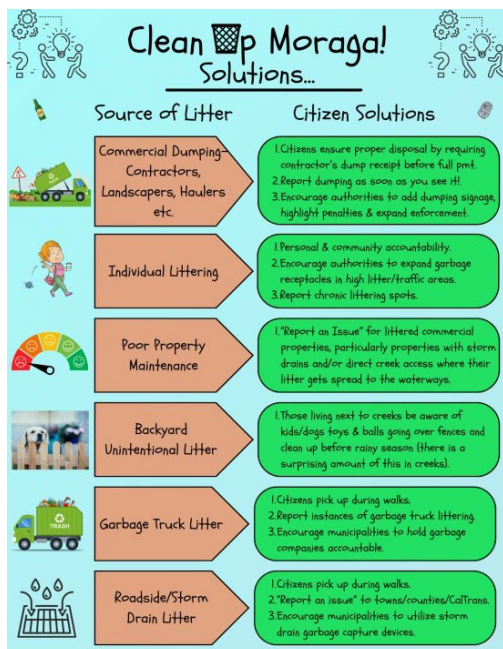
"For me," Parker advises, "it's all about long term solutions, not endless cleanup." He believes he has hit all the local creeks and open space, cleaning up each one. "But now, we have to figure out why people are using these spaces for dumping and come up with solutions," he notes.

"I've done, and will continue to do, my part," Parker says. But now it's time for the town, private property owners and residents to do their part to either stop litter altogether or at least stop it from accumulating. It's time to get the community engaged and involved."

Parker has many solutions for keeping our community clean, all of which involve taking responsibility, being accountable, and reporting issues quickly to the town. He believes that Moraga is now the cleanest it has been in decades so we can start fresh to keep it this way.

The easiest way to do this, Parker emphasizes, is by going to the town's website (<https://www.moraga.ca.us/>). On the front page, there is a "Report an Issue" button. It's easy to use and, Parker notes, "is a great way for residents to get involved without getting their hands dirty; the town is generally very responsive. It's the old 'see something say something' adage," he says.

"We have the ability to keep our town clean and be proud of where we live," Parker declares.



After cleaning up Moraga, Scott Parker had created a brochure, including his ideas of how to keep the town clean.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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