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SANTA CRUZ

Earth Day fair raises environmental awareness

By Samantha Clark

sclark@santacruzsentinel.com
@samanthabelark on Twitter

SANTA CRUZ » Officially, Earth Day is few days away, but Santa Cruz celebrated the event early

on Saturday in San Lorenzo Park.

The goal of the annual festival is to raise environmental awareness by learning about environmental concerns and showcasing solutions. More than 1,000

people attended to check out what local companies, nonprofits, schools, activists and government agencies are doing to protect nature resources and to promote conservation.

Attendees also enjoyed fam-

ily friendly activities, live music and sustainable food vendors.

“We want people to have a good time and to walk away with more compassion and knowledge about how to help

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the environment,” said Mary Simmons of Santa Cruz’s waste reduction program and one of the event organizers from the city, Santa Cruz County and Ecology Action.

Since cars are a major source of carbon dioxide emissions, Logan Conover, an 11th-grader at Merit Academy in Soquel, is asking people not to drive on April 23 as part of his When, Not If campaign. The name refers to “when” the more severe consequences of climate change will occur, “not if” they will.

“If the world stopped driving for a day, about 30 billion pounds of CO2 wouldn’t enter the atmosphere,” he said. “At my website www.whennotif.org, you can enter how much you would drive next Saturday, and it calculates how much CO2 you prevented from going into the atmosphere.”

Logan said participating could be a good first step for those who want to drive less.

“People might feel like they’re the only ones doing something or only one person, so I wanted something we could all do together,”



KEVIN JOHNSON — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Terry Hershner sits on his Zero electric motorcycle with his 10-month-old husky named Charger at San Lorenzo Park in Santa Cruz on Saturday during the annual Earth Day event.

he said.

Fourth-graders Lucinda Steiner and Tamarah Minami of the Monarch School talked to event attendees about the large amount of energy it takes to produce single-use plastic water bottles and the large amount of waste they become.

“It takes 450 years for these water bottles to decompose,” Tamarah said.

“But metal ones like mine can be used again and again and again,” Lucinda added.

There were also composting workshops, information on how to discourage mosquito breeding and a cleanup event at the San Lorenzo River, which runs next to fair’s location and supplies Santa Cruz with drinking water.

“We went because it was an opportunity to clean up a place that we love,” said River Krimmer, 34, of Santa Cruz. “There were lots of cigarette butts and garbage, so maybe if there were more trash cans along the river walk, peo-

ple would use them.”

According to Save Our Shores, which hosted numerous coastal cleanups throughout Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, more than 400 volunteers came out and picked up more than 4,000 pounds of litter.

In addition, more than 100 volunteers came out to Lighthouse Field State Beach to weed plants, lay mulch and install fencing with the California State parks Foundation in an Earth Day event sponsored by PG&E.