

"We Can Do This"--New Campaign From Community for a Clean Watershed

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Ventura County's Community for a Clean Watershed is launching a new outreach campaign to reduce stormwater pollution.

VENTURA, CALIF. -- We've all seen it on the television news after a strong rain--tons of trash floating in the ocean, carried there from city streets and neighborhood yards through storm drains and natural creeks. The mounds of trash along the beaches are particularly noticeable after rainy days, but the pollution is a year-round problem. Ventura County's Community for a Clean Watershed is launching a new outreach campaign to reduce stormwater pollution.

The "We Can Do This" campaign focuses on trash removal and encourages residents to "pick it up before it makes the trip" through Ventura County's watersheds. Creeks, estuaries, and storm drain systems collect untreated water and carry it and anything in it to the ocean. Trash, including paper cups, gum wrappers, cigarette butts, plastic water bottles, fast-food wrappers and yard waste, is a major pollutant. Anything that is thrown on the ground instead of into a trash or recycle bin will end up in the watershed.

Automotive fluids, garden pesticides, and weed killers are also major water pollutants. Pet waste, improperly discarded food and dirty diapers harbor bacteria that can harm people and marine life exposed to the bacteria-laced water.

"All these pollutants can be kept out of the watershed with some simple housekeeping by the public," says Arne Anselm, Ventura County water quality monitoring manager. "For example, pick up a piece of litter even if it isn't yours, and always dispose of automotive fluids, pet waste and unwanted food properly. Also, using less toxic alternatives such as mulch to keep weeds down will prevent pesticides from killing unintended critters. Consider using a car wash that recycles its water instead of washing your car at home and letting the sudsy pollutants run down the gutter."

The trash problem was evident at the 2010 annual Coastal Clean-Up Day in September. Volunteers collected over five tons of trash (11,608 pounds). "That was trash that hadn't yet made it out to sea," notes Anselm. "The amount collected in one day is a tiny fraction of the annual quantity of litter that enters our storm drains and is carried into the ocean where we swim and play. The debris can come from anywhere in Ventura County--Thousand Oaks, Fillmore, Oxnard, Camarillo. Creeks and storm drains leading to the ocean run throughout the county. "

The month-long campaign, created by the Agency in Camarillo, will include television, radio, and online outreach. Go to Community for a Clean Watershed on Facebook for more information on how to keep Ventura County's watersheds clean, or visit www.cleanwatershed.org.

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Community for a Clean Watershed is a coalition of stormwater quality management agencies in the cities and unincorporated areas of Ventura County, working together to protect county watersheds by preventing stormwater pollution.

Category Environment, Education, Lifestyle

Tags community for a clean watershed, ventura county, watershed, stormwater pollution, trash in the

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