

Ventura County coalition launches "Beauty" campaign to keep streams clean

By Cheri Carlson

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Images of some of Ventura County's most beautiful places are headed to local television screens as officials ask residents to keep local streams and creeks pollution-free.

The Ventura County Community for a Clean Watershed started its annual outreach campaign this month. Dubbed "Beauty," the campaign is designed to celebrate county sights, including the Los Padres National Forest, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Ventura River, officials said.

"Ventura County is very beautiful, and there's a lot here to protect," said Arne Anselm, a water quality manager for the county Watershed Protection District.

What flows into neighborhood storm drains from yards, driveways, streets and sidewalks also flows through creeks and rivers and ends up in the ocean, he said. "Everyone lives in a watershed, and what they do can impact our rivers and the ocean."

The group is a collaboration among the county, its 10 cities and the Watershed Protection District. They work together to educate the public on how to protect surface waters from runoff pollution, Anselm said. The efforts, required by the state, must include funding for an outreach campaign.

For the past several years, the group has used ads for its outreach campaign. Past efforts mostly focused on specific pollutants, but this year, the group wanted to try something new.

"We think we've learned that telling people what to do or what not to do can only go so far," Anselm said. "But if we can show them what we need their help to protect, then we can get more action."

The campaign, which includes commercials on local cable and radio stations, also directs residents to the group's website, which gives more information about how to keep the watershed clean.

"I really like it," said Kay Allen, coordinator of Simi Valley's environmental compliance program. "We're trying to get people to bond with nature and see it as something that is important to the community and to them."

This is a different approach and may reach new audiences, she said.

"Ventura County has just so much to offer," she said. "We've got the beach. We've got the mountains. We've got so many amazing places."

On the Net: <http://www.cleanwatershed.org>



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