



PRESS RELEASE

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Wishtoyo's Ventura Coastkeeper Program Takes Action Against 9 Companies to Stop Illegal Discharges of Pollutants from 37 Acres of Automobile Dismantling and Scrap Metal Facilities from Impairing Drinking Water Supplies and the Santa Clara River

Move Under the Clean Water Act Aims to Halt the Illegal Discharge of Pollutants from 9 Neighboring Companies into the Santa Clara River and Groundwater to Protect the Public from Proposition 65 Listed Carcinogens & Reproductive Toxins, and to Protect the Ecological Integrity, Cultural Resources, and Southern California Steelhead of the Santa Clara River Watershed and Ventura's Coastal Waters

Santa Paula, Ventura County, CA – The Wishtoyo Foundation's Ventura Coastkeeper Program ("Ventura Coastkeeper") has issued 60-Day Notices of Intent to sue ("NOI") nine auto dismantling companies and a scrap metal company under the Clean Water Act to stop storm water discharges from their facilities from impairing the Santa Clara River watershed and groundwater supplies beneath, around, and downstream from their operations.

These neighboring Facilities, encompassing a combined 37 plus acres along Mission Rock Road in Santa Paula, California include: Ventura County Auto Parts ("VCAP"), Pick the Part, Pick Your Part, Tri-County Auto Dismantlers, Ventura Mercedes Dismantling, Muschamp Dismantling, ABC Auto Parts and Dismantling, Ventura Truck Only Dismantlers, and C&D Auto Parts and Dismantling. Information available to Ventura Coastkeeper also indicates that VCAP has an automobile dismantling facility with a sizable, hidden scrap metal operation on Mission Rock Road that has not been reported to the State of California as required by the Clean Water Act's General Industrial Storm Water Permit.

Numerous samples taken by Wishtoyo's Ventura Coastkeeper Watershed Monitoring Program personnel, visual observations, and examination of the facilities' own sampling results reported in Clean Water Act Annual Monitoring Reports over the last 5 years reveal the facilities' toxic storm water discharges, best management practice deficiencies, and routine failures to observe and sample storm water discharges as required by the Clean Water Act.

Discharges from the nine Facilities contain copper, zinc, and a plethora of other heavy metals in toxic concentrations that violate the Clean Water Act Water and that jeopardize the Southern California Steelhead and other inland, estuarine, and coastal aquatic life. Alarming, discharges from these facilities contain chemicals listed in Proposition 65 as carcinogenic and reproductive toxins such as lead, hexavalent chromium, mercury, arsenic, beryllium, and cadmium in

concerning concentrations. The area has at least 24 active wells in a one mile radius. Well water intended for agricultural utilization can be ingested by farm workers and property occupants according to Watershed Protection District officials.

“The goal of Ventura Coastkeeper’s action is to clean up a toxic hotspot along the Santa Clara River that has served as the County’s epicenter for automobile dismantling since 1975, and to mandate the facilities prevent toxic discharges from entering the Santa Clara River and seeping into groundwater supplies,” said Jason Weiner, Ventura Coastkeeper’s Associate Director and Staff Attorney.

The ecologically rich, approximately 116 mile long Santa Clara River, is Southern California’s last naturally flowing major river system that is not heavily dammed or channelized. The Santa Clara River and its Estuary downstream of the Facilities are home to the endangered “Isha’kowoch” (Chumash name for Southern California Steelhead), which is a vital and sacred resource to Chumash Native American Culture, the well being of Southern California’s diverse communities, and the ecological integrity of the Santa Clara River. The Chumash People have a long history of interaction with the Santa Clara River and with the River’s population of Isha’kowoch for a variety of cultural purposes including religious and ceremonial ones.

“Our campaign to rid Ventura County waterways of polluted storm water will continue until every discharger is in compliance with the Clean Water Act,” says Mati Waiya, Chumash Ceremonial Elder and Executive Director of the Wishtoyo Foundation and its Ventura Coastkeeper Program. “If we treat the Santa Clara River with honor and respect, we have a chance to continue benefiting from vital cultural and natural resources that our ancestors depended on, and that we depend on for a healthy future. Like our ancestors who stewarded and sustainably co-existed with their land and wildlife, we too have the same obligation and must continue this commitment to each other, our cultures, our species, and our environment.”

About The Wishtoyo Foundation and its Ventura Coastkeeper Program: Founded in 1997, Wishtoyo is a 501(c)(3) non-profit grassroots organization with over 700 members consisting of Ventura County’s diverse residents and Chumash Native Americans. Wishtoyo’s mission is to preserve and protect Chumash culture, the culture of all of Ventura County’s diverse communities, and the environment that our current and future generations depend upon. Wishtoyo shares traditional Chumash Native American beliefs, cultural practices, songs, dances, stories, and values with the public in its Chumash Discovery Village and through educational programs in schools to promote environmental awareness and natural resources stewardship. In 2000, Wishtoyo founded its Ventura Coastkeeper Program (“VCK”). VCK’s mission is to protect, preserve, and restore the ecological integrity and water quality of Ventura County’s inland and coastal waterbodies for all beings in the County’s diverse community through outreach and education, restoration projects, advocacy, litigation, and community organizing and empowerment.

For more information about Wishtoyo Foundation and its Ventura Coastkeeper Program Visit: www.wishtoyo.org.