



PRESS RELEASE

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Ventura Coastkeeper's Stormwater Campaign Leads By Example With Its J-Street Drain Trash Clean Up Event - Efforts Not Enough though as at Least 1,375 pounds of Trash Are Swept Into Ormond Beach and Oxnard's Coastal Waters Following the First Storm Event of the Rainy Season

23 Ventura Coastkeeper Volunteers Clean up 35 Bags of Trash from J-Street Drain and Prevent it from Impairing the Ormond Beach Wetlands and Oxnard's Coastal Waters

On Saturday, October 10 2009, Ventura Coastkeeper ("VCK") Volunteers gathered inside a ¼ mile stretch of Oxnard's J-Street Drain to pick up roughly 125 pounds of trash to prevent it from being swept into the Ormond Beach Wetlands during this season's first storm event. Volunteers worked hard to pick up over 580 cigarette buds, 649 plastic food wrappers, 83 plastic grocery bags, 250 styrofoam plates and cups, 67 metal bottle caps and 196 plastic cups. In total, VCK volunteers removed up 549 paper items, 284 glass items, 144 metal items, 576 styrofoam items, 1637 plastic items, and an assortment of sporting balls and large items from the storm drain.

In regards to VCK's J-Street Drain Trash Clean Up Event, Mati Waiya, Ventura Coastkeeper's Executive Director and Chumash Ceremonial Elder states that: "Its inspiring to see the group of dedicated local volunteers that came out to take care of their waterbodies and to recognize the commitment it takes to protect our environment...Its also fulfilling to know that when you hear the rain come down, you contributed to the protection of all the species living in the Ormond Beach Wetlands and our marine waters, and that if not for our effort our ecosystems would be further impaired. I would like to thank all the volunteers for their meaningful work."

While VCK volunteers did their part, the remaining 2 ¾ mile stretch of the J-Street Drain remained filled with an estimated 1,375 pounds of trash (125 pounds every ¼ mile), which now, after our first rain event is settling into and will impair the Ormond Beach Wetlands and our coastal waters for years to come.

Year round, J-Street Drain is littered with trash that is swept into Ormond Beach Wetlands and Oxnard's coastal waters following every rain event. Trash significantly degrades the ecological integrity and water quality of Ormond Beach Wetlands, which is

home to, and serves as migratory grounds for, numerous federally listed endangered species including the snowy plover, California least tern, and tidewater goby. The wetlands are of significant importance to Oxnard's residents, many of which are economically and politically marginalized.

Jason Weiner, Ventura Coastkeeper's Associate Director and Staff Attorney feels that "By picking up J-Street Drain's trash, VCK's volunteers protected their local ecosystems doing the job every local resident should be inclined to perform as a steward of their land, waterbodies, and ecosystems to which they belong and depend upon...However, we depend on our local and county governments to fulfill their obligations to protect our environment related health and wellbeing, and to fulfill their legal duties to comply with the Clean Water Act and their Clean Water Act Permits by preventing trash and pollutants from discharging from our storm drains into our waterbodies...Cheap and effective devices installed in storm drains, such as booms, could serve as temporary solutions to collect trash before it enters into Ventura County's inland and coastal waterbodies during storm events."

Ventura Coastkeeper's Stormwater Campaign:

Ventura Coastkeeper's Storm Drain Cleanup Events are one of the many facets of Ventura Coastkeeper's campaign to prevent storm water & dry weather urban runoff from degrading the water quality and ecological integrity of Ventura County's inland and coastal waterbodies. In addition to trash clean ups and advocating for a County Stormwater Permit (MS4 Permit) that is protective of water quality, Ventura Coastkeeper also charges itself with enforcing the MS4 permit by detecting and reporting MS4 permit violations and Clean Water Act violations through its Watershed Monitoring Program. VCK's Watershed Monitoring Program monitors and samples water from 35 sites throughout Ventura County in the Santa Clara River, Calleguas Creek, Ormond Beach, Ventura River, and in smaller coastal watersheds.

The Threat of Urban Runoff from Stormwater to Our Waterbodies:

Urban runoff is amongst the biggest threats to the water quality of Ventura County's inland waterbodies and coastal waters. In particular, stormwater runoff, or the polluted runoff that follows rainstorms, carries high levels of trash, sediment, oil, toxins, nutrients, and other pollutants from industrial sites, construction activities, and impervious surfaces in urban areas into Ventura County's streams and coastal waters. These water quality threats will be exacerbated by the population growth of Ventura County, which by 2030 is projected to rise by 200,000, from 800,000 to over 1,000,000 residents. If current trends continue, the development accompanying this population boom will lead to more impervious surfaces that increase the pollutant loads entering our waterways. Despite these trends, stormwater pollution has been exacerbated by the unwillingness of state agencies to take enforcement action against polluters, to prevent these discharges through meaningful regulation, and to require Low Impact Development (LID) and re-development that is protective of water quality.

What Trash in Urban Runoff Does to Our Waterbodies

In Ventura County trash is a substantial and visible pollutant in wet and dry weather urban runoff, which is concerning because trash in waterways causes significant water quality problems. Small and large floatables can inhibit the growth of aquatic vegetation, decreasing spawning areas and habitats for fish and other living organisms. Wildlife living in rivers and in riparian areas can be harmed by ingesting or becoming entangled in floating trash. Except for large items such as shopping carts, settleables are not always obvious to the eye. They include glass, cigarette butts, rubber, construction debris and more. Settleables can be a problem for bottom feeders and can contribute to sediment contamination. Some debris (e.g. diapers, medical and household waste, and chemicals) are a source of bacteria and toxic

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.

Wishtoyo and its Ventura Coastkeeper program believe that our land, waterbodies, and oceans are interconnected, co-dependent communities to which we as individuals, are one of many living entities that belong. As such, it is our responsibility to protect the land, water, and oceans we exist upon for the common good and to sustain our well being, co-existence, and harmony with the world and the many diverse surrounding communities that we depend on.

To volunteer with Ventura Coastkeeper or to learn more visit us at:

<http://www.wishtoyo.org/ventura-coastkeeper.html> or email info@wishtoyo.org