



PRESS RELEASE

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The Wishtoyo Foundation's Ventura Coastkeeper Program Launches its County Wide Industrial Stormwater Campaign By Issuing a 60 Day Notice of Intent to Sue Scrap Metal Giant Standard Industries to Halt its Toxic – Metals Laden Stormwater Discharge Into the Santa Clara River

Move Aims to Protect the Southern California Steelhead, and the Ecological Integrity, Water Quality, and Cultural Resources of One of America's Most Endangered Rivers and its Coastal Waters by Demanding Compliance with the Clean Water Act

Saticoy, Ventura County, CA – The Wishtoyo Foundation's Ventura Coastkeeper Program ("Ventura Coastkeeper") has issued a 60-Day Notice of Intent to sue ("NOI") County Scrap Metal giant Standard Industries ("Standard") for routinely violating the federal Clean Water Act ("CWA") by discharging stormwater laden with toxic metals from its 10.74 acre scrap metal yard into the Santa Clara River. Standard's yard, containing mountains of scrap heaps, is highly visible downstream from the Highway 118 / Los Angeles Avenue Bridge over the Santa Clara River. Ventura Coastkeeper's NOI, coming after more than 5 years of Standard's illegal discharges of stormwater contaminated by, and wreaking of, toxic metals, oils, and grease, is a needed course of action to adequately protect the endangered Southern California Steelhead and the ecological integrity, water quality, and cultural resources of Ventura's coastal marine waters and the Santa Clara River. The ecologically rich, approximately 116 mile long Santa Clara River, Southern California's last naturally flowing major river system that is not heavily dammed or channelized, was identified by American Rivers as one of the nation's most endangered rivers in 2005.

A multitude of samples taken by Wishtoyo's Ventura Coastkeeper Watershed Monitoring Program personnel, and examination of Standard's own Clean Water Act NPDES permit sampling reports over the last 5 years, revealed Standard's toxic stormwater discharge. Wishtoyo's Ventura Coastkeeper Watershed Program with over 35 monitoring sites in Ventura County's Santa Clara River, Ventura River, Calleguas Creek, and Ormond Beach watersheds, is composed of staff and local residents trained by Ventura Coastkeeper to monitor for water quality impairments and to identify and report water pollution in their communities.

For too long, many Ventura County businesses have been discharging toxic stormwater from their properties into our waterbodies due to lack of Clean Water Act enforcement. Unfortunately, these businesses need incentives, such as fear of legal action, to protect the county's endangered wildlife, fragile aquatic ecosystems, recreational waters, and cultural resources.

"We hope that our action to protect the Santa Clara River's treasures alerts local industry that we are here, watching, and ready to enforce the Clean Water Act if toxic stormwater is discharged from

their properties...Allowing Standard to continue its highly visible toxic discharge without a Clean Water Act enforcement action would send the wrong message to Ventura County businesses,” says Jason Weiner, the Associate Director and Staff Attorney for Wishtoyo’s Ventura Coastkeeper Program.

Mati Waiya, Chumash Ceremonial Elder and the Executive Director of the Wishtoyo Foundation and its Ventura Coastkeeper Program adds, “Our campaign to rid Ventura County waterways of polluted stormwater will not stop until every discharger is in compliance with the Clean Water Act... In the wake of our, many public interest groups, and government entities’ efforts to restore the Santa Clara River ecosystem and its populations of endangered species, it is of the utmost importance that we hold businesses and all dischargers accountable for water pollution...For instance, as adult Southern California steelhead attempt to migrate up the Santa Clara River to reproduce in their spawning grounds, we must prevent toxic stormwater discharges from wiping them out upon contact. The same goes for all species that suffer from these lethal plumes of toxins that impair our waterbodies, our species, and our cultural resources.”

To protect the Southern California Steelhead and all of the Santa Clara River’s species, Wishoyo’s Ventura Coastkeeper program will require that Standard implements the best available source and treatment control best management practices (“BMPs”) that results in Standard’s attainment of water quality standards promulgated to protect endangered species, wildlife, and aquatic ecosystems.

Ventura Coastkeeper’s Industrial Stormwater Campaign: Ventura Coastkeeper samples industrial stormwater discharges, monitors NPDES permits and sampling reports, and pursues Clean Water Act enforcement actions against the most egregious industrial stormwater polluters to abate their toxic discharges into our waters. The 60 day notice of intent to sue Standard Industries under the Clean Water Act marks the launch of Ventura Coastkeeper’s Industrial Stormwater Campaign by targeting the most visible and toxically egregious stormwater polluter in the County.

Industrial Stormwater Discharges: During every rainfall event, millions of gallons of polluted rainwater originating from Ventura County industrial operations, including from scrap metal yards, pours into storm drains and ends up in the Santa Clara River, the Ventura River, Calleguas Creek, Mugu Lagoon, the Santa Clara and Ventura River Estuaries, and the Pacific Ocean. The consensus among water quality experts and government agencies is that storm water pollution accounts for more than half of the total pollution entering marine and inland waterbodies annually. The pollutants associated with activities commonly conducted at scrap metal recycling facilities include, but are not limited to: zinc, copper, lead, cadmium, arsenic, aluminum, iron, mercury, nickel, silver, barium, and chromium; oil and grease; PCBs; fuel and fuel additives; battery fluids; total suspended solids (“TSS”); pH-affecting substances; and fugitive and other dust, dirt, and debris.

The pollutants discharged from industrial sites during storm events pose sublethal, acute, and chronic toxicity threats to the marine and freshwater organisms they encounter, devastating aquatic habitats and their wildlife, and impairing the recovery of endangered species such as the Southern California Steelhead.

Southern California Steelhead: The Santa Clara River, the largest river system in Southern California, flowing approximately 100 miles within a 1,600 square mile watershed, is home to Southern California’s best steelhead habitat. Standard Industries lies on the Santa Clara River roughly 8 miles from the Pacific Ocean. Its discharge, by posing sublethal and acute toxicity threats to steelhead, along with the Vern Freeman Diversion Dam, an upstream fish passage barrier, inhibits

steelhead passage to 99% of their traditional spawning grounds. The Santa Clara River's tributaries have seen their adult steelhead populations drop drastically from over 8,000 returning adult spawning steelhead per year in the decades preceding the Dams construction, to between 0-2 . The survival and revitalization of the Southern California Steelhead, a species of significance to the ecological health of Ventura county ecosystems and Chumash culture, is dependent upon a healthy and unimpaired Santa Clara River without acute and sublethal toxicity threats.

Chumash and Resident Cultural Resources: The endangered and severely threatened "Isha'kowoch" (Chumash name for Southern California Steelhead), is a vital 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 Santa Clara River's population of steelhead, for a variety of cultural purposes including religious and ceremonial ones. The Chumash People also share a sacred and cultural relationship with the "Isha'kowoch", that is depicted in Chumash Peoples' ancient cave paintings, modern day art, celebrated in Chumash songs and ceremonies, and told about in Chumash stories which have been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. Additionally, members of the public use the Santa Clara River, Ventura County's coastline and beaches for body contact water sports such as surfing and other forms of recreation, wildlife observation, aesthetic enjoyment, educational study, spiritual contemplation, and cultural and religious practices, all of which are impaired by Standard's toxic stormwater discharge.

"If we respect and treat the Santa Clara River with the honor and respect that we should, we will have a chance to continue benefiting from vital cultural and natural resources that our ancestors depended upon, and that we depend on for a healthy future," Waiya said. "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. 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.

For more information about Wishtoyo Foundation's Watershed Monitoring Program with 35 sites in the Calleguas, Ventura, Ormond Beach, and Santa Clara River watersheds throughout Ventura County visit: <http://www.wishtoyo.org/vck-watershed-monitoring-program.html>