



# NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION KIT

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES TO PREVENT POLLUTION  
IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD AND WATERWAYS



Erase the  
waste

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CALIFORNIA WATER BOARDS



Dear Resident:

As a Californian, we know that you care about the health of your community, and want to protect local water quality and the environment. But too often our local rivers, creeks, beaches and communities are tarnished by pollution – pesticides, runoff, fast food wrappers, cigarette butts and pet waste – and our beaches are closed due to the trash, motor oil and other debris that are left in the streets to wash out to our waterways, creating unsafe conditions. This problem – known as storm water pollution – is one that we must and can do something about.

The California Water Boards – the state and regional government boards responsible for protecting California's waters – have made reducing storm water pollution in California a top priority by sponsoring a storm water public education program, called Erase the Waste. This multifaceted campaign has worked to educate residents about the dangers of pollution, how it affects their communities and how it ultimately affects our waterways and our environment, as it makes its way from the streets directly into nearby creeks, rivers and the ocean. Residents can get involved and be part of the solution – with the ultimate goal of reducing pollution and improving the environment of our coastal and inland communities.


As part of this effort, we are pleased to present you with the Erase the Waste Neighborhood Action Kit – an interactive resource that we hope will empower you to join our effort to erase the waste and take back your community from pollution and the associated risks that can threaten the health and safety of your family, community and area waters.

Why should you care about storm water pollution? Because with a population of more than 35 million residents in California, pollution is likely a part of your daily experience. Every month hundreds of thousands of Californians drop cigarette butts in streets, parks and playgrounds; dispose of their motor oil improperly; overuse fertilizers and pesticides; and toss trash on the ground. The fact is, nobody knows your community as well as you do. And with your support, we can reduce these alarming statistics and lessen the amount of pollution in your area.

This Erase the Waste Neighborhood Action Kit contains a wide range of information and tools. Inside, you will find everything from tips on how to create a trash-free event, adopt your local park or neighborhood, or organize a community cleanup or watershed restoration activity with your family and neighbors, along with simple activities you can do with your children, and public speaking pointers, so that you can make a presentation on the issue to your local PTA or homeowners association.

If each of us commits to performing simple, preventive acts every day -- such as putting litter in the trash can and cigarette butts in ashtrays, picking up pet waste, using fertilizers and pesticides sparingly, using non-toxic products whenever possible and becoming involved in community clean ups --we would have a great chance of succeeding at our goal of reducing pollution in your community and protecting the quality of our waterways.

The California Water Boards hope you find the tips and tools in this Neighborhood Action Kit (also available at [www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com)) useful and appropriate for your family, neighborhood or organization, and that it motivates you to reduce pollution by erasing the waste.



Arthur G. Baggett, Jr.  
Chair  
California State Water Resources Control Board



# NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION KIT AT-A-GLANCE

## THE KIT IS COMPRISED OF SIX SECTIONS:

### **SECTION 1 – CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND AND STORM WATER POLLUTION PREVENTION INFORMATION**

This section contains:

- Background on the California Water Boards' Erase the Waste campaign
- Information and facts on the storm water pollution problem
- Good housekeeping practices that will help prevent pollution

### **SECTION 2 – HOW TO GET INVOLVED TO ERASE THE WASTE**

This section focuses on pollution prevention information ranging from "Simple Tips for Individual Action," to neighborhood events, and from activities to do with children, to "Ideas for Large Groups and Organizations." Tips for organizing a successful clean up or pollution prevention event are included, as well as pre-event and day-of-event planning checklists. This section also includes a how-to sheet for developing partnerships in your neighborhood.

Also included is a sample event flyer that can be adapted to individual events, a sample letter to solicit event partners and a sample release and indemnification form.

### **SECTION 3 – SPEAKING OUT TO ERASE THE WASTE**

For many people, speaking in front of an audience is one of their worst fears. In "Speaking Out to Erase the Waste," the Neighborhood Action Kit provides:

- Ways to make speaking easier, by showing you how to develop a speech
- Pointers for speakers
- Basic facts and figures for your key messages

For large organizations, there is a how-to sheet for creating a formalized speakers bureau.

### **SECTION 4 – WORKING WITH MEDIA TO ERASE THE WASTE**

The media can be a big asset in spreading the pollution prevention word, as well as helping gain support and resources for anti-pollution efforts.

"Working With Media to Erase the Waste" provides:

- Checklists for publicizing events and programs, and for maintaining media relationships.
- Information about a wide variety of media materials and activities, including a media advisory and release, pitch letter, letter to the editor, opinion-editorial (op-ed) article, calendar announcement, public service announcement, public affairs/news talk shows, media conferences and editorial board meetings. Templates and samples of many of these materials can be found at the end of this section.

### **SECTION 5- INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS TO ERASE THE WASTE**

This section contains:

- Informational materials such as, flyers and posters that can be used to educate your neighbors and family about storm water pollution. Materials include:
  - ▶ Erase the Waste posters that relate to: (1) picking up pet waste; (2) putting cigarettes in ashtrays; (3) putting litter in the trashcan; and (4) doing home improvement activities safely.
  - ▶ Flyers covering: (1) pet waste; (2) safe gardening; (3) litter prevention; and (4) safe home improvement.

### **SECTION 6 – ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO ERASE THE WASTE**

The final section of the Neighborhood Action Kit is a resource list that provides you with further information about a variety of topics under pollution prevention. The list is divided into five categories:

- General Campaign Information
- Organizations That Hold Community Clean Up Events/How to Get Involved
- General Environmental and Storm Water Pollution Information
- Regulatory/Government Agencies
- Annual Pollution Prevention Events



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# ERASE THE WASTE

## STORM WATER POLLUTION SOLUTIONS EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

### BACKGROUND

Storm water pollution is a serious problem in California, with significant impacts on the state's water quality, environmental resources, plants and wildlife, and public health and safety. The issue also has significant economic impacts – as clean-up measures are extremely costly, and poor water quality and unsafe beach conditions threaten California's tourism-driven revenues.

To address this critical issue, the California Water Boards sponsored a comprehensive, public education program from 2003-2006 to measurably reduce storm water pollution in the state. The Water Boards' primary mandate is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's waters. This campaign is a further demonstration of the State's commitment to protect our inland, coastal and ground water sources and its priority focus to improve water quality to the benefit of California's more than 35 million residents.

### CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

The Water Boards' storm water public education effort is built around the theme, Erase the Waste – a positive message that encourages all residents and stakeholders to take ownership of their communities, and help reduce and prevent storm water pollution in the local landscape.

The California Water Boards realize that every community faces different pollution concerns and that the campaign tactics and activities utilized will vary between communities. To help meet the diverse needs of the different regions throughout the state, the Water Boards have developed a number of varied tactics and tools that are outlined in this kit. Since you know your community the best, the Water Boards recommend that you determine which tactics will be the most effective at educating and empowering your residents to become involved in pollution prevention.

### CASE STUDY – LOS ANGELES COUNTY

As an example of how the Erase the Waste campaign can be customized to meet the needs of a specific regional area, we have provided a case study of the Erase the Waste campaign as it was implemented in Los Angeles County.

The Los Angeles Erase the Waste campaign was the first countywide storm water public education campaign under the Water Boards' auspices. The Water Boards wanted to ensure that this storm water pollution prevention campaign dealt with relevant pollution issues and delivered messages that motivated county residents to become involved in pollution prevention. Through research conducted by the campaign, the Water Boards were able to determine their target audience of the "greatest polluters most likely to change their polluting behaviors" – a group of more than seven million residents, approximately 72 percent of the total population of Los Angeles


County. This group of residents was found to be most motivated to reduce pollution when they understood the health and safety impacts it created for families and children. This metropolitan and urban audience did not respond to pollution prevention messages that focused on the coastal and environmental impacts, used in previous storm water campaigns in the region.

This information led to the Water Boards' development of an innovative and ground-breaking campaign that approached the storm water issue from a completely new perspective – one that focused on the public health and safety threats to communities, neighborhoods, families and children, an issue that is relevant to all inland and coastal communities. The goal

of the campaign was to encourage residents to change their polluting behaviors and stop pollution at its sources – communities and neighborhoods – before it impacted local waterways.

The Los Angeles Erase the Waste campaign conveyed action-oriented pollution prevention messages to residents where they live, work, shop and play. The campaign placed an emphasis on priority regional pollutants including trash, cigarette butts, animal waste, pesticides and fertilizers and tied them all back to the

public health and safety impacts that Los Angeles County residents were concerned about.



**THE ERASE THE WASTE  
CAMPAIGN CONVEYS ACTION-  
ORIENTED POLLUTION  
PREVENTION MESSAGES TO  
RESIDENTS WHERE THEY LIVE,  
WORK, SHOP AND PLAY.**

### KEY CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS


- *Advertising* – Los Angeles residents are bombarded with messages every day. The challenges in creating messages that "cut through the clutter" and are memorable are significant. The campaign developed ads that took a problem/solution approach and used both humor and drama to illustrate the health/safety impacts of storm water pollution. The print, television and radio ads (English and Spanish) included "Excuse Me, Did You Drop Something?" on

the subject of pet waste and “Hold on to Your Butts,” encouraging proper cigarette disposal. To ensure that the ads were seen and heard by the largest audience possible, the campaign strategically placed them during nighttime network television newscasts and on radio during peak drive-time hours.

- *Community Outreach* – To effectively reach community members, a campaign needs both a compelling message and trusted, credible messengers. The campaign engaged community leaders, community/social service organizations, and healthcare agencies to conduct grassroots outreach on behalf of the campaign from a highly credible and new viewpoint. The group, known as the Water Improvement Network (WIN), also provided the State with feedback from community residents about campaign strategies and activities. The development of local campaign “advocates” was effective in encouraging residents to take ownership of their community pollution problems and create solutions. It also helped build new leaders in the storm water pollution prevention effort that can carry the Erase the Waste message and foster neighborhood participation long after the campaign “officially” ends.
- *Strategic Partnerships* – Innovative partnerships with retailers, corporations, municipalities and non-profit organizations were developed to increase the reach of campaign messages. Through public-private partnerships, with various entities including, The Home Depot, Lowe’s, Petco, 99 Ranch Markets, Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council and Heal the Bay, the campaign was able to gain invaluable opportunities to educate its partners’ members and customers on storm water pollution issues through joint mailings, point-of-purchase displays, in-store promotions, distribution of campaign collateral and special discount programs. With the campaign’s emphasis on the health impacts of pollution, innovative partnerships were also developed with organizations such as the American Lung Association of LA County that allowed the campaign to include their messaging about the health impacts of cigarette butts into the organization’s outreach.
- *Media* – People have a tendency to view messages as more credible when they are featured in news outlets because they interpret media coverage as the media’s “endorsement” of an issue’s importance. The campaign utilized general interest, ethnic and community media to increase visibility on the storm water issue and position the State as an expert resource. The campaign developed a “fresh” story angle, positioning storm

water pollution as a public health problem, to heighten media interest. The team conducted outreach around campaign milestones (i.e., launch of the Neighborhood Action Kit, two 8-week advertising cycles, community cleanups), local storm water stories and water policy issues. It also placed special emphasis on times during the year when storm water issues are most relevant to residents. These included spring (as gardening season began), the beginning of summer (when clean beaches are top-of-mind), and just before “first flush” (the beginning of the rainy season to point out and help prevent problems that are caused by trash and oil residue being swept into storm drains and out to the ocean).

- *Youth Education* – One of the best ways to create long-term sustainability in a community environmental education campaign is by creating effective education tools that will inform youth about their local environment, and how they can protect it through personal action and initiative. Through such education it is hoped that these young residents will internalize these principals to benefit society as water stewards, both as young students, and as future civic leaders. In this vein, the campaign team created educational projects to reach the area’s 1 million K-12 students including: 1) a water quality learning model for grades 4-6, consisting of campus-based studies and school/community-based projects to help students understand polluted runoff in a campus setting (this program meets California State Standards and will be provided to educators statewide, along with teacher training sessions); 2) an interactive watershed exhibit at the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium in San Pedro, California; and 3) an after school program for use statewide.
- *Business and Stakeholder Outreach* – Outreach was conducted to key business, political and environmental leaders to educate them on key storm water issues and keep them apprised of and engaged in campaign efforts.



**THE WATER BOARDS’ LOS ANGELES COUNTY-  
FOCUSED STORM WATER PUBLIC EDUCATION  
EFFORT WAS BUILT AROUND THE THEME,  
ERASE THE WASTE - A POSITIVE, EMPOWERING  
THEME THAT ENCOURAGES ALL RESIDENTS  
AND STAKEHOLDERS TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF  
THEIR COMMUNITIES, AND HELP REDUCE AND  
PREVENT STORM WATER POLLUTION IN THE  
LOCAL LANDSCAPE.**



## STORM WATER POLLUTION BASICS FACT SHEET

### What is Storm Water Pollution and How is it Created?

Storm water pollution is a major environmental issue in California, leading to unsanitary living environments, unhealthy surface waters, such as lakes, creeks and rivers, unhealthy ocean and beach conditions, and street and neighborhood flooding during the rainy season. It's created when pesticides, trash, cigarette butts, animal waste, motor oil and other contaminants left on the ground are washed directly into local waterways. This pollution mixes with millions of gallons of rainwater and flows untreated into local creeks, rivers and the ocean – polluting our waterways, as well as degrading neighborhoods and other natural resources.

### What are the Major Storm Water Pollution Issues the State of California addresses?

With more than 35 million people living in California, each resident's contribution to storm water pollution adds up quickly to create a serious environmental problem. Leading water issues include:

- *Watershed protection* – A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place (i.e. a river, creek, lake, etc.). Ensuring water quality and protecting the health of watersheds throughout California are a top priority for the State.  
  
In this effort, the California Water Boards oversee the Clean Water Team, a citizen water monitoring program that allows residents to take an active role in monitoring local water quality. The Water Boards also support watershed councils in their work to develop regional strategies to reduce pollution and ensure sustainable watershed health.
- *Urban runoff* – Urban areas contain up to 90 percent hard surfaces, such as rooftops and pavement, that do not allow rain to soak into the ground. Instead, most developed areas rely on storm drains to carry this runoff water to nearby waterways. The pollution created in neighborhoods and left on the ground, including oil, dirt, pet waste, fertilizers and pesticides, are carried by water runoff directly to local streams, rivers and the ocean, where they seriously harm water quality. Most of these pollutants are derived from the large population of residents in these urban areas and their

polluting behaviors. Runoff from non-residential sources, such as construction sites, buildings, restaurants and gas stations, also contribute to pollution in metropolitan areas

The good news is that through public education programs, such as the California Water Boards' Erase the Waste campaign, residents are learning their small everyday actions can help reduce pollution in their areas. Through small things such as utilizing pesticides and fertilizers conservatively, properly disposing of motor oil and picking up after their pets, residents can help prevent additional pollution in their communities – and they can be powerful catalysts encouraging change and support from business and industry.

### What Are the Effects of Storm Water Pollution?

Degradation of Natural Resources – Research conducted by regional agencies, respected environmental non-profit organizations and academic institutions have identified storm water pollution and urban runoff as one of the leading sources of pollutants to inland rivers, creeks, the ocean and beaches along the state. The widespread critical issue has reached a level that has prompted local, state and federal policymakers and regulatory agencies to enact and enforce more stringent storm water permit regulations, financial penalties and other compliance measures. Environmental effects include:

- *Risk to Wildlife and Sea Life* – Contaminated waterways pose a dangerous threat to wildlife and sea life. In California, there have been many incidents where sea life is affected directly by pollution and contaminated waters.
  - ▶ Many pollutants remain in the environment for many years, including: cigarette butts (1-5 years); plastic bags (10-20 years); plastic bottles (450 years); and Styrofoam cups (undetermined).
- *Closure of Beaches* – When bacteria levels in the ocean water exceed the State Standards, a warning sign is posted and swimmers are encouraged not to enter the water. Storm water contaminants are one of the main causes of increased bacteria levels at California's beaches. During 2003, there were 1,353 warnings posted on California beaches for a total of 7,993 days where the ocean was too polluted for human use. Over the past several years, trash, pesticides

**STORM WATER POLLUTION IS  
CREATED WHEN TRASH,  
CIGARETTE BUTTS, ANIMAL  
WASTE, PESTICIDES, MOTOR OIL  
AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS  
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WASHED OR THROWN DIRECTLY  
INTO STORM DRAINS.**

## STORM WATER POLLUTION BASICS FACT SHEET

and sediments have polluted more than 100 miles of California coastal shorelines.

- **Public Health Risk** – Storm water pollution creates serious health risks to people swimming or fishing in contaminated waters, especially within 400 yards of storm drain outlets.
  - ▶ A study conducted by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project (and partially funded by the State Water Resources Control Board) found that storm water pollution in the ocean leads to increased risk of viral infections, earaches, sinus problems, fever, flu and skin rashes and viral diseases such as hepatitis for those swimming in the ocean close to storm drain outfalls, especially following a rainstorm when litter and contaminants are flushed into the storm drain system. The Governor's Clean Beaches Initiative (CBI), funded by portions of four voter-approved bond measures, has already begun the clean up effort statewide through construction of diversion and treatment facilities.
  - ▶ The Water Boards report that more than 680 water bodies in California are contaminated with a variety of pollutants. And that is just what we know about. State scientists continue to collect more data on the thousands of waterways that bisect the state. As new data becomes available, the number of identified polluted waterways will most likely increase.

*Neighborhood Value and Involvement* – When storm drains become clogged with trash and debris, it can result in street and neighborhood flooding during the rainy season. This water backup can lead to closed roads and increased traffic, and create an unhealthy environment of smelly and unsanitary conditions in communities, worsening local aesthetics and lowering property values. The cleanliness of communities has a further impact on the financial and personal investment residents make in their property, and contributes to the overall sense of community pride and civic engagement.



**WITH THE LARGE POPULATION IN CALIFORNIA, EVEN SMALL, INDIVIDUAL ACTION STEPS CAN ADD UP TO BIG CHANGES. LEARN MORE WAYS TO REDUCE STORM WATER POLLUTION – LOG ON TO [WWW.ERASETHEWASTE.COM](http://WWW.ERASETHEWASTE.COM)**

*Economic Impacts* – California's coastline is one of the state's most breathtaking natural features. Millions of visitors come to view the beauty of the California coastline and partake in the recreational activities the ocean provides. California's beaches generate \$1 billion per year in direct revenue. When indirect benefits are added, California's beaches contribute \$73 billion to the national economy and generate 883,000 jobs nationwide— all of which depend largely on the access and enjoyment of clean waters. If the perception of our beaches deteriorates, it poses broader implications for the state's financial growth.

### Ways to Reduce Storm Water Pollution

With the large population in California, even small, individual action steps to reduce storm water pollution can add up to big changes. Here are a few simple actions residents can take:

- ♦ **USE PESTICIDES AND FERTILIZERS SPARINGLY, BY SPOT APPLYING. CONSIDER USING NON-TOXIC OR LESS TOXIC PRODUCTS.**
- ♦ **ALWAYS PUT YOUR CIGARETTE BUTTS IN AN ASHTRAY.**
- ♦ **JOIN OR ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY CLEAN UP TO HELP PROTECT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.**
- ♦ **THROW TRASH IN A TRASH CAN OR RECYCLING BIN (AS APPROPRIATE), NOT ON THE GROUND OR INTO THE STORM DRAIN.**
- ♦ **CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOG EVERY TIME.**
- ♦ **RECYCLE YOUR USED MOTOR OIL. NEVER DUMP IT ONTO THE GROUND OR INTO A STORM DRAIN.**
- ♦ **BECOME INVOLVED IN WATERSHED PROTECTION. THERE ARE NUMEROUS GROUPS THAT OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR ONGOING INVOLVEMENT IN WATER MONITORING AND WATERWAY CLEAN UPS.**
- ♦ **REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE MATERIALS WHENEVER POSSIBLE.**
- ♦ **LEARN MORE WAYS TO REDUCE STORM WATER POLLUTION – LOG ON TO [WWW.ERASETHEWASTE.COM](http://WWW.ERASETHEWASTE.COM)**

## 10 WAYS YOU CAN ERASE THE WASTE AND PREVENT STORM WATER POLLUTION



Storm water pollution is a serious issue in California – one that leads to water quality issues, increased health risks, neighborhood flooding, unsanitary living environments and unsafe ocean and beach conditions – as well as high costs to clean up tons of pollution each year. Storm water pollution is created when litter, fertilizers, animal waste, cigarette butts, motor oil and other contaminants left on the ground are washed or thrown directly into storm drains, where this toxic soup clogs gutters, causing neighborhood flooding and pollution of our local rivers, creeks and the Pacific Ocean.

Through the Erase the Waste storm water pollution prevention campaign, the California Water Boards encourage all California residents to take the following simple, everyday actions to improve the state's water quality:

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>1.</b> Throw your litter in the trash can or recycling bin (as appropriate), not the street and never into the storm drain. Dispose of all trash properly – fast food wrappers, Styrofoam cups, bottles and paper – every time.</p>   | <p><b>5.</b> Take action. Organize or join in the clean up of a beach, river or community. Join with your neighbors to adopt a local park or playground and organize a clean up event. Do your part to keep your community and waterways healthy and clean and encourage others to participate. Get involved and beautify your neighborhood!</p> | <p><b>8.</b> Make it a practice to purchase non-toxic or less-toxic products for home and garden use. Dispose of all leftover toxic products at a local Household Hazardous Waste collection center. Visit <a href="http://www.earth911.org">www.earth911.org</a> to find a location near you.</p> |
| <p><b>2.</b> Always put your cigarette butts in ashtrays, not on the streets. Remember – our parks, playgrounds and beaches are not ashtrays. “Hold on to your butts” and help keep these places clean and safe.</p>  | <p><b>6.</b> Reduce, Reuse and Recycle materials whenever possible. By following the Three R's, you will be creating less waste that could end up on our streets and contribute to further storm water pollution.</p>  | <p><b>9.</b> Recycle your used motor oil and other automotive fluids by taking them to a certified used oil recycling center where it can be disposed of properly. For a location near you, visit <a href="http://www.earth911.org">www.earth911.org</a>.</p>                                      |
| <p><b>3.</b> Volunteer to take part in watershed protection. A number of local and statewide environmental groups offer ongoing opportunities for involvement in water monitoring and volunteer opportunities in watershed protection/ restoration.</p>   | <p><b>7.</b> Limit use of pesticides and fertilizers year-round – especially during the rainy season. Excess pesticides and fertilizers applied to your garden and yard will wash away in the rain, straight into the storm drain system. Apply lawn and garden chemicals sparingly and follow directions.</p>                                   | <p><b>10.</b> Rake or sweep up sidewalks and driveways, rather than hosing them down. Using a hose forces debris and chemical residues into storm drains, which can clog gutters and lead to street flooding and polluted waterways.</p>   |
| <p><b>4.</b> Pick up after your dog and dispose of waste in trash cans or the toilet. Bring extra bags on your walk to share with other pet owners. You can help cut down on the spread of disease carried by animal waste and maintain clean and healthy neighborhoods, beaches and waterways.</p> | <p><b>FIND MORE POLLUTION PREVENTION TIPS AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES ON <a href="http://WWW.WATERBOARDS.CA.GOV">WWW.WATERBOARDS.CA.GOV</a>.</b></p>   |  |






# HOW TO GET INVOLVED TO... **Erase the Waste**

Pollution in our communities and waterways is an issue that affects everyone universally. When our rivers, lakes and the ocean become polluted with contaminants left on the ground and streets and our neighborhoods are littered with trash, we all must deal with the consequences – degradation of natural resources, economic impact and public health concerns.

However, we can all take action to prevent pollution in our communities.

## WHY PEOPLE POLLUTE

- Most people do not create pollution out of maliciousness or ill will. There are many factors as to why people pollute their communities, including:
- Lack of knowledge about the problem they are creating
- Cost and convenience
- Attitudes
  - ▶ People don't feel a sense of ownership, even though areas such as parks and beaches are public property.
  - ▶ People believe someone else – park maintenance or highway crews – will pick up after them.
  - ▶ People see others in the community adopting polluting behaviors and figure their actions won't make a difference.



**IF YOU ...  
OWN A HOME,  
RUN A BUSINESS,  
DRIVE A CAR,  
JOG,  
HIKE OR BIKE,  
SWIM IN THE OCEAN,  
PAY TAXES,  
OR  
CARE ABOUT GOOD HEALTH,  
YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT LITTER AND  
OTHER POLLUTION IS MORE THAN AN  
EYESORE. IT IS UNSAFE, UNHEALTHY  
AND COSTLY. YOU CAN COVER YOUR  
EYES AND PRETEND IT'S NOT  
THERE...OR DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.**

## WHY GET INVOLVED IN **ERASE THE WASTE**

Pollution affects us all; it can have the following effects:

- Chemical contaminants left on the street or poured directly into a storm drain increases toxicity levels in local waterways. It takes just one quart of motor oil to contaminate 250,000 gallons of water.
- Children can injure themselves or become ill handling litter or trash thrown on the ground. And, litter ingested by pets and wildlife on land, and in water, threatens their lives. Litter provides a breeding ground for disease-carrying rats and insects.
- Local and state agencies spend millions of taxpayer dollars on education and clean up activities, in an effort to combat the pollution problem.
- Litter is a serious problem that impacts public health, business and tourism.
- Increased bacteria in ocean water can lead to beach closures. During 2003, bacteria levels at California beaches exceeded State water quality standards at numerous locations, leading to 1,353 warnings posted on California beaches for a total of 7,993 days where the ocean was too polluted for human use.
- Litter discourages economic development because it impacts property values. Stores and businesses will not locate in a community that lacks the pride to effectively control litter and pollution. Litter reduces property values because it sends a message that the community no longer takes pride in its appearance.

## EVERY PERSON AND EVERY ACTION COUNTS:

### SIMPLE TIPS FOR INDIVIDUAL ACTION

Here are a few simple tips to do your part on a daily basis. Further in this Neighborhood Action Kit, you will find more information, ideas, activities and resources to fight litter and storm water pollution in your community.



#### LITTER REDUCTION

- Make a resolution not to litter – and keep it! Always put your trash in a proper container. If one is not available, hold on to your trash until you find one.
- If you are a smoker, always put your cigarette butts in an ashtray or trash container, not on the ground. Butts are toxic and polluting, and can be dangerous to children and pets that might ingest them, choke or get burned.
- Always keep a trash bag in your car and use it. Grocery and produce bags work well.
- Report any illegal dumping of litter, debris or contaminants into local storm drain inlets by calling your local public works department.
- Participate in recycling programs. Curbside, drop-off and/or buy-back programs are available in every community.
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.



#### PET WASTE

- Pick up after your pet every time. Grocery and produce bags will work, plus there are many special bags and containers available in pet stores to make this job easier. This will help cut down on the spread of disease carried by animal waste and keep neighborhoods clean and healthy. In many areas, picking up dog waste is the law and pet owners disregarding this law can be fined.

**PET WASTE SHOULD ALWAYS  
BE PUT IN THE TRASH OR  
FLUSHED IN THE TOILET.  
NEVER WASH IT INTO THE  
GUTTER OR STORM DRAIN.**

- Carry extra bags when walking your pet and share with other pet owners.
- Pet waste should always be put in the trash or flushed in the toilet. Never wash it into the gutter or storm drain.
- Carry extra bags in your car, so you are prepared when you travel with your pet.
- Post a friendly message in your yard or neighborhood park, reminding pet owners to pick up after their pets.



#### GARDENING AND LAWN CARE

- Use California-friendly plants in your yard or garden that use two-thirds less water than other plants. There are more than 6,000 native California-friendly plants. To get information about these plants and where to buy them, log on to <http://www.bewaterwise.com>.



# INDIVIDUAL ACTION



## HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- Use water-based paints whenever possible and buy only the amount you need.
- Wash paint brushes in an inside sink, not outside where the dirty paint water runs into the gutter.

**DISPOSE OF ALL LEFT-OVER  
TOXIC PRODUCTS, SUCH AS  
PAINT, HOUSEHOLD  
CLEANERS AND FERTILIZERS  
AT LOCAL HOUSEHOLD  
HAZARDOUS WASTE  
COLLECTION CENTERS.**

- If you have left-over paint, turpentine, glue or other toxic home improvement products take them to a Household Hazardous Waste collection center.
- Use non-toxic or less-toxic cleaning products as much as possible.



## VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND USE

- Make sure your car doesn't leak fluids on the driveway or streets.
- Recycle used motor oil and filter. Dumping motor oil and other toxic products down the storm drain or onto the ground is illegal. Visit [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org) for the location of a used motor oil recycling location near you.
- Whenever viable, wash your car on a surface that will absorb the water, or take your car to a car wash.
- Properly maintain your vehicle, and perform smog checks as governed by law. This will improve your car's performance, and limit the amount of pollutants that enter the air, and ultimately fall to the pavement, and wash into waterways.
- Carpool, walk or ride your bike, when possible. Limiting vehicle use reduces pollution.

## EVERY PERSON AND EVERY ACTION COUNTS:

### IDEAS AND ACTIONS FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

If you want to take a hands-on role in keeping your neighborhood clean and getting your neighbors involved as well, think about organizing a neighborhood clean up, a community garage sale, charitable donation drive or any one of a variety of ideas outlined in this Neighborhood Action Kit.

■ Information about the activities and organizations mentioned on this sheet can be found in the resources section of this kit.

#### RIVER/BEACH CLEAN UPS

Any organization or individual can participate in programs that collect and remove debris from creeks, rivers, beaches and shorelines. This type of activity is designed to clean the area and raise general public awareness about polluted runoff and its effect on our waterways. Other clean up programs go beyond simply collecting and removing debris. Some programs record data on the numbers and types of debris and pollutants being found. Data collected from clean ups can be extremely important in helping to pass new laws or strengthen existing laws and programs supporting water pollution prevention.

The top 10 most frequently found marine debris items in the United States during the International Coastal Clean Up are: cigarette butts (23%); plastic pieces (6%); foamed plastic pieces and food bags/plastic wrappers (5% each); paper pieces, plastic lids and caps and glass pieces (4% each); glass beverage bottles and straws (3% each); and beverage cans and plastic beverage bottles (2% each).

Organize a river or beach clean up or volunteer for an existing event. There are many clean up events that happen locally, check with your local water/beach advocacy organization, such as the Surfrider Foundation or visit [www.coastal.ca.gov](http://www.coastal.ca.gov) to find out how to become involved in the California Coastal Clean Up Day, the annual event takes place every September.

■ See the "Sample Planning, Evaluation and Reporting Form" later in this section for information about collecting data on your clean up event.

#### COMMUNITY AND STREAMSIDE CLEAN UPS AND BEAUTIFICATION

Neighborhood clean ups can be a fun, easy and much needed activity that will make a positive impact in your community and local waterways. Neighborhood clean ups can involve collecting litter and recyclables, planting trees and flowers, creating a mural and hauling away bulky items. Think in terms of an old fashioned block party or a block spring clean. What a great way to spend time with neighbors and friends, get some exercise and at the same time accomplish a worthwhile activity.

If you don't want to organize a neighborhood or streamside clean up, join an existing one. Check your respective city's Web site or call your public works department to see if your city has an organized beautification program you can join.

■ See the "Sample Planning, Evaluation and Reporting Form" later in this section for information about collecting data on your clean up event and where to send the final report.

#### DOGGIE DO AT DOG PARKS

Whenever you hear about the possibility of creating a dog park in your neighborhood, get out and support it. If you already have a dog park in your neighborhood, make sure you and your family use it. These parks provide not only a safe place for your pet to run and play, but also makes cleaning up after your pet much easier. If there is not a dog park nearby, make sure you carry a bag when you are out with your pet to pick up after it. Also, carry extra bags to give others you see on your walks who might not have a bag. If your neighborhood park doesn't carry complimentary bags, think about getting the neighbors together to campaign before the local city council for park doggie do bags.

#### WATER MONITORING

Volunteer water quality monitoring can be an important component in a comprehensive water quality monitoring program. Volunteers can gather technical data to determine the environmental health of a watershed. Water quality monitoring by volunteers gives students and others practical experience, involves them in the monitoring and management of their watershed, and increases the knowledge of stakeholders about area waterways.

When volunteers receive proper training and proper quality assurance procedures are followed, volunteer monitoring data can be as reliable as data collected by professionals. There are local, statewide and national water quality organizations that train and certify volunteers to collect and analyze the water quality at monitoring locations throughout the state.

Some of the statewide water monitoring groups include: California State Water Resources Control Board's Clean Water Team, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Volunteer Monitoring Program and the California Coastal Commission. Information about these programs can be found in the resources section of this kit.



# YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD



## **ADOPT-A-STREET CORNER, PARK, PLAYGROUND OR STORM DRAIN**

Residents can adopt a public site near their home or business and routinely pick up litter at their adopted location. You and your neighbors can care for your adopted spot during a weekly walk or as part of a scheduled neighborhood gathering. One example of an adopt-a-site program is Adopt-a-Beach sponsored by the California Coastal Commission.

## **YARD SIGNAGE**

With the rising amount of home computers and simple desktop publishing software, more and more people have the capability to generate simple signs on 8 1/2" x 11" paper (or smaller) that can be laminated. These simple signs can be staked or posted in your yard to remind dog walkers to "Please pick up after your dog" or passers-by to "Please don't litter my yard. It is not a trash can." You can use the verbiage on the posters and flyers included in the "Informational Materials to Erase the Waste" section of this kit for your yard signs. Sometimes this type of signage can be purchased at home improvement stores or nurseries.

## **PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL RETAILER EDUCATION EVENTS**

Many nurseries and home improvement stores hold regular customer workshops. Talk to local retailers about the possibility of including workshop topics involving environmental protection. This would help supplement your own education efforts in the local community. Topics might include the following: safe use of fertilizers and pesticides for beautiful lawns and gardens; alternative products and practices for healthy

lawns and gardens; environmentally safe car repairs; and simple and easy home repairs. Most of these workshop programs are free to customers and usually don't last more than a few hours on the weekend. Make time to suggest these alternative workshop themes to local retailers and encourage your neighbors to attend them to learn useful tips that help the environment.

## **CURBSIDE COLLECTION**

Many communities in California have curbside collection or tree recycling programs. However, not everyone uses these services. Items such as Christmas trees or large objects shouldn't be placed in trash containers, and neighbors should be reminded to utilize services the local waste hauler has in place. Send out a handwritten reminder to your neighbors and friends about curbside collection or tree collection events. You can get this information by calling your city's public works or sanitation department.

## **COMMUNITY GARAGE OR RUMMAGE SALES**

A community garage sale involves setting a designated date on which each household on your block (or designated area) holds their own garage sale. If multiple households are involved, the cost of signs, newspaper ads and other expenses can be split between all the participating households.

Community rummage sales are generally fundraisers for local charities. Community members contribute items to the event, and volunteers help staff booths to sell these items. Talk to your local library, school, park or retailer with a large parking lot for an event location.

By doing either of these activities you can

reduce the amount of garbage that is sent to landfills or is improperly discarded, support your favorite charity and give your old possessions a new life with a different family.

## **DONATION DRIVES**

Your neighborhood can encourage its residents to donate materials to their favorite charities. This might motivate infrequent donors to make a special effort to dig through garages and closets in search of reusable materials. It also encourages those who never donate to get involved. Check the yellow pages under "Human Services Organizations," "Non-profit Organizations," or "Charities" for groups accepting donations, or call your city's public works department to find a graffiti abatement program for your paint.

- Information about the activities and organizations mentioned on this sheet can be found in the resources section of this kit.
- "Tips for Organizing a Successful Event," a "Pre-Event Planning Checklist," and a "Day-of-Event Checklist" can be found at the end of the "Getting Involved to Erase the Waste" section of this Neighborhood Action Kit.
- See the "Sample Planning, Evaluation and Reporting Form" later in this section for information about collecting data on your clean up event and where to send the final report. Individuals who return this form will receive a Certificate of Recognition from the California State Water Resources Control Board. Return by fax to (916) 341-5252.



## EVERY PERSON AND EVERY ACTION COUNTS:

### IDEAS FOR LARGE GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Community-based organizations with a large membership can implement on a larger scale any of the activities discussed in the “Ideas and Actions for Your Neighborhood” section, and with additional resources and outreach, larger activities can be considered. Any or all of these events can be conducted to coincide with major events such as Earth Day (April), America Recycles Day (November) or Pollution Prevention Week (September).

■ Information about the activities and organizations mentioned on this sheet can be found in the resources section of this kit.

Some of these larger-scale activities include:

#### STORM DRAIN STENCILING

Have your organization stencil storm drain inlets in your neighborhood with a storm water pollution prevention message. A stenciling effort requires coordination with your city’s public works department for permission to paint on sidewalks or streets. Many municipalities have a pre-approved stencil pattern that you must use. Your organization should also find out about specialty paints and application techniques.

#### ADOPT-A-BEACH OR WATERWAY, FORM A WATER MONITORING TEAM

This effort is similar to the activity described under the neighborhood activities, but with an organization behind you, it can grow in scope. With a large organization, an ongoing schedule can be established or a larger area can be “adopted” or monitored.

■ See the “Sample Planning, Evaluation and Reporting Form” later in this section for information about collecting data on your clean up event and where to send a final report.

**MANY OF YOUR  
ORGANIZATION’S MEMBERS  
MOST LIKELY WORK IN AN  
OFFICE. ENCOURAGE EACH  
OF THESE MEMBERS TO  
ORGANIZE AN OFFICE CLEAN  
UP EVENT IN THEIR  
RESPECTIVE PLACE OF WORK.**

#### OFFICE CLEAN UP EVENTS

A large amount of bulky goods are generated from businesses and offices, including used paper. The U.S. Conference of Mayors sponsors its annual Clean Your Files Day to encourage offices to reuse and recycle paper (some communities also focus on other office supplies and equipment). Your office can also organize a swap meet or “white elephant sale” to encourage the reuse of these materials.

Many of your organization’s members most likely work in an office. Encourage each of these members to organize an office clean up event in their respective place of work.

#### CURBSIDE EXCHANGES

Your organization might consider conducting a curbside exchange event, where a group of residents or businesses leave reusable goods on the curb to be picked up and put to use by other residents or businesses. Another location option for your “curbside” exchange is a local parking lot, such as a library or local business, where all goods can be brought to a single area. When developing your plans for an exchange event, don’t forget to have a plan for proper disposal of goods remaining on the curb or in the parking lot.

A flyer with a signup sheet can be distributed to homes and businesses within a specific area. A follow-up flyer with a list of participating houses/businesses, the timeframe for the event, and the ground rules can be distributed the week prior to your curbside exchange. Think about distributing the follow-up flyer beyond the boundary of the participating area to attract a wider audience. Don’t forget to remove your flyers after the event concludes.



# LARGE GROUPS & ORGANIZATIONS



## ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

More than 12 million computers are scrapped every year in the United States and many more old computers are being stored in closets and garages. With HDTV being implemented universally in 2006, and computer technology becoming obsolete every 18 months, the problem will continue to accelerate. Non-profit organizations can partner with city departments or computer retail stores for an electronics collection event. Usable equipment can be donated to schools or charitable organizations, unusable equipment can be taken to an e-waste collection event.

**MORE THAN 12 MILLION  
COMPUTERS ARE SCRAPPED  
EVERY YEAR IN THE UNITED  
STATES AND MANY MORE  
OLD COMPUTERS ARE BEING  
STORED IN CLOSETS AND  
GARAGES.**

## USED BUILDING MATERIALS COLLECTION EVENTS

Windows, doors, lumber, plumbing fixtures and appliances can be reused for new construction and for refurbishing older buildings and homes. For example, Habitat for Humanity has established ReStores, a thrift shop that recycles quality surplus, new and used building materials. To find a ReStores location near you, visit [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org). Developing a used building materials event is also an idea worth investigating.



**HABITAT FOR HUMANITY  
HAS ESTABLISHED  
RESTORES, A THRIFT  
SHOP THAT RECYCLES  
QUALITY SURPLUS, NEW  
AND USED BUILDING  
MATERIALS.**

- "Tips for Organizing a Successful Event," a "Pre-Event Planning Checklist," and a "Day-of-Event Checklist" can be found at the end of the "Getting Involved to Erase the Waste" section of this Neighborhood Action Kit.
- A checklist of publicity activities your organization can undertake to publicize your efforts can be found in the "Working With Media to Erase the Waste" section.

## TIPS FOR ORGANIZING A SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITY

As the organizer of a community or streamside cleanup event, you want to have a successful event without spending all your free time to do it. Here are some simple steps that all event organizers should consider to maximize their time and the success of their event.

### 1. Pick an activity that is well-suited to your neighborhood, community or organization.

In selecting an activity, think about what the major problems are in your area. If you are uncertain about the major pollution issues in your community, contact your public works department, neighborhood action committee or local environmental group. This will help you select the activity that will make the biggest difference.

- ▶ Concentrate on littered areas not normally reached by ongoing programs.
- ▶ Your area should be of workable size. It is important that you achieve total clean up with your available time and resources.

### 2. Spend ample time in the planning stage.

It will save you time later. Invite a few neighbors for coffee or snacks, or have a staff or membership meeting. Brainstorm about tasks, resource needs (equipment and people), local business participation, and roles and responsibilities.

Clearly define the goals of your event. For example, how many volunteers you would like to recruit, how large of an area to clean, how many pounds of trash to collect, etc. The satisfaction of a job well done starts with knowing exactly what you want to accomplish.

Dependent upon the area(s) you've selected to clean up, you might need to obtain permission from the property owner or the city. At minimum, let your local law enforcement agency know your group will be conducting a clean up.

Determine who will handle and dispose of the litter, yard waste, charitable donations and used equipment at the end of your event. Your city public works or sanitation department, waste hauler, recycling center or nearby charity store might be able to help. This resource may also help you weigh and/or sort your trash for record keeping purposes and for sharing with the California Water Boards.

- See the "Sample Planning, Evaluation and Reporting Form" later in this section for information about collecting data on your clean up event and where to send a final report.

### 3. Get help from fellow residents, local businesses and other organizations.

You need volunteers to do the planning work and the day-of-event work. Local businesses might be willing to help with trash containers, plastic bags, paint and paintbrushes, hoes, rakes and refreshments. But you need to pick up the phone and ask.

Here are some ideas for local partners and how they can get involved:

- ▶ Hardware stores: Tips on safe use and storage of paints and chemicals; donations of tools and/or materials
- ▶ Home improvement stores: Demonstrations on safe use of lawn products and proper home improvement practices; donations of tools and/or materials
- ▶ Nurseries and gardening supply stores: Demonstrations on safe use of lawn products
- ▶ Waste haulers and recycling centers: Help in clean up of waste gathered at your events
- ▶ Fast food restaurants and donut shops: Advertising on paper cups and bags and at their establishment; refreshments for your event
- ▶ Grocery and convenience stores: Advertising on grocery bags
- ▶ Business associations/improvement districts: Funding, advertising or resources for your event
- ▶ Environmental or other non-profit organizations: Organizing resources, advertising, networking opportunities, or developing handouts for your event
- ▶ City/County public works and sanitation departments: Funding, organizing resources, or advertising your event
- More information about forming partnerships is included in this section of the Neighborhood Action Kit.

If you need more resources than your immediate neighborhood or organization can provide, here are some organizations that may offer volunteer support:

- ▶ Youth — Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, 4-H clubs, Future Farmers of America, faith-based groups
- ▶ Service — Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis
- ▶ Environmental — Sierra Club, Conservation Corps, Surfrider Foundation

# ORGANIZING ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Schools — PTA, community colleges, trade schools, adult development centers
- ▶ Recreational — bass and fishing clubs, rowing clubs, soccer and softball leagues
- ▶ Marinas — yacht club members
- ▶ Business — chambers of commerce, trade associations, local retailers
- ▶ Homeowners — Homeowner and resident associations

A simple flyer or handwritten invitation can be used to recruit your immediate neighbors to join the effort. (A flyer template can be found at the end of this section.) For larger-scale activities involving any of the organizations listed above, let the organization recruit and coordinate their members and give you a report on the numbers you can expect. You can also draft a press release and send it to the local newspaper for placement in the community calendar section.

Prior to the event, all volunteers should receive information about what to wear (type of clothes, shoes, hat, gloves and sunscreen); time and location of designated meeting place; and tools to bring (if they have access to them). After the event, everyone should receive a thank-you note.

- See the “Working With Media to Erase the Waste” section in this kit for the proper formats for media materials.

**4. Get the word out.** Organizers of small neighborhood clean ups (one to two blocks) should tell their neighborhood weekly paper what they are doing to call attention to the problem and to draw volunteer support. After the event, they should also be contacted with a success story of the event. Facts and figures will interest every newspaper — how many people participated, how large of an area you cleaned, how many pounds or bags collected, number of bulky items removed, etc. You can find which papers publish in your neighborhood by looking in the free racks at the grocery store, outside convenience stores, in street containers and at neighborhood restaurants. Inside each paper you will find contact information for the publisher and who to contact.

- To generate greater media coverage or involvement for large-scale events, see the “Working With Media to Erase the Waste” section of this kit.

Another way to get the word out is by posting signs and flyers. You can use the ideas provided in the templates in this Neighborhood Action Kit. Also, make sure someone is assigned to remove the signs after the event concludes.

A final idea is to send “blast e-mails” or “blast faxes.” This is usually a single page of information sent (or “blasted”) to a list of people in groups. For example, if you have an e-mail address list for a group of neighbors, you can send a single e-mail to the entire group. The same type of list creation can be done for organizations, partners, businesses and media.

- A sample blast e-mail/fax can be found at the end of this section.

**5. Measure what you collect and tell the California Water Boards.** The Water Boards are very interested in hearing about the success of your event and the data you were able to collect. The “Planning, Evaluation and Reporting Form” at the end of this section can assist you in all phases of your event planning and reporting of data. The Water Boards will welcome receiving this form and learning about your clean up efforts. They will send you a Certificate of Recognition as an appreciation for your participation and interest in cleaning our environment.

- See the “Sample Planning, Evaluation and Reporting Form” later in this section for information about collecting data on your clean up event and where to send the final report.

**ORGANIZERS OF SMALL NEIGHBORHOOD  
CLEAN UPS SHOULD TELL THEIR  
NEIGHBORHOOD WEEKLY PAPER WHAT  
THEY ARE DOING TO CALL ATTENTION  
TO THE PROBLEM AND TO DRAW  
VOLUNTEER SUPPORT.**

## DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS/SPONSORSHIPS

A partner in any of your pollution prevention activities can help in a number of ways including:

- Spreading the word about the problem and the event
- Providing in-kind services, products or funds
- Increasing your resources and budget
- Providing endorsement and support, particularly partnerships with elected officials
- Reinforcing working relationships
- Providing resources
- Producing how-to workshops for do-it-yourselfers and gardeners

### STEPS TO DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

**Step 1 — Decide what you want or need, then prioritize;** for example, volunteer support, products and endorsements.

**Step 2 — Brainstorm with neighbors, staff or friends about potential partners.** Create a list of potential partners based on your list of prioritized needs. Also, brainstorm on ways to acknowledge or recognize your partners' efforts and assign someone to ensure the acknowledgement or recognition happens. Here are some ideas of what you can give a partner: recognition in all publicity materials (e.g., flyer, media release); signage at the registration area; and/or acknowledgment from the city council or the homeowners association. At minimum, every partner should receive a personal thank-you note after the event that tells what his or her contribution accomplished.

See if anyone in your brainstorming group knows someone who works for a listed potential partner or has information that can help you contact the potential partner.

Find out everything you can about the potential partner's business; why should this particular business be interested in the problem or your activity.

**Step 3 — Ask for Assistance.** You can ask for bottles of water, volunteers, trash bags, publicity and/or money, or other services and supplies. Requests can be made by phone, introductory letter or e-mail. The approach is dependent on whether you (or someone else) know the potential partner and/or whether the partner knows about your effort or organization.

Before you make the contact, know exactly what you want to say, concisely:

- Who you are
- What you want (have specific ideas and a backup wish list)
- Why you want it
- What the partner gets out of it

Be prepared to be flexible. Leave the options open. Engage the potential partner in a discussion that can lead to new and different ideas.

**Step 4 — If you are successful in securing a partner — get it in writing.** Write a simple letter of understanding that both of you sign. It should state exactly what the partner has agreed to, what the timeframe is and what the partner will be given in return.

Make sure that you provide the partner with all the promised benefits; recognize their support through a thank-you letter or proclamation or other public acknowledgement. Send them copies of any media coverage about the event or activity.

■ A sample partnership letter can be found at the end of this section.

**SAY CONCISELY WHO YOU ARE, WHAT YOU WANT, WHY YOU WANT IT, AND WHAT THE PARTNER GETS OUT OF IT.**



## ✓ PRE-EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST


Individuals and organizations can use the comprehensive list below in planning a variety of events. Select the tasks that apply to your event and ignore the remainder of the list.

- ☐ Apply for available grants (this requires several months of lead time). Neighborhood groups or non-profit associations may apply to local, regional or state organizations for funds to use in clean up activities. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has an on-line grant-writing tutorial at <http://www.epa.gov/seahome/grants/src/msieopen.htm>.  
  
While grant application requirements vary from agency to agency, they all require the following information: Name of group, contact person, type of activity, who or what the activity benefits, how many people are involved, a task or activities plan, what quantifiable outcomes are expected, how much money is being requested and what specific activities will be covered under the grant.
- ☐ Form an organizing group that includes neighbors; friends; members of your agency's staff; representative(s) of your partners including a waste hauler, participating organizations and/or a representative of the area targeted for clean up.
- ☐ Select a site location(s) for the clean up and estimate the types and amount of litter that needs to be removed.
- ☐ Determine the number of volunteers needed.
- ☐ Set goals that can be measured and recorded. For example, the number of volunteers involved; the number of trash bags filled; the number of bags of recyclables redeemed.
  - The sample reporting form at the end of this section can be used for both planning and reporting. In the first column you can write your target goal numbers (e.g., volunteers, sponsors) and in the second column, after the event, you can write what you actually accomplished.
  - You or your organization will receive a certificate of acknowledgement from the California Water Boards if you fax the completed form to the Water Boards after the event. Fax to (916) 341-5252.
- ☐ Confer with site residents/occupants about what will be involved.
- ☐ Contact potential partners.
  - Tips for developing partnerships and a sample partnership letter can be found at the end of this section.
- ☐ Obtain a permit(s) or entry permission if either is required.
- ☐ Collect lists of organizations with potential volunteers.
- ☐ Contact organizations and request a specific number of volunteers (if more help is needed).
- ☐ Plan your publicity (media, speakers bureau, flyers, posters).
- ☐ Write and create promotional materials (e.g., flyers, media advisory, media release). Don't forget to remove any signs or flyers you post.
  - An Erase the Waste neighborhood clean up flyer template can be found at the end of this section and media material templates can be found at the end of the "Working With Media to Erase the Waste" section.
- ☐ Order volunteer giveaways (if budgeted).
- ☐ Inform local law enforcement about your clean up effort.
- ☐ Arrange for trash disposal and prepare for recyclables (CalMAX, charity shops, charitable organizations).
- ☐ Plan for refreshments.
- ☐ Plan for restroom facilities (if needed).
- ☐ Select a meeting point or main registration area for the day of the event.
- ☐ Prepare and send media advisories, public service announcements and stories to the local media. Make follow-up phone calls.
- ☐ Communicate with volunteers and/or organizations providing volunteers to inform everyone about: what to wear (type of clothes, shoes, hat, sunscreen); time and location of designated meeting place; and tools to bring (if they have access to them).
- ☐ Arrange for first-aid supplies or personnel to be on hand.
- ☐ Decide if you want or need to take pictures. These can be used on your Web site, in newsletters, for future publicity, grant and award applications, or just for fun.

## ✓ DAY-OF-EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

Individuals and organizations can use the comprehensive list below for day-of-event tasks. Use the tasks that apply to your event.

- ☐ Arrive early to set up the registration area and greet participants. Place directional signage if needed. Volunteers at large events should complete a registration sheet with detailed contact information and sign a release and indemnification form. (A sample form can be found at the end of this section.)
- ☐ Have your permit or written entry permission available if needed.
- ☐ Make sure your waste hauler has trash and recyclable containers and weight scales in position and is available for assistance.
- ☐ Give volunteers the following instructions (oral and written):
  - Project goals and project area description.
  - Restroom locations (if needed).
  - General safety rules:
    - ▶ Use caution when working along public streets. Work facing oncoming traffic.
    - ▶ Do not trespass on private property or neighbors' yards.
    - ▶ Do not pick up or touch: hypodermic needles, medical waste, condoms, chemical containers, dead animals or sharp items. Contact the event organizer and identify these materials for him/her.
    - ▶ Do not lift heavy/bulky items without assistance.
    - ▶ Drink plenty of water.
  - Location to receive empty bags and drop-off full bags of litter/recyclables.
  - Who to contact in case of emergency.
  - Where first-aid supplies are located.
  - When the event will conclude.
  - Where the water and/or other refreshments will be located.
- ☐ Give volunteers other options in case they finish early.
- ☐ Make sure all trash and recyclables are disposed of properly.
- ☐ Take pictures.
- ☐ Thank volunteers and distribute giveaways (if purchased). If possible, send a post-event thank-you letter to each volunteer.
- ☐ Complete the reporting form in this kit.
  - The sample reporting form at the end of this section can be used for both planning and reporting. In the first column you can write your target goal numbers (e.g., number of volunteers, number of sponsors) and in the second column, after the event, you can write what you actually accomplished. You or your organization will receive a Certificate of Recognition from the California Water Boards if you fax the completed form to the Water Boards after the event. Fax to (916) 341-5252.



**THE WATER BOARDS ARE VERY  
INTERESTED IN HEARING ABOUT  
YOUR EVENT. LET US KNOW  
ABOUT THE CLEAN UP ACTIVITIES  
HAPPENING IN YOUR  
COMMUNITY.**

# ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTHS

## ANTI-LITTER AND BEAUTIFICATION ACTIVITIES TO DO WITH CHILDREN

### LITTER

1. When you take your children for walks or to the park, beach or river, help them pick up trash such as paper, cups and food wrappers, and throw them in the nearest trashcan. Teach them about dangerous litter, and to avoid handling these items.
2. Organize a neighborhood or park clean up with your children. Do it as part of a spring and fall cleaning schedule. If you don't want to organize a clean up, participate in one that someone else organizes.
3. If you are involved with your child's school, help organize a "litter drive" around the school as a recess or after-school activity.
4. Challenge your children and their friends to a photo contest. You can use inexpensive disposable cameras that will be recycled after processing. The objective is to take pictures of places with litter that can be cleaned.
5. If you have a pet, take a "pet pledge" with your children. Each of you pledges to always pick up after your pet. On your computer, or with crayons, create a pledge form that each of you can sign on behalf of your pet.
6. As a home art project, have your kids make litterbags for your car.
4. Remind your children there are two sides of the paper when they draw and write, and encourage them to use both sides before recycling it. You can do the same with your grocery lists and telephone note pads.
5. Give your child a "cool" lunch box for school and use this instead of paper bags. Pack sandwiches and other lunch items in reusable plastic containers instead of wrapping them in paper or plastic wrap.

### OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL LESSONS

1. Rule of thumb: Show your children by doing. Be a good example for them.
2. Add books and stories about nature and the environment to your children's reading library. Read the books to and with them.
3. Take your child to a local nursery or gardening center to pick out a shrub or tree to plant in a pot or in your yard. Planting a shrub or tree is fun and can help stop soil erosion by securing the soil with its roots. (Loose soil can get into waterways, and create pollution known as sedimentation.) They also provide beauty, shade, attract birds and will reduce carbon dioxide in the air. Native trees are especially good because they require fewer environmental resources, such as water. Every year, the tree or shrub will grow, giving your child a sense of accomplishment.
4. Grow small greenery in your house and have your children help care for them. Salad greens, flowers and herbs are easy to grow in containers on a sunny windowsill.
5. Join a nature conservancy or environmental group and get involved with your child on group outings.
6. Attend a public hearing on an environmental issue. Take your children along with you.
7. If your child is in a scouting program, help them earn their nature/environmental badge(s).
8. Take family trips to parks, gardens, aquariums and natural history museums.
9. Help your child participate in his or her school science fair. Plan a project that demonstrates environmental health and safety.

### REUSE AND RECYCLING

1. On your walks, bring along a bag to collect recyclables, such as bottles and cans, and then take a trip to the nearest recycling center so your children can redeem them for piggy bank money.
2. When your child tires of or outgrows toys or clothes, talk to them about donating them to a charitable organization or giving them to someone who might need them and love them as much as your child did. Take your child with you to the donation center and let him/her help you unload the car. With your child, talk to the attendant about what happens to the donations and who benefits from them.
3. If you and your children have a lot of reusable items and want to make some money for their education fund, have your children help organize a garage sale. Involve your neighbors and their children.

10. Involve your child's school. The sooner positive environmental habits are instilled in children, the better our environment will become over the long term. Even on school campuses, many fun environmental activities can be undertaken by teachers and students, such as starting on-campus lunch recycling programs or conducting on-site water pollution monitoring programs. Through these activities, students see first-hand the benefits of environmental action and understand that they can make a difference. Go to <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov> and click on "water education" for more information about environmental resources for schools.
11. For teachers – Jiminy Cricket's Environmentality Challenge provides an opportunity for your class and all other fifth grade classes in the State of California to "think green." It's a challenging and fun hands-on experience that will help fifth graders learn more about their environment and allows the State of California to show them why "it's cool to care" about the earth. The purpose is to encourage students to think and act environmentally at school, at home and in their community. In California, Jiminy Cricket's Environmentality Challenge is a partnership between The Walt Disney Company and the State of California's Environmental Education Interagency Network (CEEIN). CEEIN includes representatives from the California Environmental Protection Agency (including the California Water Boards), the Department of Education, the Department of Food and Agriculture, the State and Consumer Services Agency, the Resources Agency and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. To learn more about this program, you can call the hotline at 1(800) 290-0299 or visit the Web site <http://www.oehha.ca.gov/ceein/jim/index.htm>.

## SAMPLE RELEASE AND INDEMNIFICATION FORM

(This form is provided for guidance only. It should not be considered as legal advice or taken in place of legal consultation.)

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, am a volunteer for the (EVENT NAME) being conducted by (ORGANIZING BODY [IES]) on (DATE) at (LOCATION).

I understand that I voluntarily assume all risk of accident, injury or damage, and release and forever discharge the producers, co-sponsors, employees, agents or representatives of the (ORGANIZING BODY [IES]) from any and all liability for personal injury or property damage of any kind sustained in association with or during participation in this event, regardless of whether such personal injury or property damage is caused by negligence of the producers, co-sponsors, employees, agents or representatives of the (ORGANIZING BODY [IES]).

I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the producers, co-sponsors, employees, agents or representatives of the (ORGANIZING BODY [IES]) from all liability, loss and expense, including, but not limited to damages, legal expenses and cost of defense in any matter arising during or from the participation in the (EVENT).

I further agree that I will abide by all applicable rules and regulations promulgated by the producers, co-sponsors, employees, agents or representatives of the (ORGANIZING BODY [IES]) and agree to follow the instructions of all volunteer supervisors who are connected with the (EVENT).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## SAMPLE PLANNING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING FORM

### COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION/CLEAN UP EVENT

(This form can be used as a planning, evaluation and reporting tool.)

Fax final report to (916) 341-5252.

Name of event: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of event: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

GOAL	PRE-EVENT PLANNING (the number you need or would like to obtain)	POST-EVENT ACTUAL (the number you actually obtained and counted after the event was over)
Number of volunteers		
Total amount of partner/sponsor money raised or in-kind contributions	\$ Potential list:	\$ Actual list:
Number of blocks cleaned OR size of area cleaned		
Number of bags of litter collected		
Number of pounds of litter collected		
Number of bags of recyclables collected		
Number of pounds of recyclables collected		
Number of incidents of graffiti painted over		
Amount of bulky items removed (appliances, furniture, etc.)		
Storm drain stenciling – number of stencils painted		

## SAMPLE PLANNING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING FORM — PAGE 2

### COMMUNITY AND LOCAL WATERWAY BEAUTIFICATION/CLEAN UP EVENT QUESTIONS

#### Answer these additional questions for streamside clean ups near creeks, rivers, lakes, bays and the ocean

1. Please describe the waterway by smell:  
**a)** rotten egg      **b)** musky      **c)** petroleum  
**d)** no odor      **e)** other: \_\_\_\_\_
2. The top of the water is:  
**a)** foamy      **b)** scummy  
**c)** oil sheen      **d)** covered with pond weed  
**e)** covered with algae      **f)** other: \_\_\_\_\_  
(if so, color: \_\_\_\_\_)
3. The water itself is:  
**a)** muddy      **b)** milky  
**c)** brown      **d)** clear  
**e)** other: \_\_\_\_\_
4. How deep is the water? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you see any creek life in or around the waterway?  
If yes, list below (e.g., crayfish, birds, insects):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Describe the waterway (circle all that apply):  
**a)** shaded with tall trees      **b)** grass      **c)** tall brush  
**d)** back yards      **e)** no trees  
**f)** other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Answer these additional questions for community clean ups

1. What was the most common type(s) of trash found?  
**a)** cans      **b)** tires      **c)** packaging  
**d)** fast food containers      **e)** plastic bags      **f)** bottles  
Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does it appear the site may be used as an illegal dumping spot (presence of appliances, tires, bags or trash, etc.), or do the trash items appear to have collected here at random? Share your findings with local public works staff and specify below:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Did you encounter any items that may pose a threat to human health? (e.g., medical waste, pet waste, diapers, human waste, pesticides, ponded-water in open cans or tires that breed mosquitoes, broken glass, etc.) Share with local public works staff, local authorities and specify below:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Does it appear that the trash can be traced to a particular group, organization, business or activity (e.g., restaurant litter, homeless encampments, etc.)? Use this information to contact your local public works department and/or local businesses, organizations for assistance. They might help develop an education program with you, or intervene on matters involving public health or safety.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. List locations of the following (if applicable):  
Stenciling: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Has this site been the subject of a clean up effort in the past? If yes, please rate the level of site cleanliness prior to the event based on earlier clean ups:

**a)** major improvement      **b)** some improvement  
(Less than half the amount of trash)      (Less than one-quarter the amount of trash)  
**c)** same      **d)** worse

7. If the site is cleaner than in the past, please list what education efforts your group has done to make a difference (circle all that apply):

**a)** door-to-door canvassing      **b)** community flyers  
**c)** media coverage      **d)** business/partner  
**e)** diversion (recycling efforts, etc.)      cooperation

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Note to clean up teams: The Water Boards encourage you to revisit your site periodically to conduct clean ups, evaluate your effectiveness, work with local government, businesses and organizations to erase the waste.

# Help Erase the Waste in our Community

**Creek Clean Up Event  
Will Lead to a Healthier  
Environment for Us All**



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## YOU'RE INVITED!

Help prevent pollution in our local waterways and environment by joining [sponsoring organization] as we host an Erase the Waste event at [name of waterway] and help protect California's precious resources.

**Activities will include:**

- Trash removal from the creek and its banks
- Tree planting
- Insights from an environmental expert on keeping our waterways clean
- Tips to help prevent pollution every day

Come and learn about ways to be a part of the pollution solution. Join your neighbors as we help cleanup our local waterway and show our community pride.

[MEETING PLACE]  
[DATE] [TIME]  
[ADDRESS]

Contact: [NAME]  
[ORGANIZATION]  
[PHONE NUMBER]

For more information about how to erase the waste in our community and waters, log on to  
[www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com).

Printed on recycled paper.

## SAMPLE E-MAIL AND FAX BLASTS

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### \* Creek Clean Up Event in Our Area \*

[DATE]

## HELP ERASE THE WASTE FOR A CLEANER COMMUNITY AND A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT

### *Community Clean Up Event Spotlights the Importance of Pollution Prevention*

Storm water pollution is a serious problem in California that harms our water quality, plants and wildlife, and impacts the health and safety of our communities. Storm water pollution is created when trash, including recyclables, end up on the ground and are washed into local waterways. These contaminants pollute our local creeks and rivers and threaten the health of wildlife and the environment. To address this critical issue, the California Water Boards are sponsoring a comprehensive, public education program called Erase the Waste. The Erase the Waste campaign aims to teach local residents about the simple steps we all can take to reduce the pollution that ends up in our local waterways.

Take the first step -- join community leaders, local youth groups and elected officials in a day of outdoor fun as we clean up our community and learn about the role each of us can play in preventing pollution. Activities will include trash removal from the streets (or stream); tree planting; and sign-ups for future community events and pollution prevention activities.

The Erase the Waste campaign encourages Californians to take ownership of their local waterways and communities, and help prevent pollution before it happens. For more information about how to erase the waste in our community, log on to [www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com).

The event begins at 10 a.m. and will run approximately two hours.  
Refreshments will be served.

**Location**  
**[ADDRESS]**

**Contact Information**  
**[Name, Phone Number, Extension]**

**Directions**  
[Provide directions such as: Enter Longwood Park from Grant Avenue, near the intersection with Shallow Hill Way. Follow the *Erase the Waste* signs to the Picnic Area]

## SAMPLE PARTNERSHIP LETTER

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[DATE]

[CONTACT NAME]

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION/BUSINESS, ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION/BUSINESS]

Dear [CONTACT]:

***Partnering with Erase the Waste is an effective way to show your [CUSTOMERS/MEMBERS] that you care about keeping our community and waterways clean!***

If [ORGANIZATION/BUSINESS] would like to:

- Demonstrate its commitment to the communities it serves
- Align itself with an important issue that impacts all of us
- Define itself as environmentally responsible

...then partnering with Erase the Waste will be an invaluable outreach tool for your company/organization.

The State of California has made reducing storm water pollution a top priority. Storm water pollution is a serious danger to local water quality, posing significant threats to the public health and safety of communities, natural resources and the state's economic vitality. Storm water pollution is created when trash, including recyclables, end up on the ground and are washed into local waterways. These contaminants pollute our local creeks and rivers and threaten the health of wildlife and the environment. At last count, more than 680 water bodies in California were contaminated with a variety of pollutants. And that is just what we know about, as state scientists continue to collect more data on the thousands of waterways that bisect the state. The number of identified polluted waterways is likely to increase.

### ***Let's work together to educate your customers on ways to Erase the Waste.***

[Company/Organization] can help spread the word about storm water pollution prevention to the community by partnering with the Erase the Waste campaign. I'd like to invite you to consider:

- **Hosting a Community Clean Up** – organize, publicize and bring your group to a local event where we'll:
  - ▶ Beautify a local waterway, park or playground
  - ▶ Share information on recycling and preventing pollution
- **Publicity** – Can you help us get the word out by running an announcement about our clean up on your Web site, in employee communications materials or by placing a posting on your bulletin board?
- **In-Kind Donations** – Can your company/organization donate or lend equipment that can be used for our clean up, such as:
  - ▶ Brooms and rakes
  - ▶ Buckets, gloves and bags
  - ▶ Tables, chairs and microphones
  - ▶ Printing and advertising resources

We all share a responsibility in keeping our community and environment clean. Please join us in doing your part. For more information about how to erase the waste in our community, log on to [www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com).

We are eager to build a partnership with your company/organization. We will follow up with you in the next few weeks to discuss this opportunity. In the meantime, please feel free to call me at [TELEPHONE NUMBER] with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]



## SPEAKING OUT TO...

Speaking to others about pollution prevention is a very effective way to encourage them to take action to keep their neighborhood healthy and clean. However, chances are you have read or heard that public speaking is one of our greatest fears, but it really doesn't have to be. You'll find that if you start by speaking to a small group of people who are interested in learning about something you are passionate about, it's not that hard. Once you get comfortable with small groups, you can start expanding to larger groups.

Start out talking to your neighbors and don't forget to include your children and their friends.

Here are several ideas for small group talks with familiar people:

- Your neighbors during a homeowners association meeting or other neighborhood gathering
- Your child's Boy or Girl Scout troop, or similar organization meeting
- Your child's school class
- PTA meetings
- Your child's soccer or little league baseball team (you can use this opportunity to promote a litter-free event)
- Your place of worship
- A networking or civic group to which you belong

Here are a few ideas for subjects:

- Plan a creek, neighborhood or river clean up. Tell them why it's important, how much time it will take and what they need to do.
- Share a community clean up/beautification success story. Talk about what you learned and what could be done next.
- Discuss water-monitoring opportunities that are available with local environmental and water advocacy organizations. Share your personal experience in monitoring local waters and how it has changed the way you treat the environment.
- Relate a personal experience(s) or things you've seen (piles of bulky items or excessive littering) Share your concerns about the health and safety of the community, your children and the environment.
- Talk about how the neighborhood can increase its recycling of Household Hazardous Waste, electronics and building materials.
- Provide ideas for a litter-free event.

- Have seasonal conversations about:

- ▶ Spring gardens and yards – water conservation, effective fertilizing and pesticide use, recycling yard waste and safe storage of hazardous materials and supplies.
- ▶ Winter – recycling Christmas trees; using less and reuse of holiday wrapping; how to reduce, reuse and recycle during the holiday period; New Year's resolutions to fight litter; keeping your neighborhood clean; using less toxic products around the house.
- ▶ Back-to-school – purchasing school supplies made with recycled content; using lunch boxes with reusable sandwich containers instead of paper bags and disposable wrappers.

Once you've developed a comfort level in speaking to the neighbors, your friends and smaller groups of people, here are some organizations/groups you can contact to find other speaking opportunities or to join their speakers bureau:

- Chambers of commerce
- Visitors and convention bureaus
- Environmental groups
- Lawn and garden clubs
- Museums
- Rotary clubs
- Public hearings and meetings

**ONCE YOU GET COMFORTABLE SPEAKING  
WITH SMALL GROUPS ABOUT POLLUTION  
PREVENTION, YOU CAN START EXPANDING TO  
LARGER GROUPS.**

## CREATING AN ORGANIZATIONAL SPEAKERS BUREAU

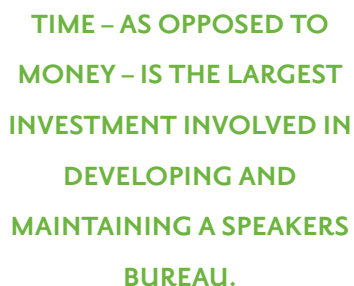
Speakers bureaus are groups of specially-trained representatives who can knowledgeably talk about a specific topic, process or program. Speakers bureau members can be organization staff members, or experts who come from the community as volunteer speakers. Speakers bureau members speak to public and private organizations and groups on educational topics, issues of concern, specific projects, programs or planning activities.

### **SPEAKERS BUREAU MEMBERS CAN:**

- Provide in-depth information and expertise to the general public in a personal format.
- Put a human “face” on the organization.
- Listen to people’s concerns.
- Answer questions.
- Build relationships with community members.

### **SPEAKERS BUREAUS ARE USEFUL AND COST-EFFECTIVE**

- They expand possibilities for community education and participation.
- Speakers can also expand the distribution and public understanding of printed materials.
- Speakers bureaus can be integrated into a larger effort with a variety of other public involvement techniques.
- Speakers bureaus can address a wide variety of groups from civic to social, from professional to neighborhood, and from youth to special interest groups.
- Speakers bureaus help the community understand the organization and its work.



**TIME – AS OPPOSED TO  
MONEY – IS THE LARGEST  
INVESTMENT INVOLVED IN  
DEVELOPING AND  
MAINTAINING A SPEAKERS  
BUREAU.**

### **YES! IT’S EASY TO ORGANIZE A SPEAKERS BUREAU**

Time – as opposed to money – is the largest investment involved in developing and maintaining a speakers bureau. In reality, the greatest time investment comes in the development stage. Once the speakers bureau has been developed, maintenance time can be minimal as long as the bureau manager keeps records on a regular basis.

Setting up and running a speakers bureau can be accomplished in six steps:

**Step 1** — Determine who will be the manager of the speakers bureau

One person should be designated as the overall manager for the bureau to ensure accountability. The manager can then designate staff persons to assist or be responsible for activities.

**Step 2** — Select the speech topics

It is recommended that you focus on four to five overarching topics. These can be advertised in your promotional materials to the general public. Within each of these topics, you can tailor sub-topics for each group.

**Step 3** — Identify speakers for each topic

Since speakers are perceived as representatives of an organization, it is important that your organization selects and/or recruits people who are (1) knowledgeable about the topic and (2) willing to do the job. Speakers function as ambassadors and their work should represent an organization’s best efforts. Remember, they become the “face” of the organization, reflecting its enthusiasm, attitude and expertise.

**Step 4** — Prepare speakers and materials

You need to train and equip speakers for their presentations. Don’t assume that because a person is knowledgeable about the subject, that they don’t need a little training specific to presenting this knowledge to a group of listeners. In successful presentations the words are prepare, prepare, prepare, regardless of how well the speaker knows

# SPEAKERS BUREAU

the subject. Prepare a core presentation or key talking points, as well as collateral materials to distribute at speaking engagements (e.g., fact sheets, tips, reprinted articles).

## Step 5 — Promote your speakers bureau

Opportunities to promote your speakers bureau include: sending a media advisory to your local newspaper and public access TV station; adding a promotional page to your Web site; including a simple advertisement/notice in your organization's newsletter; posting a flyer on bulletin boards in public places; and sending reminder e-mails to your membership list, friends and colleagues.

- A publicity flyer and blast fax/e-mail template, which can be used for bureau publicity, can be found at the end of the "Getting Involved to Erase the Waste" section.
- A checklist of publicity activities for the speakers bureau can be found in the "Working With Media to Erase the Waste" section of this kit.

## Step 6 — Schedule and track presentations

The initial task is to let groups and organizations know an expert speaker is available and willing to speak to the group. General categories of potential groups are listed earlier in this section. The best and easiest way to arrange speeches is to target existing meetings. These meetings have set formats and offer an existing audience.

Use letters or phone calls to arrange speaking opportunities. Note: if you send an initial letter, it should be followed up with a phone call. If you start with a phone call, you should confirm your phone conversation in a letter. Scheduling – as well as solicitation – is an ongoing process.

It is important to track the presentations made, so that you are able to make a complete report at the end of each quarter or year. You can also use this schedule to post on your Web site, as well as for use in funding applications for public education grants.

## POINTERS FOR SPEAKERS

1. The single best way to have a successful presentation is to prepare properly.
2. The frequency of practice is better than the length of a practice session.
3. Focus on what you have to say – not on the fact that you are saying it.
4. Using conversational language is the best way to assure common understanding among the members of the audience. Be careful about the use of jargon and slang. Be sure that everyone will understand what you mean.
5. Concentrate on clear, crisp articulation throughout the presentation.
6. It is not just what you say that counts...it's how you say it. If you mean what you say...say it like you mean it.
7. The expression on your face must match the meaning of the words you are using.
8. Always give the audience eye contact because: (1) it involves your audience; (2) it keeps you aware of their reactions to what you say; and (3) it helps you identify friends and foes.
9. An audience's initial impression of a speaker is made within the first three to four seconds the audience sees him or her.
10. Use visuals when appropriate – a picture can be worth a thousand words; however, if you don't want to talk about something, don't put it on a visual.
11. Stay with one major subject per visual.
12. If you want the audience to look at the visual, you look at it. If you want the audience to look at you, you look at them.
13. Find the farthest object in the room and project your voice to that object.
14. Don't hand out materials or samples during your presentation.
15. Choose your questioners from varying positions in the room. Give the person asking the question your full attention. If you don't understand a question, make the questioner repeat it. Don't guess about the question or the answer.
16. Repeat all questions in your own words. This ensures you understand the question being asked and gives the rest of the audience a chance to hear the question. Repeating the question also gives you time to mentally compose the best answer.

For information about how to improve your public speaking skills, you can visit organizations such as Toastmasters at <http://www.toastmasters.org>.

## HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR SPEECH

1. Decide why you are talking to the group.
  - Are you selling an idea? ("Let's have a beach clean up.")
  - Are you delivering information? ("We need to clean up the litter in our community/near our river so it doesn't pollute our waterways.")
  - Are you explaining technical information? ("The river has high levels of bacteria due, in part, to the trash left on the shoreline.")
2. Identify the people who will be listening.
  - Who are they?
  - What are their interests?
  - Why are they there?
  - What motivates them?
3. Pre-think what's important to the listeners (health, safety, convenience, noise, cost, time constraints).
4. Know what you want the listeners to do.
  - Say yes or no.
  - Sign up for a task.
  - Give an opinion or provide input.
  - Approve something.
5. What's your message?
  - This is the most important part of the presentation.
  - The message is what the listeners know, think or do after you have completed your speech.

## BLUEPRINT FOR BUILDING YOUR SPEECH

### WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE?

For example... "The shoreline is littered with trash and the river is polluted with bacteria, due in part to the litter coming from our city. It is making our community look rundown and is threatening public health, wildlife and our local environment."

### SUPPORT YOUR MESSAGE WITH FACTS...

"The water is so polluted, it is causing harm to public health, wildlife and our local environment."  
(Cite specifics on harm to wildlife, possible illnesses caused from pollution, number of days river is closed to human contact)

"Due to the bacteria levels in the water, there have been several parts of our river closed to the public. Meaning our families cannot enjoy the waterways in our own community."

"The trash-ridden river area/(specific neighborhood area) makes our community look rundown, as if we don't care about keeping our community clean."

### CLOSE WITH YOUR MESSAGE AND ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT...

"We have a serious problem as long as (our neighborhoods/the river) is/are littered with trash and the water is polluted. No one in the community can enjoy the river when it is closed, public health and wildlife is affected and our community looks rundown."

"I think we should take one hour this weekend and, as a group, do a clean up the river/(section of neighborhood)."

"If we all bring trash bags and gloves, we can get it clean in no time. Who will join me this weekend?"

## SAMPLE SPEECH BASED ON THIS OUTLINE

Audience: Members of a civic organization, monthly meeting

Speaker: Homeowner, member of association

---

Good evening. My name is John Thomas and I am a longtime resident of this community. I asked to be on tonight's agenda because I am concerned about the amount of trash that has accumulated in our local neighborhoods and waterways. The growing pollution problem has contributed to the degradation of this prized part of the community and puts our local creeks and the ocean at risk.

It is imperative to clean up our neighborhoods, so we can continue to enjoy our beautiful community. We should all be concerned with keeping our parks healthy and safe place for our children to play. And because we live nearby (insert name) creek, what we do locally has a direct impact on the area's water quality.

At one time or another, we have all contributed to our storm water runoff – the accumulation of motor oil, animal waste, yard waste and trash pose the greatest harm to our waterways, wildlife, public health and the surrounding environment – though probably without full understanding of the impact. Storm water pollution is created when trash, including recyclables, end up on the ground and are washed into local waterways. These contaminants pollute our local creeks and rivers and threaten the health of wildlife and the environment. At last count, more than 680 water bodies in California were contaminated with a variety of pollutants. And that is just what we know about, as state scientists continue to collect more data on the thousands of waterways that bisect the state. The number of identified polluted waterways is likely to increase.

We need to do what we can to protect (name of local waterway). Our families deserve clean and safe lakes, rivers and beaches where they can enjoy recreational activities.

I believe this is a serious problem. But one that we can help solve. Together we can take steps to reduce pollution at the community level and reduce the amount of litter and debris finding its way into the storm drain system and our waterways.

I would like to propose that we organize a (neighborhood or waterway) clean up event on Sunday, May 8. If everyone would commit one hour, we would make a significant contribution in keeping this waste off our streets and out of our (specify waterway).

Who will volunteer to help? [Pass around a signup sheet]

Who can bring litter bags? Gloves?

Who will volunteer to dispose of the trash? And the recyclables?

Can everyone meet at 10 o'clock Saturday morning? I'm certain we can be done by noon. If enough people are interested, maybe we could conclude the morning with a picnic lunch.

This is a great response. Thank you. I will call everyone on the list the Wednesday before the 8th and touch base with you. See you on Sunday the 8th.



## KEY MESSAGES: LITTERING, POLLUTION AND YOU

These are some important facts, figures and messages that you can share with your neighbors and contacts. Additional information about how to erase the waste from your community and local waterways can be found at [www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com) or at any of the Web sites listed in the resources section of this kit.

### **ERASE THE WASTE STORM WATER PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN**

- The California Water Boards' are sponsoring the Erase the Waste campaign, a comprehensive, public education program to educate Californians on the dangers of storm water pollution and about easy to implement steps they can take to prevent pollution in their community.
- The Erase the Waste campaign is built around the theme, Erase the Waste – a positive, empowering theme that encourages all residents and stakeholders to take ownership of their communities, and help reduce and prevent storm water pollution in the local landscape.
- The Water Boards' primary mandate is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's waters. This campaign is a further demonstration of the State's commitment to protect our inland, coastal and ground water sources and its priority focus is to improve water quality to the benefit of California's more than 35 million residents.
- The California Water Boards realize that every community faces different pollution concerns and that the campaign tactics and activities utilized will vary between communities.
- The Erase the Waste campaign encourages California's more than 35 million residents to take ownership of their communities and help reduce storm water pollution.
- Among other tips, the campaign encourages residents to: properly dispose of their used automotive fluids, use pesticides and fertilizers conservatively, throw trash in a trash can or recycling container, pick up after their dog every time; fix leaking vehicles; practice safe gardening and home

improvement activities; join or organize a community or waterway clean up to restore the local environment.

### **STORM WATER POLLUTION**

- California's coastline and beaches suffer dramatically from the effects of storm water pollution. With storm drain outlets flowing directly into the ocean, millions of gallons of polluted water heads unfiltered to our beautiful beaches and bays each day. Storm water pollution increases bacteria levels at our local beaches, making ocean water too polluted for human use, leading to beach advisories, warnings and closures and creating serious health risks to people swimming or fishing in these areas.
- A study conducted by the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Project (and partially funded by the State Water Resources Control Board) found that storm water pollution in the ocean leads to increased risk of viral infections, earaches, sinus problems, fever, flu, skin rashes and viral diseases such as hepatitis for those swimming in the ocean close to storm drain outfalls, especially following a rainstorm when litter and contaminants are flushed into the storm drain system.\*
- At last count, more than 680 water bodies in California were contaminated with a variety of pollutants. And that is just what we know about, as state scientists continue to collect more data on the thousands of waterways that bisect the state. The number of identified polluted waterways is likely to increase.
- During 2003, bacteria levels at California beaches exceeded state water quality standards at numerous locations, leading to 1,353 warnings posted on California beaches for a total of 7,993 days where the ocean was too polluted for human use.
- Remember, whatever is discharged into the street or on the ground flows to a storm drain and eventually makes its way to the ocean. Never put anything but clean water into a gutter, open drainage ditch or down a storm drain. All trash and garbage in our local neighborhoods leads directly to local rivers, creeks, lakes and ultimately to the ocean through our storm drains, with no water quality treatment along the way.

**THE ERASE THE WASTE CAMPAIGN  
ENCOURAGES CALIFORNIA'S MORE THAN 35  
MILLION RESIDENTS TO TAKE OWNERSHIP  
OF THEIR COMMUNITIES AND HELP REDUCE  
STORM WATER POLLUTION.**

\* Note: Scientific research data related to storm water pollution can be found at <http://www.santamonibay.org/uploads/library/texts/epistudyexecsumm.pdf>

# KEY MESSAGES

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## BEACH CLEAN UPS

- The top 10 most frequently found marine debris items in the United States during the International Coastal Clean Up are: cigarette butts (23%); plastic pieces (6%); foamed plastic pieces and food bags/plastic wrappers (5% each); paper pieces, plastic lids and caps and glass pieces (4% each); glass beverage bottles and straws (3% each); and beverage cans and plastic beverage bottles (2% each).
- Since the introduction of the annual California Coastal Cleanup Day in 1985, more than 552,000 Californians have removed more than 8.5 million pounds of debris from our state's shorelines and coast.
- By organizing or joining in a beach clean up, you can make the beach cleaner and safer for families to visit.

## INLAND COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP EFFORTS

- The most effective way to help erase the waste in our communities is to involve our neighbors to take initiative and help be part of the solution. It's important to recognize that pollution close to home eventually finds its way to our waterways and eventually the ocean. We have the power and resources to mobilize our community members to clean up the trash in our neighborhoods before it contaminates our precious local rivers and streams. Littering and Recycling
- Everyone's actions count when it comes to erasing the waste. There are more than 35 million people residing in California and the small, individual actions by each of us to reduce litter and other pollution can add up to big changes.
- Easy to implement pollution prevention actions include:
- Throwing litter in a trash can or recycling bin – never on the ground.
- Putting your cigarette butts in ashtrays, not on the streets.
- Keeping a trash bag in your car, and grocery bags work well.

## REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE.

- According to Earth Resource Foundation, the current projected annual cost to public agencies in California for litter prevention, clean up and disposal is \$375.2 million. In 2003, Californians recycled an average of 28.9 million beverage containers each day. Meaning only 55% of beverage containers were recycled, and the remaining 45% were either thrown on the ground or into the garbage.

## PET WASTE

- Animal waste contains disease-causing pathogens and harmful nutrients, that when left on the ground, wash down storm drains and contaminate local waterways and beaches. In many areas, there are laws or ordinances that ban dog owners from leaving animal waste on public or private property.
- Throw away pet waste in the garbage – or flush it down the toilet; never wash it out into the street or into the storm drain. Carry extra bags when walking your dog and make them available to other pet owners.



# WORKING WITH MEDIA TO...

One of the best ways to build awareness of the pollution problem, and gain support and resources for anti-pollution efforts is ongoing media coverage of the problem and solutions being undertaken by committed citizens' groups and organizations.

It is not necessary to get on national television or in major daily newspapers. Local media and news outlets are always looking for local story ideas.

■ The following media material samples and templates can be found at the end of this section: media release and advisory; calendar advisory; public service announcements (PSAs); letters to the editor; op-ed piece.

## TYPES OF MEDIA OUTLETS

- Newspapers
  - ▶ Daily
  - ▶ Weekly (many of these are free)
- Television
- Radio
- Newsletters
- Web sites

## WHAT IS NEWS

News can be any type of story that is of interest to your local media outlets. The key when considering sending a news story to the media is: Does it have local impact? Your local media is only interested in stories for or about the community reader, listener or viewer.

News stories can be:

- An announcement or account of a local event (e.g., River Rally clean up event).
- What will or has happened to a local person or people (e.g., Jane Smith honored as Citizen of the Year for organizing 25 river clean ups over the past 10 years).
- Local information people need (e.g., More than 100 tons of litter are collected in the annual River Rally each year. This can be prevented if everyone puts litter in the trash can, instead of in the street).

## FROM THE MEDIA PERSPECTIVE

When you work with media on a larger scale by pitching stories or writing op-ed pieces, it is important to consider things from the media perspective. Here are some of the things an editor, reporter or news director will consider when assessing the value of your story:

- Impact or consequence – How many people does the event or idea affect, and how seriously does it affect them? To what extent is the information useful to their readership? Does anyone care?

- Proximity or locality – It is news only if it's happening within the media outlet's circulation or viewership area. If it's in another city or county, there is less interest.
- Timeliness – Today's news may be stale tomorrow. However, some issues of great impact are timeless. So, the best time to tell an important story is as soon as possible.
- Prominence – Names don't always make news. Still, happenings that involve well-known people or institutions are likely to be interesting even if not important.
- Novelty or drama – The unusual makes news. Firsts make news. Bizarre makes news. "When a dog bites a man it is not news because it happens often. But, if a man bites a dog, that's news."
- Conflict – Many reporters spend most of their time covering conflict – whether it's lawsuits, politics, crime or sports. Conflict is both a contributing and complicating factor in news.

## HOW TO FIND YOUR LOCAL MEDIA OUTLETS

There are several ways to find out what local media covers your neighborhood and how you can contact them. Some of these include:

- News racks
  - ▶ Affixed to sidewalks
  - ▶ In convenience stores and local eating establishments
  - ▶ At supermarkets and grocery stores
- Yellow Pages under "Newspapers," "Radio Stations," "Broadcast Companies" and "Television"
- Local library
- Civic and business organizations' newsletters
- Internet search engines such as Yahoo, Google, Alta Vista or others



## COMPILING A MEDIA LIST

If you or your organization plans to conduct ongoing media relations or publicize regularly scheduled events or activities, create and maintain a list of local media outlets that cover environmental issues. A good media list should have the following information:

- Reporter/editor's name
- Title/position
- Name of publication or media outlet
- Mailing address
- Phone number
- Fax number
- E-mail address
- Preferred method of receiving information
- Deadline information

When compiling your media list be sure to include print (newspapers and magazines) and electronic media (television, radio and Internet) in general and ethnic markets. Some examples include daily and weekly papers; wire services (e.g., Associated Press), local television affiliates, radio news programs, local radio and television talk shows and targeted magazines. Remember to include alternative media outlets, such as newsletters and Web sites published by groups including the local chamber of commerce, community service organizations or environmental advocacy organizations.

- At the end of this section, you will find media material templates including: a media advisory/alert, media release, pitch letter, letter to the editor, calendar announcement and public service announcements (PSAs).

## ✓ MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS CHECKLIST

### **To develop and maintain a good working relationship with the media:**

1. Make their jobs easy
  - Give them information that is accurate, thorough and within their deadline.
  - Schedule phone interviews at convenient times or in-person interviews at accessible locations.
  - Provide additional resources or references when appropriate.
2. Make sure spokespersons are accessible when needed. The spokespersons should:
  - Always know what the facts are at the time.
  - Never lie when they don't want to reveal the answer. To a reporter, an official caught in a lie makes a better story than the truth.
3. Make sure all of your contact information is accurate and that someone will respond.
4. Keep the media informed of relevant news about your organization or issue.

### **The following actions guarantee a bad relationship with the media:**

1. Don't respond quickly (or at all) to their inquiries.
2. Fail to respect their deadlines.
3. Provide inaccurate or incomplete information.
4. Send them irrelevant news or "fluff."
5. Call them repeatedly about your event or story.

# PUBLICITY

## ✓ CHECKLIST: PUBLICIZING YOUR PROGRAM OR EVENT

A good publicity program will help you recruit participants, partners and sponsors, as well as call attention to the pollution issue and what your group or organization is doing to fix the problem. A good publicity program can also demonstrate to the general public that the organization is concerned about the effects of pollution and litter and their effects on city beautification and public health/environmental protection.

Here are some pointers for designing and implementing your publicity program:

1. If you schedule your clean up campaign or program in conjunction with another major event (e.g., Earth Day or California Coastal Clean Up), you can take advantage of publicity that is already being generated.
2. Distribute a media calendar announcement well in advance of the event or program launch telling “Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.” In addition to your regular media list, don’t forget to include Web sites, newsletters, or high school and college newspapers. You can also register your event on related Web sites such as <http://www.choose2reuse.org> and/or on your partner/sponsors’ Web sites.
3. Prepare a flyer explaining the event or program and distribute it widely. Make the “call to action” and contact information visible and easy to understand. Your distribution list should include: media outlets, libraries, public bulletin boards, chambers of commerce, schools, youth centers, businesses, public counters and places of worship.
4. Talk to your local newspaper, radio and cable television station about running public service announcements and stories several days before the event.
5. To aid the media in preparing a story, develop fact sheets specific to the problem and solution, distribute a media release, and/or write a pitch letter with an already-written or “canned” story.
6. Send an e-mail to friends, colleagues and organization staff asking them to announce the event or program at all meetings they attend. Notify your city government officials. Make sure you remind your speakers bureau members to include announcements in their presentations. Obtain a proclamation from your mayor or city council. These proclamations can commemorate the day, or recognize the neighborhood or an individual’s efforts.



**A GOOD PUBLICITY  
PROGRAM WILL HELP YOU  
RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS,  
PARTNERS AND SPONSORS,  
AS WELL AS CALL ATTENTION  
TO THE POLLUTION ISSUE.**



## CORE MATERIALS FOR YOUR MEDIA RELATIONS TOOLKIT

The most common types of materials you will use when working with the media are:

- Media advisories or alerts
- Media releases
- “Canned” articles
- Pitch letters
- Letters to the editor and opinion-editorial pieces
- Media information kits

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### MEDIA ADVISORY OR ALERT

The purpose of a media advisory or alert is to notify reporters of important information being announced or the date of a press conference or media event. Sent out in advance of the announcement or event, the alert briefly and clearly summarizes “Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.”

For daily publications or broadcasts, you should follow-up with reporters or editors one to two days before the announcement or event to pitch the story, or confirm their interest or attendance. For weekly publications or cable TV shows, follow-up at least one week in advance.

### MEDIA RELEASE

The purpose of a press release is to generate media coverage of an event, announcement or new development, or to provide insight or additional information about an ongoing issue, product or policy. Distributing a media release allows you to package the information, story and quotes the way you would like them covered.

For events or breaking news, the release is typically issued the same day as the news occurs (at a press conference, by fax or e-mail), although you may issue it in advance of the event. For issues, product or policy updates, the release should be timed to maximize effectiveness of the message.

#### Four tips for writing a media release:

1. Define your purpose. What message do you want to send to the community about storm water pollution? (Samples of key messages/facts and figures can be found in the “Speaking Out to Erase the Waste” section of the Neighborhood Action Kit.)
2. Before you write the release, identify the core information: “Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.” This information should be in the first and second paragraph of your release. Many times, if the reporter doesn’t see the importance of the story in these paragraphs, he or she stops reading and throws it away.
3. Details. Write down the supporting key points for your core information, such as background information on littering and pollution or your organization’s work in this area. This information is in paragraphs three and four. Quotes from a

main spokesperson can and should be used to provide or support the details. (Your spokesperson can be a member of your speakers bureau.)

4. Be sure to include:

- Contact information — identify the organization issuing the release with a current contact name, phone number and e-mail address. Make sure the person will always be available and that the phone number and e-mail address are correct. You also should include your organization’s Web site address.
- Description of your organization — this should be standard information included as the last paragraph of any release you distribute.

### PITCH LETTER

The purpose of a pitch letter is to explain to a reporter, editor or news director why he or she should cover your story or address your issue. A pitch letter is not used for breaking news stories. With that in mind, you should not expect instant coverage in the next day’s paper or on the evening news.

#### Two tips for writing a pitch letter:

1. It should make the case of how your story relates to their audience, why it is interesting or relevant and how it is newsworthy.
2. The pitch letter may be a follow-up to a phone conversation with a reporter and generally accompanies other written materials such as fact sheets, case studies, press releases or other program materials that serve as background information for the reporter.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND OPINION-EDITORIAL PIECES

Another way to reach opinion leaders and educate your community about pollution prevention is to submit letters to the editor and opinion-editorial (op-ed) pieces. Op-ed pieces and letters to the editor should be written in the same fashion as a media release, with the most important information at the beginning of the letter. For maximum impact, a senior member of your organization should sign letters to the editor and op-ed articles.

Letters to the editor are usually written in response to specific news articles, current local community issues or a publication's coverage of a particular issue or news event.

#### **Five tips for writing a letter to the editor:**

1. Call your local paper to inquire about guidelines on length, deadlines and whether the letter will be edited. Editors will likely choose a few short letters rather than a long one. Be brief.
2. Write immediately when you see a topic that catches your eye, or one that can be tied to storm water pollution or related environmental issues.
3. The letter should be factual. Support statements with localized statistics or facts.
4. Stick to the issue. Avoid partisan or divisive remarks.
5. Don't send generic letters. Editors are less likely to print them.

Opinion editorials are written to frame and position specific issues from a particular point of view, and are not a direct response to an article. However, the subject of an op-ed must be timely and of relative importance to the newspaper's readers.

#### **Five tips for writing an op-ed piece:**

1. Offer a forceful opinion.
2. Provide well-documented, well-researched facts and arguments.
3. Make sure your essay adds to the public's knowledge of storm water pollution issues.
4. Provide insight on issues that are relevant to the local area.
5. Make sure the essay is clear, organized and interesting.

■ "Letters to the Editor" and "Op-Ed Article" templates are provided at the end of this section.

#### **PRE-WRITTEN OR "CANNED" ARTICLES**

Small local publications that don't have a large reporting staff may accept a pre-written or "canned" article and run it with little editing. In larger local publications, however, the "canned" article may be used to spur a reporter to cover your story. In this case, your pre-written article may provide the basic facts for the reporter's story, but he or she may develop their own angle. Remember weekly and monthly publications require a much longer lead-time than daily publications. Be sure to contact the publication to determine submission deadlines.

#### **MEDIA INFORMATION KITS**

Media kits are packets of information that can be distributed at a press conference or event, or given to a reporter to provide background information for an interview or news story. The

information included should be relevant, brief and easy to scan for the main ideas. Make sure the information included in media kits is always kept current and before you hand over a kit to a reporter, reconfirm that all the information is correct, relevant and current.

Media kits can include:

- Media release
- Fact sheet on the event, issue and/or project
- Fact sheet on latest relevant statistics and research
- Photographs, slides or electronic art of appropriate logos, images or diagrams
- Brochures and other printed program materials
- Relevant media coverage from other noted publications
- Statistical data or studies related to storm water pollution and/or the story being covered by the reporter
- Current contact information, in case a reporter has a need for further information. This should include your Web site address, if you have a site dedicated to storm water pollution information.

#### **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO ADD TO YOUR MEDIA RELATIONS TOOLKIT**

In addition to the key media tools just detailed, there are several other tools you can use in your media relations outreach. These include:

- Press conferences and media events
- Calendar announcements/bulletin boards
- Feature stories
- Radio and television: public affairs shows/news talk shows
- Commentaries/editorials
- Public service announcements (PSAs)
- Web sites and e-mails

#### **PRESS CONFERENCES AND MEDIA EVENTS**

Hosting a press conference or event should be used strategically, particularly in or near large metropolitan areas. Much of your media outreach can be handled by issuing press releases and contacting reporters directly. However, if your announcement is particularly newsworthy or visual, then holding a press conference or inviting the media to attend your event might be appropriate.

How can you tell if a media conference or media event is the right move for other forms of neighborhood involvement? Do you have something breaking to announce; will it be worth the reporters' time to travel there; do you have great visuals with lots of color and interesting speakers; and can you accomplish the same results through a phone call, pitch letter or media release?

One good example of a visually interesting event is a large-scale neighborhood or river clean up, where you have hundreds of volunteers in action, and key speakers, such as elected officials, providing good sound bites for local reporters.

When planning a press conference or media event, consider:

- The location of the event \*
- The time it is held \*
- What other newsworthy events are happening on that day or time \*
- Will the location help tell your story? (i.e., in front of a storm drain clogged with litter)
- Is it centrally located, easy to find and reach?
- Is there plenty of accessible parking?
- Can signage be displayed?
- Will television and radio stations be able to transmit clear signals to their studios?
- For television and print photographers, is the location visually appealing? Are there visuals you can add, such as littered gutters or waterways, clean up activities, etc.?
- Is there enough room for reporters and broadcast equipment, as well as, enough electrical outlets?
- Do you need to bring in a public address system, chairs, risers or tables?
- What directional or information signage do you need?
- Is there wind or background noise (airplanes, traffic) that may make it difficult for radio or television outlets to hear your spokespeople?

\* These issues are critical in determining if and/or when to hold a press conference in large metropolitan areas. Distances are great, time is limited and competition is fierce for news coverage. On any given day, 30 to 40 media events or announcements can occur in larger media markets. While not as overwrought with news stories, these issues should still be taken into account in smaller communities.

## CALENDAR ANNOUNCEMENTS

To increase the visibility of your meetings, events or public participation forums, consider submitting location information for local media outlet calendar listings. The calendar listings

(also referred to as announcements or bulletin boards) are the section of the newspaper, or a time slot on radio/television where community events and activities are listed or announced. To increase the likelihood of having your meeting included in the calendar section, send your announcement well ahead of the event.

## FEATURE STORIES

The key distinction between a feature story and a news story or editorial is that a feature story has the purpose of both informing and entertaining the reader and does not advocate a position.

Features can be profile stories on people or places or they can take a strong human-interest angle. A good human-interest story is built around the premise that the reader can easily identify with the subject or event. It involves a fellow human being and a situation that could happen to, or involve, the reader. However, the human-interest aspect of the story outweighs its value as a straight news story.

Often community publications don't have a lot of staff and usually can't send a reporter or photographer to cover your event or take pictures. However, it is always a good idea to take pictures of your local efforts and include those with the information sent to the smaller papers.

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND NEWS TALK SHOWS

Equivalent to the editorial pages of a newspaper are the public affairs and talk shows on radio and television. When deciding if radio or television is an appropriate medium for your issue, consider what makes your topic newsworthy or air-able. Again, comparable to print media, your messages should be clear, concise, timely, interesting and relevant to listeners. It helps if your representative is a well-known community leader or an expert.

Radio and television public affairs and news talk shows can be forums for in-depth discussions of issues affecting your community. The first step in getting on the air is to familiarize yourself with the public affairs and news talk programs on radio and television stations in your area. Most are on AM radio or cable television stations. Be sure to acquaint yourself with the format of the programs, noting whether they feature in-studio guests, live call-ins, panel discussions or taped programming.

## COMMENTARIES/EDITORIALS

Some local radio and cable television stations accept commentaries/editorials from listeners. For on-air commentaries, call the radio, cable or television station and ask them if they accept commentaries/editorials from listeners/viewers. Find out their protocol. Do they want to see a script; what are their commentary length requirements (30-60 seconds); and how do they want to receive it (fax, regular mail, e-mail, etc.)?

## **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)**

PSAs are free “mentions,” usually on radio stations, that give concise information about an event (date, time, location, contact information) or a “tip” that is of benefit to the public (e.g., limit use of pesticides and fertilizers in your yard; the excess chemicals will wash into waterways when it rains).

Thirty seconds is usually the maximum length a radio station will run a PSA, however, call the station to obtain the station's PSA requirements, including length and lead-time.

PSAs can be submitted in written format, to be read by the station's announcer, or pre-recorded on an audio or digital tape (this can be expensive and must follow the electronic needs dictated by the station).

### **Five tips for writing a PSA:**

1. Give the radio station a choice of two or three lengths (e.g., 10 seconds, 20 seconds, 30 seconds). Make sure you accurately time your PSA, whether it is submitted in writing or pre-recorded.
2. Make sure you have taken the “service” approach and are providing specific and valuable information for the local listening audience.
3. Limit your PSA to one main topic. Avoid extra words, particularly adjectives.
4. Close your PSA by asking people to take an action whenever possible.
5. If you submit a pre-recorded PSA, use a professional recording studio with broadcast-quality equipment. Home tape recorders aren't good enough for producing broadcast-quality tapes.

Important reminder: Don't forget your non-English stations for all of these radio and television public affairs and public service opportunities. The ideal scenario is to send in-language materials to non-English outlets. However, if that is not possible, it is recommended you check with your respective media outlets to find out their policies pertaining to this subject.

## **WEB SITES AND E-MAIL**

The Internet provides another important medium to increase public awareness of your issue. While Internet access for all socio-economic groups is still a concern, the so-called “digital divide” is rapidly closing and most media have Internet access and e-mail boxes.

Include your organization's Web address on all your communication materials. The Web site can include storm water pollution prevention facts, what your organization is doing to

prevent pollution, business regulations and information, copies of media and other educational materials, a place for commentary, frequently asked questions, links to other related Web sites and a host of other important information. Be sure to keep your Web site up-to-date by adding current information and materials regularly.

Other features of your Web site could include:

- Links to other resources related to littering or water pollution
- “Contact us” links to your media liaison and your speakers bureau manager

E-mail can be a very cost-effective means to contact media. E-mail addresses should be researched and included on your media list. Dependent upon your computer's mail manager, you might be able to set up a media e-mail group.

## **HANDLING CALLS FROM REPORTERS**

When you get a call from a reporter working on a story, it can be tempting to answer his or her questions immediately. However, even seasoned media spokespeople can run into trouble when they try to do an interview “cold.”

Instead, when a reporter calls, get as much information as possible about:

1. The news outlet (if you are not familiar with it)
2. The angle of the story he or she is working on
3. A list of questions the reporter would like answered
4. Who else has been interviewed
5. The reporter's deadline

Tell the reporter that you need this background, so that you can be sure to give him or her the most appropriate information. In some cases, after listening to the reporter's needs, you may determine that you are not the best spokesperson for the interview, or that another person who is an expert on the subject matter should join you for the interview. Make sure you (or the designated spokesperson) calls the reporter back well before the deadline with the information they requested. Before returning the call, take time to organize your key messages and practice saying them. Pull together pertinent facts and figures, so that you have them in front of you when you do the interview. If the reporter has questions you cannot answer, or if you need more time to gather information, call the reporter back well before the deadline and tell them.

For tracking and internal record-keeping, it is important to document both proactive and reactive media contacts.

## WORKING WITH ETHNIC MEDIA

California is culturally and ethnically rich. Therefore, approaches used to inform the media must also be diverse. Many communities have ethnic- and language-specific newspapers, television channels, radio stations and magazines that should be utilized and seen as partners in your media relations outreach.

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### TAILORING YOUR MESSAGES FOR ETHNIC MEDIA

Keep in mind that ethnic media has a specific audience. This should be considered when developing a message for that particular community. What works for the general market media might not be as effective within ethnic communities.


### CONTACTING ETHNIC MEDIA

Although ethnic media utilizes general industry resources (e.g., wire services) to learn about news stories, specific publications and television and radio programs should be targeted when trying to reach a particular ethnic community.

While most reporters at ethnic print and broadcast media outlets speak English, it is advisable, and sometimes required for your radio and television spokesperson to speak the language of the listening or viewing audience. Additionally, if possible and/or needed, adapt your key media informational pieces such as releases, fact sheets or pitch letters into the language of the media outlet. If this is not possible, it is important to check with the outlet to ask about their policy on this matter.

If you choose to invite ethnic media to your press conference or event, make sure that you have the same materials and resources available in the appropriate languages (if possible and/or needed). Try to have at least one spokesperson fluent in those languages to address the ethnic media. To assist you in this effort, you might also consider seeking the support of a translating service.

If someone within your organization cannot accurately adapt media materials, check your local listings for translation services. Be sure to have a native speaker review your translated documents to ensure that your messages don't get lost in the translation.




**KEEP IN MIND THAT ETHNIC MEDIA HAS A SPECIFIC AUDIENCE. A MESSAGE THAT WORKS FOR THE GENERAL MARKET MEDIA MIGHT NOT BE AS EFFECTIVE WITHIN AN ETHNIC COMMUNITY. WORK TO DEVELOP A MESSAGE THAT WILL RESONATE WITH THAT PARTICULAR COMMUNITY.**

## MEDIA SPOKESPERSONS: INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Use the following tips when presenting key messages in interviews and presentations:

1. Be prepared and knowledgeable. Prior to the interview or meeting, write down your main messages and memorize a few statistics or examples to support your messages.
2. Give your main message point first in a concise, positive, complete sentence. Illustrate your point whenever possible with a few brief statistics. Follow with two or three of your other major message points.
3. Keep answers as concise and focused as possible, but not so brief as to be uninformative or appear evasive. Don't ramble or go off on tangents.
4. Position yourself as an expert source. Make sure that your credentials and years of experience are known.
5. Use your organization's name whenever possible instead of generic pronouns, such as "we" or "our."
6. Always tell the truth. Be as direct and concise as possible when answering questions. Don't give out information that you think may be true; it could cause embarrassment if discovered later to be false. Say "I don't know the answer now..." and get back with additional information if possible.
7. Assume everything is on the record. Assume everything you say will be used in a news story. Even the way you decline to answer can convey information to a reporter.
8. Keep your audience in mind. Avoid slang/technical jargon that the audience will not understand.
9. Keep your cool. Do not be ruffled or upset by questions. Keep control of the interview or presentation; politely correct inaccurate information and do not allow yourself to become defensive.
10. Don't repeat a negative question in your answer. Use positive words with which you feel comfortable.
11. Don't try to fill up silence. When finished answering a question, wait for the next one.
12. Assist the reporters. Help put reporters in touch with experts. Make an extra effort to give them background or additional materials. Make sure you provide the information they need in a timely fashion. If you do not have something they need, tell them when you can get it to them or refer them to where they can find it.



**HELP PUT REPORTERS IN TOUCH WITH EXPERTS. MAKE AN EXTRA EFFORT TO GIVE THEM BACKGROUND OR ADDITIONAL MATERIALS. MAKE SURE YOU PROVIDE THE INFORMATION THEY NEED IN A TIMELY FASHION. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE SOMETHING THEY NEED, TELL THEM WHEN YOU CAN GET IT TO THEM OR REFER THEM TO WHERE THEY CAN FIND IT.**



## SAMPLE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### SAMPLE LETTER #1

Dear Editor:

Thank you for your coverage of the [river/community clean up] held on [date]. Events such as this have a dual purpose: they make our community cleaner and they let the residents of our area know that by working together, we can make a difference in the health of our waterways.

Storm water pollution poses a danger to local water quality and community and family health. Storm water pollution is created when trash, including recyclables, end up on the ground and are washed into local waterways. These contaminants pollute our local creeks and rivers and threaten the health of wildlife and the environment. When water quality in California is threatened in California, it creates serious impacts for fish, wildlife, public health and safety and the region's economic vitality. In other words, everyone is negatively affected by storm water pollution.

But we don't have to put up with pollution, as events such as the one recently held at the river prove. By changing polluting behaviors, we can make our community healthier. Residents can implement everyday actions like, throwing trash in a trash can and not on the street, using pesticides and fertilizers conservatively and picking up after their animals. But it's up to each of us to be aware that we are a major part of the problem, and can easily be a major part of the solution.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE, ORGANIZATION (if applicable)]

### SAMPLE LETTER #2

Dear Editor:

Regarding your recent article about water quality in our area [title of article, date], I'd like to suggest that one of the reasons we are experiencing impacts on our water quality in California can be found in our own community.

If everyone takes small, individual actions to reduce storm water pollution, it can add up to big changes. When we throw trash on the ground, improperly dispose of our automotive fluids or use excessive fertilizers and pesticides, we increase the public health and safety impact on our community and damage done to the local waterways, as these items introduce unnecessary litter and chemicals into our creeks, rivers and lakes.

All of the trash and garbage found in our communities eventually flows into our local waterways and rivers, which ultimately leads directly to our oceans without being filtered or treated. At last count, more than 680 water bodies in California were contaminated with a variety of pollutants. And that is just what we know about, as state scientists continue to collect more data on the thousands of waterways that bisect the state. The number of identified polluted waterways is likely to increase.

The California Water Boards recently launched a campaign, called Erase the Waste, aimed at educating Californians on ways to reduce storm water pollution and protect the environment. Among other tips, the campaign encourages residents to throw trash in a trash can or recycling container, recycle their motor oil, pick up after their animals and join or organize a community clean up to help protect the local environment.

For more information about how to erase the waste in your community, log on to [www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com).

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE, ORGANIZATION (if applicable)]

## SAMPLE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### SAMPLE LETTER #3

Dear Editor:

Regarding your article on the decision to ban smoking on public beaches [title of article, date], I'd like to draw your attention to another benefit besides clean air.

Each year, Californians improperly dispose of hundreds of thousands of cigarettes butts. That means that all of these discarded, toxin-laden butts end up on the ground, where children are at risk of swallowing, choking or burning themselves. Also, it means that these butts can be washed into our local waterways. This affects our local environment, causing harm to fish and wildlife.

According to the California Coastal Commission, volunteers pick up more than 300,000 cigarette butts annually during statewide cleanup events on beaches throughout the California.

Even seemingly harmless acts such as using the sand as an ashtray have a ripple effect on the cleanliness of our community, and the health of our environment. For more information about how to erase the waste in your community, log on to [www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com).

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE, ORGANIZATION (if applicable)]

### SAMPLE LETTER #4

Dear Editor:

I wanted to thank you for covering the important issue of California's water quality in your recent article [title of article, date]. I also wanted to remind your readers that we are all responsible for protecting local water quality and that there are many opportunities to become involved.

The Smith County Watershed Council is just one of many local groups that work to foster better stewardship and understanding of local watershed resources. Their activities encourage residents to get involved in keeping our waterways clean and ensuring sustainable watershed health.

The Watershed Council hosts activities such as ongoing stream clean ups and restoration projects, the planting of native trees and shrubs along the local waterways and opportunities for residents to volunteer for ongoing water monitoring positions. And anyone can join in to make a difference in our watershed.

These activities work to bring volunteers from all parts of our community together to help protect the local water quality and our local environment. To learn more about ways they can help, I encourage your readers to log on to [www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com).

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE, ORGANIZATION (if applicable)]

## SAMPLE OPINION-EDITORIAL

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### PREVENTING STORM WATER POLLUTION IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Would you believe that small, everyday actions can make or break the health of a community? Each day, millions of poor decisions ranging from improperly disposing of used motor oil to throwing litter on the ground have a negative cumulative effect on the quality of our local waters. But thanks to an innovative campaign by the California Water Boards, called Erase the Waste, Californians are learning about their role in safeguarding water quality and protecting our local environment.

As an example of how one's individual action can contribute to a much larger problem, one needs only to look at the improper disposal of used motor oil in California. According to the California Integrated Waste Management Board, in 2004, approximately 64 million gallons of motor oil was recycled, leaving approximately 20 million gallons unaccounted for and possibly improperly disposed of down storm drains, into lakes or streams, or thrown in the garbage. Why should you care? Because when this contaminant enters our local waterways, the water becomes polluted, threatening the health of our community and its natural resources.

With a population of more than 35 million residents in California, an overwhelming volume of storm water pollution is created. The State of California has made reducing storm water pollution throughout the state a top priority. Storm water pollution is a great danger to water quality and poses significant threats to the public's health and safety and local natural resources.

In these efforts, the California Water Boards has created a storm water pollution public education campaign, called Erase the Waste. The Erase the Waste campaign encourages Californians to take ownership of their communities and help prevent storm water pollution before it happens. Among other tips, the campaign encourages residents to: throw trash in a trash can or recycling container; use pesticides and fertilizers conservatively; pick up after their dog every time; and join or organize a community clean up to help protect local environment.

Here in [NAME OF YOUR AREA], we already have hosted several community clean up days and are planning to hold more. [INSERT INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICULAR ACTIVITY SUCH AS HOW MANY ATTENDED AND HOW MANY POUNDS OF WASTE WERE DISPOSED OF, ETC.]

We all share a responsibility for preventing water pollution in California. Please join us in doing your part. For more information about how to erase the waste in our community, log on to [www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com).

[An organization staff member or director should sign the editorial.]

## SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

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**\* MEDIA ALERT \* MEDIA ALERT \* MEDIA ALERT \***

[NAME OF AREA] CLEAN UP DAY LETS RESIDENTS  
BE PART OF THE POLLUTION SOLUTION

Volunteers pitch in to reap big rewards for local water quality

**WHAT:** To help keep our community and environment clean, the [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] is hosting a community (or streamside) clean up day in [NAME OF CITY] as part of California's Erase the Waste campaign ([www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com)). Volunteers will work to remove litter, discarded cigarette butts and other trash and plant trees throughout the local neighborhood. These activities will beautify the community and help prevent this debris from ending up in our local waterways (or ocean) and contributing to storm water pollution. Participants will also learn about opportunities to get involved in [NAME OF ORGANIZATION]'s ongoing clean up activities.

**WHY:** Due to the polluting behaviors of many residents, the local community has become littered with trash and debris. These pollutants create a local health and safety risk for families and contribute to widespread water pollution throughout the region. These clean up efforts will help refurbish the local community and take a proactive step towards stopping harmful contaminants from entering our nearby waterways.

**WHERE:** [NAME OF PARK]  
[Intersection or Address]

**WHEN:** [DATE] [TIME]

**WHO:** [NAME OF COMMUNITY GROUP OR ORGANIZATION]  
[LIST STAFF NAMES, TITLES], Mayor Mary Doe, concerned residents

**VISUALS:** Piles of trash collected, newly planted trees, kids and adults removing trash from the river

**CONTACT:** [NAME]  
[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]  
(XXX) XXX-XXXX

# # #

## SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

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[Organization Letterhead]

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CONTACT: [NAME]  
(XXX) XXX-XXXX

### **[ORGANIZATION NAME] HOSTS SUCCESSFUL ERASE THE WASTE RIVER CLEAN UP**

*Event Reclaims Community from Polluters, Inspires Local Residents to Play an Active Role In Preventing Pollution*

LOS ANGELES [DATE] – [ORGANIZATION NAME] today hosted a community clean up event at a [LOCATION] to beautify the area and to illustrate the concept that everyone can play a role in neighborhood protection and storm water pollution prevention. More than [NUMBER] pitched in, collecting more than [NUMBER] bags of trash and planting [NUMBER] trees.

“The California Water Boards have made reducing storm water pollution in the State a top priority. Not only is it a great danger to water quality, it also poses significant threats to the public’s health and natural resources,” said [NAME, TITLE].

Participants not only picked up litter, they also learned about actions they can take in the future to make a difference in their community, such as citizen water monitoring programs, beach clean ups and watershed restoration projects. Today’s event was part of the Water Boards’ Erase the Waste campaign, which encourages Californians to take ownership of their communities and to help reduce storm water pollution by changing their polluting behaviors.

-more-

## *[ ORGANIZATION NAME] Hosts Successful Community Clean Up*

*Page 2*

“With the large population in California, even small, individual actions to reduce storm water pollution can add up to big changes,” said [NAME, TITLE]. “We’re asking everyone to do their part to protect our community, its water quality and the local environment.”

Every month, hundreds of thousands of Californians drop cigarette butts in streets, parks and playgrounds; toss trash on the ground; and dog owners fail to pick up their dog’s droppings. These actions all lead to storm water pollution. While on the ground, these contaminants make our neighborhoods look dirty and once it passes into our waterways, the water becomes polluted, threatening natural resources.

Among other tips, the campaign encourages residents to: throw trash in a trash can or recycling container; use pesticides and fertilizers conservatively; recycle their used motor oil; participate in citizen water monitoring programs and; join or organize a community or streamside clean up. For more information about how to erase the waste in your community, log on to [www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com).

Erase the Waste is the California Water Boards’ storm water public education campaign to reduce storm water pollution in the state and improve the environment of its coastal and inland communities

# # #



## SAMPLE CALENDAR ADVISORY

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### CALENDAR ADVISORY • CALENDAR ADVISORY • CALENDAR ADVISORY

#### ***[ORGANIZATION NAMES] Team Up for a Recycling Drive at [NAME OF SCHOOL]***

#### ***School Recycling Event Will Make Our Community Cleaner and Gain Funds for Local School***

**WHAT:** Help prevent pollution in our neighborhood and nearby (insert name) creek or stream by joining [SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS] as they host an Erase the Waste recycling drive. Come and be part of the pollution solution by recycling your papers, cans and bottles instead of throwing them on the ground or in the garbage – which creates more waste. Meet your neighbors and join us as we help protect the local environment and help raise funds for the local school.

**WHY:** Storm water pollution is created when trash, including recyclables, end up on the ground and are washed into local waterways. These contaminants pollute our local creeks and rivers and threaten the health of wildlife and the environment. The [ORGANIZATION NAMES] want to help clean up this environmental problem and give all funds to the local school.

**VISUALS:** [ORGANIZATION NAMES], families and community members, sorting recyclables and handing out Erase the Waste information packets.

**WHEN:** [DATE] [TIME]

**WHERE:** [LOCATION]

**BACKGROUND:** *Erase the Waste is the California Water Boards' storm water public education campaign to reduce storm water pollution in the state and improve the environment of its coastal and inland communities. For more information about how to erase the waste in our community, log on to [www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com).*

**CONTACT:** [NAME]  
[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]  
(XXX) XXX-XXXX

# # #

## SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### 30 SECONDS

You're invited to a community clean up on [DATE], at [LOCATION] in [NAME OF AREA]. It's part of Erase the Waste, a program that encourages Californians to take ownership of their communities, help reduce storm water pollution, and be part of the "pollution solution," by preventing pollution before it happens. Remember, all of us share the responsibility for protecting local water quality and the environment. For more information about how to erase the waste in our community, log on to [www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com)

### 10 SECONDS

The State's Erase the Waste campaign reminds you that all of us share the responsibility for protecting local water quality and the environment. For more information about how to reduce harmful pollution in our community, log on to [www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com).



# People who harm our communities often leave a trail.



Use a garbage can for trash and recycle reusable materials. Never throw trash on the street or out your car window. To learn more ways to keep your neighborhood and waters healthy, clean and pollution free, visit **[www.waterboards.ca.gov/education](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/education)**.

**Erase the  
waste**  
Brought to you by  
the California Water Boards



**When nature calls,  
make sure you  
pick up.**

Clean up after your dog every single time. Do your part to keep your neighborhood and waters clean, healthy and pollution free. For more tips, visit **[www.waterboards.ca.gov/education](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/education)**.

**Erase the  
waste**  
Brought to you by  
the California Water Boards



# Cigarettes can be harmful even after they're put out.



Make sure to place your extinguished cigarette butts in an ashtray or garbage can every single time. To learn more ways to keep your neighborhood and waters healthy, clean and pollution free, visit **[www.erasethewaste.com](http://www.erasethewaste.com)**.

**Erase the  
waste**  
Brought to you by  
the California Water Boards



# Improve your home without harming your community.



Home improvement products such as paint, fertilizers and pesticides contain toxic chemicals that can be harmful to your neighborhood and waters. Use these products sparingly and according to directions. When cleaning up after a project, make sure to dispose of them safely and properly at a local Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center or Event. To learn more ways to keep your neighborhood clean and healthy, visit **[www.waterboards.ca.gov/education](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/education)**.

**Erase the  
waste**  
Brought to you by  
the California Water Boards

# Keep our neighborhoods and waters healthy and clean.

Things like litter, cigarette butts and animal waste left on the street create dirty neighborhoods and cause a health threat to the community. They can also wash into storm drains, leading to flooding and pollution of local waterways. Prevent pollution in your community and waters by following these simple tips:

- ☐ Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.
- ☐ Throw extinguished cigarette butts in an ashtray and trash in a trash can every single time.
- ☐ Clean up your pet's waste by throwing it in the trash.
- ☐ Organize or join in the clean up of a local waterway or community.
- ☐ Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly and never apply them prior to rainstorms.
- ☐ Take unwanted paints, yard chemicals and automotive fluids to a local Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center or Event.

To learn more ways to keep your neighborhood and waters healthy and clean, visit [www.waterboards.ca.gov/education](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/education).

**Erase the  
Waste**

Brought to you by  
the California Water Boards



Printed on recycled paper.

# When nature calls, make sure you pick up.

With the number of dogs in your community, imagine how unhealthy it would become if no one picked up after their pets. Dog waste carries bacteria, and if left on the ground, can make people sick. It can also wash into storm drains, polluting your community and local waterways. Dog owners can help prevent pollution by taking these simple steps:

- ❑ Pick up after your pet every single time. Check with your pet store for products that make picking up easy.
- ❑ Throw away pet waste in the garbage; never wash it into the gutter or storm drain.
- ❑ Carry extra bags in your car, so you are prepared when you travel with your pet.
- ❑ Get involved in a pet group and remind others to pick up after their pets.

To learn more ways to keep your neighborhood and waters healthy and clean, visit [www.waterboards.ca.gov/education](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/education).

**Erase the  
Waste**

Brought to you by  
the California Water Boards



Printed on recycled paper.



# Keep your yard green without harming your community.

Many residents use pesticides and fertilizers to keep their yards looking nice. However, without proper use and disposal, these products can cause a health threat to neighborhoods, families and waters. Pesticides and fertilizers can run off into storm drains, leading to pollution of your community and local waterways. Prevent pollution by taking these easy steps:

- ❑ Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly, by spot applying. Consider using non-toxic or less toxic products.
- ❑ Avoid over watering after applying pesticides or fertilizers.
- ❑ Never apply pesticides or fertilizers before it rains.
- ❑ Bag or compost yard waste.
- ❑ Take unwanted products to a local Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center or Event.

To learn more ways to keep your neighborhood and waters healthy and clean, visit [www.waterboards.ca.gov/education](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/education).

**Erase the  
waste**

Brought to you by  
the California Water Boards



Printed on recycled paper.

# Improve your home without harming your community.

When completing a painting project, many residents wash off paintbrushes under an outdoor faucet. Toxic paint products rinsed or dumped outside can result in a health threat to your neighborhood and waters. These products can run off into storm drains, leading to pollution of your community and local waterways. When cleaning up after a painting project, prevent pollution by following these easy steps:

- ❑ Never dump paint or related products into the gutter or storm drain.
- ❑ Clean water-based paint from brushes in any sink, never outside with a hose.
- ❑ Clean oil-based paint from brushes with paint thinner, which can be filtered and reused.
- ❑ Donate unused paint to local anti-graffiti organizations or reuse it for touch ups.
- ❑ Take unwanted paint or related products to a local Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center or Event.

To learn more ways to keep your neighborhood and waters healthy and clean, visit [www.waterboards.ca.gov/education](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/education).

**Erase the  
Waste**

Brought to you by  
the California Water Boards



Printed on recycled paper.

# Eraser the Waste

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO...

This is a partial list of organizations that can provide environmental resources and information or that offer opportunities to get involved in cleaning up local communities and waterways. Be sure to look to your own community for additional organizations that offer these resources.

### GENERAL CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

**California Water Boards** – State and regional government boards that strive to protect water quality and beneficial uses for the state of California.  
Eraser the Waste Public Education Campaign  
Public Affairs Office **Phone: (916) 341-5254**  
1001 I Street  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812  
Fax: (916) 341-5252  
E-mail: [info@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:info@waterboards.ca.gov)  
Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/education>  
Campaign Web site: <http://www.erasethewaste.com>  
Water Quality Service Learning Model - The Water Boards developed state standard curriculum specifically for 4th through 6th grade levels to assist teachers in increasing students' awareness of polluted runoff and how it impacts local waterways and the environment. For more information, log on to [www.waterlessons.org](http://www.waterlessons.org)

### ORGANIZATIONS THAT HOLD COMMUNITY CLEAN UP EVENTS/ HOW TO GET INVOLVED

**California Coastal Commission** – The Commission regulates land and water uses in the coastal zone and oversees the Adopt A Beach program, Coastal Clean Up Day and COASTWEEKS.  
Public Education Department **Phone: (800) 262-7848  
or (415) 904-5200**  
45 Fremont Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105-2219  
Fax: (415) 904-5400  
Web site: <http://www.coastal.ca.gov>

**California Ocean and Coastal Environmental Access Network (OCEAN)** – A web-based virtual library for the discovery and access to ocean and coastal data and information from a wide variety of sources to support ocean and coastal resource management, planning, research and education.  
California Resources Agency **Phone: (916) 653-5656**  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: (916) 653-8102  
E-mail: [ocean@resources.ca.gov](mailto:ocean@resources.ca.gov)  
Web site: <http://ceres.ca.gov/ocean>

**Keep California Beautiful** – Hosts the Great American Clean Up, which is the nation's largest organized litter prevention, beautification and community improvement event.  
3914 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite A-218  
San Diego, CA 92123 **Phone: (858) 505-9936**  
Fax: (858) 505-9940  
E-mail: [kcbeee@aol.com](mailto:kcbeee@aol.com)  
Web site: <http://www.keepcaliforniabeautiful.com>

### GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS

**California Water Boards** – State and regional government boards that strive to protect water quality and beneficial uses for the state of California.  
Public Affairs Office **Phone: (916) 341-5254**  
1001 I Street  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812  
Fax: (916) 341-5252  
E-mail: [info@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:info@waterboards.ca.gov)  
Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/education>

**American Rivers** – A National nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to protecting and restoring healthy natural rivers and the variety of life they sustain for people, fish and wildlife.  
National Office: **Phone: (202) 347-7550**  
1101 14th Street NW, Suite 1400  
Washington, DC 20005  
Fax: (202) 347-9240  
E-mail: [amrivers@amrivers.org](mailto:amrivers@amrivers.org)  
Web site: <http://www.americanrivers.org>  
California Office: **Phone: (415) 482-8150**  
6 School Street, Suite 200  
Fairfax, CA 94930-1650  
Fax: (415) 482-8151  
E-mail: [msamet@amrivers.org](mailto:msamet@amrivers.org)

**California Conservation Corps** – Engages young men and women in meaningful work, public service and educational activities that assist them in becoming more responsible citizens, while protecting and enhancing California's environment, human resources and communities.  
1719 24th Street **Phone: (916) 341-3100**  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
Fax: (916) 323-4989  
Recruitment Hotline: 1-800-952-5627  
Web site: <http://www.ccc.ca.gov>

**California League of Conservation Voters** – Protects the environmental quality of the state by increasing public awareness of the environmental performance of all elected officials, working to elect environmentally responsible candidates, and holding them accountable to the environmental agenda once elected.  
1212 Broadway, Suite 630 **Phone: (510) 271-0900**  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Fax: (510) 271-0901  
Web site: <http://www.ecovote.org/>

**California Materials Exchange** – Conserves energy, resources and landfill space, by helping businesses find markets for non-hazardous materials they have traditionally discarded.  
E-mail: [calmax@ciwmb.ca.gov](mailto:calmax@ciwmb.ca.gov) **Phone: (877) 520-9703**  
Web site: <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/calmax>

**California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC) Network** – Resource for environmental education programs and also hosts several environmental events.  
CREEC Network Administration **Phone: (916) 322-9503**  
1430 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Web site: <http://www.creec.org>

**California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA)** – Assists water quality programs in California  
P.O. Box 2105  
Menlo Park, CA 94026-2105  
Phone: (650) 366-1042  
Fax: (650) 365 – 8678  
Web site: <http://casqa.org/index.html>  
CASQA and The California Water Boards created the California Storm Water Resource Directory – a web-based inventory of storm water public education and outreach materials from municipalities throughout California. Log on to the Web site at <http://casqa.org/resourcelibrary/> for more information

**Clean Water Team** – Citizen monitoring program of the California State Water Resources Control Board.  
Phone: (213) 576-6788  
State Water Resources Control Board  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812  
E-mail Address: [eburres@rb4.swrcb.ca.gov](mailto:eburres@rb4.swrcb.ca.gov)  
Web site: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/mission.html>

**Earth 911** – Provides information about conserving resources and the environment.  
7301 East Helm, Building D **Phone: (480) 889-2650**  
Scottsdale, AZ 85260  
Fax: (480) 889-2660  
Web site: <http://www.earth911.org>

**Green Seal** – Promotes products and services that cause less pollution and provides valuable environmental resources.  
1001 Connecticut Avenue,  
NW, Suite 827 **Phone: (202) 872-6400**  
Washington, DC 20036-5525  
Fax: (202) 872-4324  
E-mail: [greenaseal@greenaseal.org](mailto:greenaseal@greenaseal.org)  
Web site: <http://www.greenaseal.org>

**The National Environmental Directory** – A resources directory with more than 13,000 organizations in the United States concerned with environmental issues and education.  
Harbinger Communications  
112 Glenview Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95062  
E-mail: [info@environmentaldirectory.net](mailto:info@environmentaldirectory.net)  
Web site: <http://www.environmentaldirectory.net>



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**National Resources Defense Council** – A national, nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment.

National Headquarters **Phone: (212) 727-2700**  
40 West 20th Street  
New York, NY 10011  
Fax: (212) 727-1773  
Web site: <http://www.nrdc.org>

Southern California Regional Office  
1314 Second Street **Phone: (310) 434-2300**  
Santa Monica, CA 90401  
Fax: (310) 434-2399  
Northern California Regional Office  
111 Sutter Street, 20th floor **Phone: (415) 875-6100**  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
Fax: (415) 875-6161

**Ocean Conservancy** – Provides information on beach clean ups through various channels, including the newsletter, Coastal Connection.  
1725 DeSales Street, NW #600 **Phone: (202) 429-5609**  
Washington, DC 20036  
Fax: (202) 872-0619  
Web site: <http://www.cmc-ocean.org>

**Recycled Products Purchasing Cooperative (RPPC)**  
Seeks to conserve natural resources by providing recycled copy paper and products at competitive prices.  
**Phone: (800) 694-8355**  
E-mail: [information@recycledproducts.org](mailto:information@recycledproducts.org)  
Web site: <http://www.recycledproducts.org>

**Sierra Club** – A national grassroots environmental organization with chapters throughout the country, that serve as resources for local environmental programs.  
National Headquarters **Phone: (415) 977-5500**  
85 Second Street, 2nd floor  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
Fax: (415) 977-5799  
Web site: <http://sierraclub.org/>

**Surfrider Foundation** – Nonprofit organization working to preserve our oceans, waves and beaches.  
National Headquarters **Phone: (949) 492-8170**  
P.O. Box 6010  
San Clemente, CA 92674-6010  
Fax: (949) 492-8142  
E-mail: [info@surfrider.org](mailto:info@surfrider.org)  
Web site: <http://www.surfrider.org>

**Trust for Public Land** – Helps conserve land for recreation and spiritual nourishment and to improve the health and quality of life of American communities.  
Western Regional Office **Phone: (415) 495-5660**  
116 New Montgomery Street, 3rd Floor  
San Francisco, CA  
Fax: (415) 495-0541  
Web site: <http://www.tpl.org>

**United States Environmental Protection Agency Volunteer Monitoring Program** – Volunteer water monitoring program overseen by the US EPA and conducted in conjunction with state, interstate, local or federal agencies; with environmental organizations; or with schools and universities.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency **Phone: (202) 566-1191**  
Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20460  
Fax: (202) 566-1333  
Web site: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/vol.html>

## REGULATORY/GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**California Water Boards** – State and regional government boards that strive to protect water quality and beneficial uses for the state of California.  
Erase the Waste Public Education Campaign  
Public Affairs Office  
1001 I Street **Phone: (916) 341-5254**  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812  
Fax: (916) 341-5252  
E-mail: [info@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:info@waterboards.ca.gov)  
Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/education>

**California Department of Conservation** – The Department provides services and information that promote environmental health, economic vitality, informed land-use decisions and sound management of our state's natural resources.  
801 K Street, MS 24-01 **Phone: (916) 322-1080**  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: (916) 445-0732  
Web site: <http://www.consrv.ca.gov/index/>

**California Department of Transportation** – The Department oversees the Don't Trash California Program, which is a statewide effort to reduce the amount of pollutants, including litter that enters the highways' storm drains.  
Caltrans Division of Environmental Analysis  
P.O. Box 942874, MS-27 **Phone: (916) 653-7136**  
Sacramento, CA 94274-0001  
E-mail: [betty\\_sanchez@dot.ca.gov](mailto:betty_sanchez@dot.ca.gov)  
Fax: (916) 653-6366  
Web site: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/>

**California Department of Water Resources** – Manages the water resources of California.  
1416 Ninth Street **Phone: (916) 653-5791**  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: (916) 653-4684  
Web site: <http://www.dwr.water.ca.gov>

**California Environmental Protection Agency (CAL/EPA)** – California voice for Environmental Protection Agency; seeks to restore, protect and enhance the environment.  
1001 I Street  
P.O. Box 2815  
Sacramento, CA 95812-2815  
Web site: <http://www.calepa.ca.gov>

**California Integrated Waste Management Board** – Promotes a zero waste California in partnership with local government, industry and the public.

1001 I Street **Phone: (916) 341-6000**  
P.O. Box 4025  
Sacramento, CA 95812-4025  
Web site: <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov>

**California Regional Water Quality Control Boards** – Protects ground and surface water quality in specific regions throughout California.

**Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board**  
Watershed Management Initiative Coordinator  
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101 **Phone: (805) 549-3147**  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Fax: (805) 543-0397  
Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast>

**Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board**  
Watershed Management Initiative Coordinator  
11020 Sun Center Drive #200 **Phone: (916) 464-3291**  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6114  
Fax: (916) 464-4645  
Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley>

**Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Control Board**  
Watershed Management Initiative Coordinator  
73-720 Fred Waring Drive, **Phone: (760) 346-7491**  
Suite 100  
Palm Desert, CA 92260  
Fax: (760) 341-6820  
Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/coloradoriver>

**Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board**  
Watershed Management Initiative Coordinator  
2501 Lake Tahoe Boulevard **Phone: (530) 542-5400**  
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150  
Fax: (530) 544-2271  
Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley>

**Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board**  
Watershed Management Initiative Coordinator  
320 West 4th Street **Phone: (213) 576-6600**  
Suite 200  
Los Angeles, CA 90013  
Fax: (213) 576-6640  
Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/losangeles>

**North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board**  
Watershed Management Initiative Coordinator  
5550 Skyline Boulevard, **Phone: (707) 576-2220**  
Suite A  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
Fax: (707) 523-0135  
Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast>

**San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board**  
Watershed Management Initiative Coordinator  
9174 Sky Park Court, Suite 100 **Phone: (858) 467-2952**  
San Diego, CA 92123-4340  
Fax: (858) 571-6972  
Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sandiego>

**San Francisco Bay Regional  
Water Quality Control Board**

Watershed Management Initiative Coordinator  
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400 **Phone: (510) 622-2300**  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Fax: (510) 622-2460  
Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay>

**Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board**

Watershed Management Initiative Coordinator  
3737 Main Street, Suite 500 **Phone: (951) 782-4130**  
Riverside, CA 92501  
Fax: (951) 781-6288  
Web site: <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/santaana>

**United States Environmental Protection Agency**

Office of Water Resources – National entity that protects  
human health and safeguards the natural environment:  
air, water and land.  
Ariel Rios Building **Phone: (202) 272-0167**  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460  
Web site: <http://www.epa.gov/ow/index.html>

## EVENT RESOURCES

### Annual Pollution Prevention Events (Partial List)

#### MARCH

##### Great American Clean Up

The Great American Clean Up is the nation's largest organized litter prevention, beautification and community improvement event.

Keep America Beautiful  
1010 Washington Boulevard  
Stamford, CT 06901  
Fax: (203) 325-9199  
E-mail: [info@kab.org](mailto:info@kab.org)  
Web site: <http://www.kab.org>

**Phone: (203) 323-8987**

#### APRIL

##### Earth Day

Earth Day is a celebration where hundreds of governments, non-governmental organizations, teachers, families and communities work to raise awareness of the Earth's natural resources and to protect the future of our planet.

Earth Day Network  
1616 P Street NW, Suite 340  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Fax: (202) 518-8794  
Web site: <http://www.earthday.net>

**Phone: (202) 518-0044**

#### MAY

##### Ocean Day

Ocean Day is an annual celebration and call to action for the protection of the world's oceans and includes worldwide ocean clean-up activities.

The Malibu Foundation for  
Environmental Education  
1471 South Bedford Street #3  
Los Angeles, CA 90035  
Fax: (310) 652-5169  
Web site: <http://www.oceanday.net>

**Phone: (310) 652-4324**

#### JUNE

##### World Environment Day

World Environment Day promotes an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocates partnerships that will ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safer and more prosperous future.

50 U.N. Plaza, Suite 102  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Fax: (415) 355-0033  
E-mail: [info@wed2004.org](mailto:info@wed2004.org)  
Web site: <http://www.unep.org/wed/2006/english/>

**Phone: (415) 614-9533**

#### SEPTEMBER

##### California Coastal Clean Up Day

California Coastal Cleanup Day is the premier volunteer event focused on the marine environment in the country. On this day, more than 40,000 volunteers turn out to more than 700 cleanup sites across California.

California Coastal Commission  
Public Education Department  
45 Fremont St.  
San Francisco, CA 94105-2219  
E-mail: [coast4u@coastal.ca.gov](mailto:coast4u@coastal.ca.gov)  
Web site: <http://www.coastal.ca.gov/publiced/ccd/ccd.html>

**Phone: (800) COAST-4U**

##### Pollution Prevention Week

A nationally recognized program which strives to make businesses, government agencies and citizens more aware of opportunities to prevent pollution and provide the resources and information to successfully implement it.

Department of Toxic  
Substances Control  
Office of Pollution Prevention  
& Technology Development  
P.O. Box 806  
Sacramento, CA 95812-0806  
Fax: (916) 327-4494  
Web site:  
<http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/pollutionprevention/index.html>

**Phone: (916) 322-3670**

#### NOVEMBER

##### America Recycles Day

America Recycles Day is a national all-volunteer awareness event to promote the social, environmental and economic benefits of recycling and buying recycled products.

1325 G Street, NW, Suite 1025  
Washington, DC 20005  
E-mail: [stevek@nrc-recycle.org](mailto:stevek@nrc-recycle.org)  
Web site: <http://www.americarecyclesday.org/home.html>

**Phone: (202) 347-0450**



The background of the entire page is composed of stylized, overlapping blue waves of various shades, creating a sense of movement and depth. The waves are more prominent in the top and bottom sections, while the middle section is a solid green.

Erase the  
**Waste**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE  
WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD