

Your Watershed

Stormwater Awareness

by the Russian River Watershed Association

Did you know that just by washing your car in your driveway, you could be contributing to the pollution in your local creeks? Stormwater pollution begins with seemingly harmless activities such as washing your car, taking your dog for a walk, or fertilizing your lawn. Pollutants such as soap, solvents, anti-freeze, paint, oils, chlorine for pools and spas, animal waste, lawn fertilizer, and pesticides are transported by runoff generated from rainwater, excessive irrigation, and car washing. These pollutants which are picked up in yards, driveways, and street gutters are transported through storm drains where they are discharged **without treatment** to creeks and rivers, unlike waste from homes which is collected and treated.

You can help prevent stormwater pollution by having your car washed at a local carwash (where water is collected and reused), maintaining your vehicles regularly, picking up after your pet, integrated pest management minimizing your use of lawn care products, and using irrigation devices that minimize water waste. Increasing stormwater awareness and preserving the health of our local watershed are also the goals of the Russian River Watershed Association.

The Russian River Watershed Association is an association of eleven cities, counties and special districts in the Russian River watershed that have come together to coordinate regional programs for watershed enhancement. RRWA's Stormwater Awareness Program seeks to educate our communities about stormwater pollution prevention through activities such as regional stormdrain labeling, an annual student video contest, and this environmental column.

Russian River Watershed Association's student video contest provides an opportunity for local high school students to make a short educational video aimed at increasing awareness of issues related to the health of our watershed. This year's topic is stormwater pollution prevention. The winning videos were shown and prizes awarded at the May 25, 2006 RRWA Board of Director's Meeting. These videos were also distributed to local TV stations and agencies for use.

The Russian River Watershed Association also serves as a regional voice to promote the stormwater program activities of our member agencies such as:

- Sonoma County: "Down the Drain" program at the Environmental Discovery Center at Spring Lake, educational booths at county fairs, and website: www.sonoma-county.org/stormwater.
- Sonoma County Water Agency: Environmental Discovery Center, trash cleanup in local channels, pet waste signage, and elementary school water education programs.
- City of Santa Rosa: Environmental Discovery Center; Creek Stewardship Program, booths at county fairs and events and farmers markets, and Master Gardner Program displays.

- City of Healdsburg: Stormwater outreach at the Future Farmers of America Fair and Foss Creek Cleanup.
- Mendocino County Water Agency: Watershed education and stormwater awareness activities in area schools, and the Water Festival in Fort Bragg.
- Remaining RRWA agencies: Outreach material available at reception areas and various creek stewardship activities.

Stormwater Related Upcoming Events:

- **May:** Rose Parade at Julliard Park in Santa Rosa – May 20; Arroyo Sierra Creek Restoration and Cleanup from 9-noon at the Strawberry School in Santa Rosa, 2311 Horseshoe Drive – May 20.
- **June:** Water Festival in Fort Bragg – June 2; North Bay Pride Music Festival at Julliard Park in Santa Rose – June 4.
- **July:** Rosie the Trolley Creek Tour – July 12; “African Queen” Whitewater Rodeo – July 23, California Plants versus Exotic Species – July 29 in Santa Rosa.
- **Ongoing:** “Down the Drain” program at Spring Lake Discovery Center in Santa Rosa 12-5pm Wednesday – Sunday, January through June 11; Farmers Market in downtown Santa Rosa on 4th Street – May 24, June 14, July 12.

The public is invited to join us at RRWA’s Board of Directors meetings held at the Windsor Town Hall. For more information regarding the Russian River Watershed Association, as well as the dates and locations of future meetings, please visit the website at www.rrwatershed.org, call us at (707) 833-2553.

RRWA is: the City of Cloverdale, City of Cotati, City of Healdsburg, City of Rohnert Park, City of Santa Rosa, City of Ukiah, County of Sonoma, Mendocino County Water Agency, Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission, Sonoma County Water Agency, and Town of Windsor.