



City of Santa Barbara
Parks and Recreation Department

Memorandum

DATE: June 15, 2022

TO: Creeks Restoration/Water Quality Improvement Program
Citizen Advisory Committee

FROM: Liz Smith, Creeks Outreach Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Education and Outreach Program Update**

COMMITTEE DIRECTION – FOR ACTION

That the Committee receive an update on the Creeks Division's education and outreach program; adopt proposed updated Public Education Plan Goals; and approve proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Goals and Priorities.

BACKGROUND

The overall objectives of the Creeks Division education and outreach programs are to increase awareness of the causes of and actions to help prevent water pollution, foster community stewardship of our local creeks, watershed, and ocean, and communicate the efforts of the Creeks Division to the residents of Santa Barbara.

Outreach efforts are guided by the Creeks Division's Public Education Plan, as well as the City's Storm Water Management Program (SWMP), which outlines measurable goals that must be met each year including youth education, event participation, and media campaigns.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of outreach efforts, the Creeks Division conducts Public Awareness Surveys (2002, 2008, 2013, and 2018) to gauge the community's knowledge of water quality issues, recall of Creeks Division messaging, and willingness to change behaviors in order to protect local creek and ocean water quality. The most recent survey was completed in 2018, with results presented to the Creeks Advisory Committee in April 2019. The next survey will be conducted in 2023.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH UPDATE

Youth Watershed Education

The Creeks Division contracts with Explore Ecology to provide free youth watershed education programs to students in the City of Santa Barbara. Participants learn about

watersheds, creeks, marine debris, sources of water pollution, and what they can do to help improve local water quality. As we approach the end of Fiscal Year 2022, nearly 4,000 students have participated in Explore Ecology programs, surpassing our annual goal of 3,000 students. Creeks Division staff are also available to provide presentations and project tours to youth in our community upon request.

Community Events

Community events are an important component of the Creeks Division's outreach efforts. Various informational brochures, flyers, activity books, and water quality enforcement magnets are distributed at each event, and new posters and display materials are produced for particular programs and projects as needed.

Each year the Creeks Division tables at the Community Environmental Council's Earth Day Festival at Alameda Park. Following a cancelled event in 2020 and a virtual event in 2021, the 2022 Earth Day Festival took place in person at the Arlington Theater. Creeks Division staff attended and provided outreach materials along with several other City Departments and Divisions.

Each September the Creeks Division collaborates with County of Santa Barbara, City of Goleta, City of Carpinteria, UCSB, and Explore Ecology to organize Creek Week, a full week of events celebrating our local creeks and watersheds. This year's Creek Week will take place Saturday, September 17 through Saturday, September 24. Interested community members and organizations who would like to participate can visit SBCreekWeek.com or follow us at Facebook.com/SBCreekWeek to learn more.

Volunteer Events

The Creeks Division works with various local schools and organizations to plan volunteer creek and beach clean-ups, native planting days, storm drain marking events, and field trips. While the number of volunteer events has dropped during the pandemic, staff have recently collaborated with LinkedIn, Urban Creeks Council, Cate School, Laguna Blanca School, Kiwanis, and RRM Design on beach and creek clean-ups.

The Creeks Division administers the California Coastal Commission's Adopt-a-Beach Program in the City of Santa Barbara. Current Adopt-a-Beach groups include Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council, Starbucks Coffee (Cliff Drive), the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Sea Center, and Umbra.

Television, Online Video, and Radio

In spring 2021, the Creeks Division worked with City TV to produce a series of TikTok inspired public service announcements called "Creeks to the Beach," which include the tagline "We're All the Solution to Water Pollution" and feature original music by local musician Zach Gill. Over a hundred community members (and six dogs) volunteered their time to participate in filming. The ads have been running in English and Spanish on local Spectrum (Cox) Media television stations, KEYT, Univision, and online. The "Creeks to the Beach" campaign is available online at YouTube.com/SBCreeksDivision. Over the past year, the Creeks Division has expanded over-the-top (OTT) advertising

efforts to reach individuals through streaming websites and apps such as Hulu, Amazon Video, SlingTV, and others.

The Creeks Division also works with Rincon Broadcasting to produce and air radio PSAs on local English and Spanish-language radio stations each year. We are currently broadcasting radio ads complementing the “Creeks to the Beach” television campaign.

The Creeks Division works with City TV staff to produce news style segments for the television magazine program “Inside Santa Barbara” several times a year. Recent episodes have highlighted Phase 2 of the Arroyo Burro Open Space Restoration (December 2021) and Microplastics research (March 2022). City TV is currently working on a new segment focusing on the Arroyo Burro Estuary and Mesa Creek Restoration Project 15 years after completion. All Inside Santa Barbara programs are available online at [YouTube.com/CityTV18](https://www.youtube.com/CityTV18).

MTD Bus Advertising

The Creeks Division runs advertisements on the interiors and exteriors of Metropolitan Transit District buses each year, in a partnership with the County of Santa Barbara Project Clean Water and the City of Goleta. Exterior ads run during the summer months on 12 buses, and interior ads run on the full fleet of buses year round. This summer’s exterior ads focus on storm drain awareness, with “Only Rain Down the Drain” messaging. Current bilingual interior ads coincide with the “Creeks to the Beach” television campaign, and focus on general storm drain awareness as well as a variety of pollutants of concern.

Print Advertising

The Creeks Division runs print advertisements in the *Santa Barbara Independent* and *Food & Home Magazine* promoting Certified Clean Water Businesses. The full Creek Week schedule and associated ads are run in the *Independent*, *Voice Magazine*, and *Coastal View News* each year. Public meeting notices and other event promotions are printed in various local publications as needed. The Creeks Division also frequently includes advertisements and brief articles in the City’s water bill insert *the Brief*, a newsletter mailed to over 25,000 City water customers every other month.

Community-Based Social Marketing

The City’s Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) requires that the City undertake Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) projects. While traditional media aims to provide information and increase awareness to inspire behavior change, CBSM is focused on measurable behavior change. The Creeks Division has collaborated with the County and the Cities of Carpinteria, Goleta, Lompoc, Buellton, Solvang, Santa Maria, and Guadalupe to conduct a CBSM campaign targeting lawn and garden chemicals called “Our Water Our World.” Outreach materials and education have been provided to local hardware stores and nurseries to encourage shoppers to choose organic and less harmful gardening products. Staff from each jurisdiction visits and replenishes store displays regularly. For more information on the program, please visit [OurWaterOurWorld.org](https://www.ourwaterourworld.org).

Online and Social Media

The Creeks Division's website, SBCreeks.com (or SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Creeks) provides information on various projects and programs, Creeks Advisory Committee meeting notices and videos, a full list of Certified Clean Creeks Businesses, and printed outreach materials in digital format, often available in both English and Spanish. The website received over 11,000 visits so far this Fiscal Year, with the Storm Water Management Program (SMWP) page receiving the most traffic. The City is currently working with a contractor to design and develop a new website, with the launch scheduled for June 28.

The Creeks Division sends out an email newsletter to over 930 subscribers, which includes project and program updates, newly Certified Clean Creeks Business, and information on upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. Interested community members can sign up for the newsletter at SBCreeks.com. Updates and news items are also included in the City Administrator's weekly City News In Brief email newsletter, which is sent to more than 1,200 community members, local news outlets, and all City employees.

At the time of this report, the Creeks Division's Facebook page (Facebook.com/SBCreeks) has 985 followers, and the Creek Week page (Facebook.com/SBCreekWeek) has 608 followers. The Creeks Division's social media presence also includes an Instagram account (Instagram.com/SBCreeks) with 1,139 followers, a Twitter account (Twitter.com/SBCreeks) with 546 followers, and a recently established TikTok account (TikTok.com/SBCreeks). Staff works with City TV upload video programs and PSAs to the Creeks Division's YouTube page at YouTube.com/SBCreeksDivision. The Creeks Division also utilizes Nextdoor.com to share project and event information with the community.

Clean Water Business Program

Since 2007, the Creeks Division has certified 257 local businesses, including 175 restaurants and caterers, 34 automotive businesses, 39 mobile washers, and nine contractors, who have committed to making an everyday effort to keep our creeks and ocean clean. The program is promoted through postcard mailings, direct contact with targeted business segments, enforcement actions, and at community events.

Once certified, businesses are listed online at SBCreeks.com, promoted in the Creeks Division e-News, as well as in print ads in the *Independent* and *Food & Home Magazine*, and on social media. Once a business is inspected and certified by staff, they receive a certificate signed by the Mayor and the Creeks Division Manager, and a decal to place in their window or on their vehicle identifying them as a certified business.

Capital Project Outreach and Interpretive Signage

With creek restoration and water quality improvement projects come many community meetings, project tours, presentations, and ribbon cutting celebrations. In the early design phase, the Creeks Division provides presentations to various stakeholder groups, and holds public meetings to seek community input; project tours are often provided during and after construction. Upon completion of capital projects, the Creeks

Division often installs interpretive signage to inform the public of what was done and why.

PROPOSED UPDATED PUBLIC EDUCATION PLAN GOALS

The Creeks Advisory Committee Education and Outreach Subcommittee met on April 12, 2022 to discuss updating the program goals in the Public Education Plan. Last updated in 2010, the Public Education Plan serves as a general outline to guide education and outreach efforts.

Below are the updated program goals as proposed by staff and the Subcommittee. These proposed goals align with the City's SWMP requirements and P3 goals, and will be measurable through the Creeks Division's public awareness surveys and/or ongoing program participation. Proposed additions are in blue, and proposed removals are in red strikethrough.

1. Increase public awareness of storm water pollution causes.
 - a. Measurable gains in percentage of residents who say runoff from washing cars is a serious problem.
 - b. Measurable gains in percentage of residents who say dog waste is a serious problem.
 - c. Maintain or raise percentage of residents who say pesticides and fertilizers are a serious problem.
 - d. ~~Measurable gains in~~ Maintain or raise percentage of residents who say trash is a serious problem.
 - e. ~~Increase percentage of elementary school students who can identify two or more sources of water pollution. (Incorporated into updated Goal 4 below.)~~
 - e. Maintain or raise percentage of residents who say auto fluids are a serious problem.
2. Increase understanding of role of storm drains.
 - a. Increase percentage of residents who understand that water in storm drains is not treated before being discharged into creeks and the ocean.
 - b. ~~Increase the percentage of elementary school students who understand that water in storm drains is not treated before being discharged into creeks and the ocean. (Incorporated into updated Goal 4 below.)~~
- ~~3. Increase percentage of those who express willingness to change behavior to reduce pollution.~~
 - a. ~~Measurable gains in percentage of those aware of what they can do to prevent storm drain pollution.~~
 - b. ~~Measurable gains in percentage of those willing to make significant lifestyle changes to reduce pollution.~~
4. 3. Increase percentage of those who ~~actually make~~ report making a permanent change in behavior to reduce pollution.
 - c. Increase percentage who say they have made a significant lifestyle change in the last year to reduce pollution.
 - d. Increase total number of businesses using BMPs to reduce water pollution by 20 businesses per year.

- ~~5. 4. Reinvigorate/maintain good will toward the Creeks Program to ensure continued community support for water quality education efforts.~~ Increase community awareness of creek restoration and water quality projects and programs through youth education, community events, social media, and email newsletter.
- ~~e. Increase number of people participating in youth watershed education, creek clean-ups or stewardship events, community forums, and Creek Week events.~~ Reach 3,000 students each year through youth watershed education programs.
 - ~~f. Increase percentage of the population who express an understanding of the purpose of creek restoration projects.~~ Maintain or increase number of participants in community events and volunteer programs.
 - c. Increase subscribers to Creeks Division email newsletter and social media accounts.

PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2023 GOALS AND PRIORITIES

At the April 2022 Education and Outreach Subcommittee meeting, staff and Subcommittee members discussed the following proposed goals and priorities for upcoming Fiscal Year 2023.

Messaging

Staff will continue to focus education and outreach efforts related to the following topics:

- General Storm Drain Awareness
- Dog Waste
- Pesticides/Fertilizers
- Litter
- Car Washing
- Auto Fluids
- Yard Waste
- Additional Pollutants of Concern (including but not limited to confetti, neonicotinoid pesticides, and microplastics as needed)
- Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Projects

Tactics

Staff will initiate or improve upon the following education and outreach tactics to help meet the updated program goals:

- Online Radio (Spotify, Pandora, etc.)
- Spanish Language Outreach (print, online)
- Social Media Engagement (improve posting consistency, utilize social media advertising)

Upcoming Projects

- Spring/Summer 2023 – Produce new television PSAs
- Summer/Fall 2023 – Public Awareness Survey

cc: Cameron Benson, Creeks Division Manager
Jill E. Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director