

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **Purpose of the Public Education Plan**

Under the 1996 NPDES Los Angeles County Municipal Storm Water Permit, the County was required to develop a comprehensive educational storm water and urban runoff outreach program to reach as many County of Los Angeles residents as possible. The County will continue with a public education and outreach program based on the results of research conducted during the final year of the campaign and in compliance with the 2001 NPDES permit. The County will choose an appropriate combination of educational outreach tools and activities to measurably increase the knowledge of the target audiences about the impacts of storm water pollution and potential solutions to reduce the problems caused; to measurably change the behavior of target audiences in implementing appropriate solutions; and to involve and engage socio-economic groups and ethnic communities in the County to participate in mitigating the impacts of storm water pollution.

## **What Can the County and the Co-permittees Accomplish Through the Plan?**

In developing and implementing the second Public Education Plan, the County of Los Angeles and its Co-permittees will meet the requirements outlined in the Permit using methods that are cost-effective and that attempt to change behavior. Through a unified and coordinated effort, the plan can:

- ◆ change the mind-set of a large, diverse population while educating target audiences about solutions to storm water pollution;
- ◆ create synergy by using an overarching campaign approach, “look” and tone, and by unifying multiple pollution prevention efforts;
- ◆ impact more than one audience at a time with a single campaign;
- ◆ build bridges and forge partnerships that integrate city and jurisdictional programs; and,
- ◆ document whether the education outreach effort resulted in behavior change that reduced pollution.

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## Addressing the Greatest Challenges

Research will continue to play an integral role in the development of the Public Education Plan. Through focus groups, quantitative surveys, school program assessment, behavioral change assessment based on meeting numerical targets for behavior change, pilot programs to assess pollutant-specific and community-specific outreach efforts, as well as secondary research, the challenges listed below will be addressed.

- ◆ Allocating limited budget dollars toward the **greatest polluters most likely to change behaviors**
- ◆ Discovering exactly what motivates or influences behavior change in each target audience
- ◆ Addressing the ethnic, cultural, geographical and socio-economic diversity of the County
- ◆ Determining which public education efforts have helped to reduce storm water/urban runoff pollution
- ◆ Finding the most effective, and cost-effective means of educating the public.

## The Public Education Plan -- In A Nutshell

- ◆ Founded on research
- ◆ Meets the requirements of the NPDES Permit
- ◆ Broad-based with an overarching theme
- ◆ Flexible, adaptable, cost-efficient
- ◆ Provides simple, everyday actions that will make a difference
- ◆ Integrated and coordinated
- ◆ Results-oriented

## Overarching Approach

In order to achieve maximum effectiveness, and build on the recognition already gained under the first Plan, the communications program developed for this Public Education Plan will continue to use the overarching Project Pollution Prevention approach developed in 1996. The overarching approach provides a campaign identity, a personalized feel and user-friendly

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information about how to solve the storm water pollution problem. The approach is defined for the Education Plan as a whole and remains consistent throughout the life of the Plan; however, the components within the phases that roll-out over the next four years will be fluid to reflect the evolving message for each targeted audience.

Research supports the value of a “problem/solution”-oriented approach with strong, impactful visuals and an identifying “signature.” The common elements of the overarching approach include: (1) an identified problem caused by storm water pollution; (2) an identified solution(s) to the particular problem; (3) the campaign theme tagline; (4) 1-888-CLEAN-LA hotline number and [www.888CleanLA.com](http://www.888CleanLA.com) website; and (5) **Project Pollution Prevention** identifying signature.

## **Advisory Committee**

The Permit requires the County to coordinate an Advisory Committee (Committee) to provide input and assistance in meeting the goals and objectives of the Public Education Campaign (Campaign). The Committee is comprised of representatives of the environmental community, Permittee cities, Regional Board staff, and experts in the fields of public education and marketing. The County will ensure that the Committee meets at least once a year.

The Advisory Committee provided comments and advice during the process of preparing a Request for Proposals for a storm water public education contractor, and will be consulted during the process of developing the Campaign. Committee members may participate as part of a working group that evaluates contractor proposals and other tasks as appropriate.

## **General Public/Residents**

Past research shows 63% of the County’s population can be reached through an integrated, multi-faceted communications campaign which focuses on a desire to “do the right thing” and provides “how to” information about alternative, anti-polluting behaviors. This population group also will be impacted by credible messages that imply that a change in their behavior will help protect children, and preserve the environment for the future. An additional 9% -- a harder-to-reach, but

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high polluting population -- needs a more highly-focused campaign and is not likely to be motivated by doing the right thing, or preserving the environment. However, they will listen to messages that involve protecting children and the beach or other watersport areas.

Mass media has proven to be a key source of pollution prevention information for the general public. Other communications tools -- media relations, public service announcements (PSAs), instructional materials, corporate and entertainment industry tie-ins, community-based education efforts and events, and the 1(888)CLEAN LA hotline and [www.888CleanLA.com](http://www.888CleanLA.com) web site -- are planned to work in-concert with the advertising to achieve the necessary behavior change.

## **Corporate Outreach**

A Corporate Outreach program to educate and inform managers about storm water regulations will be developed and implemented. The target audiences for this outreach are all gas station and restaurant chain executives in the unincorporated areas of the County. The County may include other target audiences during the Permit. We will make our materials available to Co-permittees upon request.

## **Business Assistance Program**

This is an optional program to provide technical assistance to small businesses regarding BMP implementation to reduce the discharge of pollutants. The target audience for this program is businesses that employ less than 100 employees and lack access to the expertise necessary to understand and comply with storm water regulations. The outreach methods may include:

- ◆ On-site technical assistance or consultation by telephone to identify and implement BMPs; and
- ◆ Distribution and discussion of applicable BMP and educational materials.

## **School Education**

Given the existence of current and successful school education programs in the County of Los Angeles, an alliance with one or more of these programs is the most effective and cost-efficient method of educating a minimum of 50% of all school children (K-12) every two years on storm water issues. For the 945,000 K-6

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children, the County's school program and youth events will provide the vehicle to teach children about storm water, source reduction and proper disposal of household hazardous waste. For the County's more than 800,000 middle- and high-school children, the County-sponsored Secondary Student Environmental Education Program presented by TreePeople will create a higher understanding of environmental issues and motivate teenagers to take action.

The assessment methods and tools used to evaluate these programs were accepted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board as meeting Permit requirements. Any Co-permittees wishing to take advantage of these programs is encouraged to contact us. Programs can also be adapted to meet individual permittee needs and address watershed-specific pollutants upon request.

## **Measure of Effectiveness**

### General Public

To assess the overall effectiveness of the Public Education Program, the following types of research will be conducted:

- ◆ A comprehensive Countywide survey in the second or third year of the Permit which identifies changes in awareness and waste disposal behavior.
- ◆ Telephone surveys, questionnaires completed by the general public, focus groups, calls to the (888)CLEAN LA hotline web site hits to the [www.888CleanLA.com](http://www.888CleanLA.com) web site, amount of household hazardous waste and used motor oil collected through County sponsored events.
- ◆ Develop pilot programs in small areas to reduce the number of variables influencing results as much as possible.
- ◆ Determine statistically sound and relevant performance measures and benchmarks for evaluating behavioral change.
- ◆ Add numerical targets for behavior change to our existing survey methods based upon the results of the 1997 baseline research regarding polluting behaviors.

### School Education Programs

To determine the effectiveness of our school programs, the following assessment methods will be implemented:

- ◆ Pre- and post-exposure evaluations of student knowledge, comprehension and retention.
- ◆ Pre-use evaluation of curriculum and materials utilized for the County's elementary and secondary school programs.
- ◆ Focus groups to evaluate teachers' opinions about educational materials and students' knowledge of storm water pollution problems and solutions before and after educational efforts are conducted.
- ◆ Evaluation forms completed by elementary school teachers, principals, and administrators.

## **Format of the Public Education Plan**

The Public Education Plan contains two sections:

1. Overview
2. Implementation by Target Audience

Within Section 2, Implementation by Target Audience, the audience subsections detail the situation analysis for each respective audience, goals and overall communications approach, and an idea of the activities to be implemented.