

# **Five-Year Public Education Plan Overview**

## **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

## **◆ SITUATION ANALYSIS ◆**

### **Urban Runoff and Its Impact on the County's Resources**

On a daily basis, millions of gallons of untreated water flush into regional rivers and the Pacific Ocean. On rainy days, it can jump to six billion gallons. These polluted flows cause public health and safety concerns at the beaches, and leave behind hundreds of tons of solid waste to be cleaned up, costing millions of dollars annually.

Even after a generation of fighting water pollution, studies continue to show the danger of illness to people swimming in waters near urban storm drain outfalls. The urban runoff that drains into the County's storm channels first picks up litter and contaminates from neighborhood streets and sidewalks. Fertilizers, pesticides, automobile soot and oil drippings, pet waste, and deteriorating leaves and plant debris not only make our communities unattractive, but also are swept untreated down the storm drains into our waterways.

In total, the impacts of storm water/urban runoff pollution encompass:

- ◆ losses to the County's \$2 billion a year tourism economy
- ◆ health risks associated with swimming in areas near storm drain outfalls
- ◆ loss of recreational resources
- ◆ dramatic cleanup costs
- ◆ impaired function and vitality of our natural resources
- ◆ losses to Southern California's commercial and sportfishing industry
- ◆ contamination of marine life

## **Opportunities for the Public Education Plan**

In developing and implementing this Public Education Plan, the County of Los Angeles has an important opportunity to meet the basic requirements outlined in the NPDES Permit using methods that are cost-effective and that effectively change behavior. Through a unified and coordinated effort, the plan can:

- ◆ change the mind-set of a large, diverse population and educate target audiences about solutions to storm water pollution;
- ◆ create a broad-based model with a long-term vision for pollution prevention in large geographic areas;
- ◆ create synergy by unifying multiple pollution prevention efforts (such as recycling and household hazardous waste) rather than conducting individual, splinter programs;
- ◆ build bridges and forge partnerships that integrate city and jurisdictional programs, combine educational outreach with technical understanding, and leverage resources; and,
- ◆ document whether the education outreach effort resulted in a behavior change that substantially reduced pollution.

This program will continue to be research-based. It will draw from the experiences and best programs of existing local, state and national programs, as well as create original qualitative and quantitative research to support the development of a comprehensive public education plan. A united effort is the most viable and cost-effective way to achieve success.

Additionally, the County and the Co-permittees are in general agreement about the concept of a campaign overarching approach, "look" and tone that clearly and concisely identifies the program, breaks through the information clutter and, at the same time, allows tailoring by Co-permittees for specific needs.

Additionally, and of equal importance, the overarching approach should not be exclusive to storm water pollution. Rather, multiple pollution prevention efforts -- solid waste recycling and disposal, household hazardous waste and used oil recycling --

should be coordinated within the overarching approach in their respective efforts and messages.

## **Our Greatest Challenges**

Research served as part of the Plan development process, and on-going monitoring will allow for program adjustments throughout the next five years. Overall challenges are:

- ◆ discovering exactly what motivates or influences behavior change in each target audience;
- ◆ deciding the best methods to reach the identified target audiences; Neat Neighbors - affluent, home-owning, family oriented professionals; Fix It Foul-Ups - predominantly male, avid do-it-yourselfers; and Rubbish Rebels - mainly single males in their teens and twenties from large families, car enthusiasts.
- ◆ addressing the vast ethnic, cultural, geographical and socioeconomic diversity of the County; and
- ◆ demonstrating whether the education effort has indeed helped to reduce storm water/urban runoff pollution.

## **Maximizing Public Education Budgets**

The estimated budget for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works Storm Water/Urban Runoff Public Education Program is \$7.5 million, with the Co-permittees having individual budgets for local education efforts. While \$7.5 million over five years appears to be a large sum of money, there are almost 10 million people within the County to reach with storm water pollution prevention messages. With an audience of this size, the funds available to the overall effort -- even combined with the Co-permittees' funds -- must be allocated carefully and effectively so that each dollar is directed towards changes in behaviors. Therefore, targeted audiences, and the communications programs aimed at each of these audiences, must be prioritized according to their relative impact on pollution and their willingness to try new behaviors that will reduce the greatest amount of pollutants entering the storm drain system.

### The Public Education Plan -- In A Nutshell

- ◆ Founded on research
- ◆ Broad-based with an overarching approach
- ◆ Flexible, adaptable, cost-effective
- ◆ Provides simple, everyday actions that will make a difference
- ◆ Integrated and coordinated
- ◆ Results-oriented

## ◆ OVERALL GOALS ◆

- ◆ Reduce the amount of storm water pollution in the County of Los Angeles.
- ◆ Integrate County, city and jurisdictional programs.
- ◆ Appropriately mix educational outreach with technical understanding, and leverage resources.
- ◆ Improve general understanding of storm water/urban runoff pollution prevention methods.
- ◆ Incorporate storm water activities into other County environmental education programs.

## ◆ OVERARCHING APPROACH ◆

The overarching approach was defined for the 1996 Public Education Plan and remains consistent. However, the components that roll-out over the next five years will be fluid to reflect the evolving messages for each targeted audience. The overarching approach will provide a campaign identity, a personalized feel and applicable “how to” information on solving the storm water pollution problem.

### **Benefits of the Overarching Approach -- Los Angeles County**

- ◆ Builds a distinct and distinguishing identity that is visually impactful
- ◆ Sends clear, concise and applicable message to the target audiences
- ◆ Sets a consistent tone and feel for the entire communications program
- ◆ Provides specific information in a personal manner making it more identifiable to the recipient
- ◆ Creates unity between all pollution prevention programs (e.g., recycling, household hazardous waste, water pollution)
- ◆ Tailorable to and flexible for specific programs, localities, topics and messages

### **Benefits of the Overarching Approach -- Co-permittees**

- ◆ Increases efficiencies in cost and production
- ◆ Enables Co-permittees to tie-in to the County’s program without feeling they are losing their own identity

- ◆ Raises the synergy and broadens the reach and impact of local campaigns through multiple communications contacts on a variety of levels -- community to countywide -- and through a variety of communications tools

### **Common Elements of the Overarching Approach**

- ◆ An identified problem caused by storm water pollution
- ◆ An identified solution(s) to the particular problem
- ◆ Campaign theme tagline
- ◆ An appeal for personal responsibility to do the right thing
- ◆ 1(888)CLEAN LA hotline number and web site (local information can be added for Co-permittee tailoring)
- ◆ Project Pollution Prevention identifying signature (city logo/name can be included for Co-permittee tailoring)

### **Campaign Signature**

The Plan will continue to use the “signature” developed for advertising, collateral materials, media relations and other campaign components to identify a united alliance in preventing pollution in all communities within the County of Los Angeles.

Potential adaptations/usage in advertising and collateral materials include:



County signature:	County of Los Angeles (seal optional) <b>Project Pollution Prevention</b>
Co-permittee signature: (example only)	City of Long Beach (w/logo, optional) <b>Project Pollution Prevention</b>
STOPP signature:	East Los Angeles <b>Project Pollution Prevention</b> <i>“Clean Communities for Economic Growth”</i>