The goals of the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program’s (SCVURPPP or Program) Watershed Education and Outreach element are to identify and change behaviors that adversely affect water quality; and to increase the understanding and appreciation of streams and San Francisco Bay. To accomplish these goals, Co-permittees conduct public outreach jointly through the Program, on a countywide basis, and individually within their own jurisdictions.

Each year, the Watershed Education and Outreach Ad Hoc Task Group, which consists of Program staff, Co-permittee representatives and consultants, identifies and prioritizes and selects countywide projects for implementation. For the past few years, the Program’s Watershed Education and Outreach element has included the Watershed Watch Campaign, Schools and Youth Education Outreach and the Watershed Watchers Program at the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Center in Alviso.

**Watershed Watch Campaign**

The Watershed Watch Campaign (Campaign) is the main focus of the Program’s Watershed Education and Outreach element. The Campaign is a multi-year education and outreach effort designed to increase the public’s awareness of watersheds and urban runoff issues including pollution prevention and pollutants of concern (e.g., pesticides, mercury, heavy metals and trash). The goals and objectives defined in the SCVURPPP Watershed Education and Outreach Strategy, developed in 1999 and revised in June 2004, direct campaign activities.

In June 2000, the Program launched the Campaign in cooperation with the Santa Clara Basin Watershed Management Initiative (SCBWMI). The SCBWMI is a collaborative, stakeholder driven effort between representatives from regional and local public agencies; civic, environmental, resource conservation and agricultural groups; professional and trade organizations; business and industrial sectors; and the general public. In December 2003, the Campaign was selected for an Outstanding Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) Implementation Project award by the Friends of the San Francisco Estuary.

**Campaign Goals**

The Program has three main overarching Campaign goals:

- **Goal 1:** Educate residents about the Santa Clara Basin watershed and how to protect it;
- **Goal 2:** Change behaviors that negatively impact watersheds; and
- **Goal 3:** Promote public involvement in watershed stewardship activities.

**Campaign Activities**

The Campaign conducts outreach through media advertising; partnering with businesses and community organizations; participating in community events; holding educational assemblies at schools; contributing newsletter articles; and maintaining the Watershed Watch web site and information hotline. Currently, the Campaign has developed partnerships with 32 organizations.

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**Schools and Youth Education Outreach**

Since FY 02-03, the Program has sponsored educational assemblies at Santa Clara County elementary schools. These assemblies, which are presented by the musical entertainment group ZunZun, educate children about watersheds, pollutants and pollution prevention. During FY 04-05, ZunZun conducted 50 bilingual assemblies reaching approximately 16,000 students in grades K-5 at 27 schools in seven cities. Post-assembly evaluation cards indicate that the assemblies are very popular with students and teachers.

**Watershed Watchers Program at Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Education Center (EEC)**

To support a full-time interpretive specialist position, the Program provides resources to the Watershed Watchers Program at the EEC. Watershed Watcher activities, which are conducted on-site and primarily on the weekends, focus on building watershed awareness and encourage stormwater pollution prevention behaviors among attendees (youth groups, Boy/Girl Scout Troops, families with children, etc.). During FY 04-05, EEC staff conducted 110 programs which attracted approximately 9,000 participants.

**Watershed outreach activity.**
Watershed Education and Outreach

Outreach Materials: To educate the general public about watersheds, the Program developed a Watershed Watch Kit during the first year of the Campaign. The Kit contains an educational brochure, a card pledging to protect their watershed, and a discount card. Residents who take the watershed pledge are eligible to win monthly prizes. The discount card can be used at various Watershed Watch partner locations.

Media Advertising: The media campaign uses print, radio and transit advertising. Advertisements are aimed at preventing urban runoff pollution while educating residents about storm drains and watersheds. All advertisements encourage residents to call the Watershed Watch hotline or visit the Watershed Watch website (www.watershedwatch.net) for additional information. The number of calls and website visits are used to track the effectiveness of the media campaign. During FY 04-05, the web site had an average of 342 page views per day compared to 162 page views per day in FY 02-03. The Campaign has also encouraged media companies to become Program partners. As partners, they have provided additional services at no extra cost, adding value to money spent on advertising. Value added resources include free production of ads, free spots and Public Service Announcements, distribution of materials at numerous well-attended events, live remotes and promotion of creek cleanup events, and third party sponsorships.

Watershed Watch Materials are distributed by partner organizations. Media partners help augment promotions by running free advertisements and conducting live-remote broadcasts at the business locations.

Outreach Events: The Campaign has participated at numerous outreach events in Santa Clara County. At several events, Watershed Watch booths are set up for distributing material to visitors. At other events, Watershed Watch materials are distributed through Campaign partners or Co-permittees.

Watershed Watch Web Site: The Program created a web site (www.watershedwatch.net) to provide detailed information about watersheds and watershed protection. The web site also includes information on the control of specific pollutants (e.g., pesticides and mercury), educational material for children, and coupons offering admission discounts to amusement parks and services offered by partner businesses. Web site pages are also available in Spanish. Visitors have the opportunity to download materials, request information, provide feedback and ask questions.

Evaluation of Effectiveness

The Program conducted an evaluation of the Campaign in September 2003. The evaluation consisted of a telephone survey of Santa Clara Valley residents, two focus groups and feedback from current Watershed Watch partners. The evaluation indicated the Program’s efforts have been largely effective and successful. For example:

- Awareness of watersheds has increased 19 percentage points compared to 1999 survey results.
- Awareness of the overall types of pollutants impacting storm drains has increased by 7 percentage points;
- Awareness of specific pollutants entering storm drains has significantly increased (i.e., 18 percent increase for oil and grease, 12 percent increase for pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers and 11 percent increase for garbage); and.
- Awareness that private residents are the major contributors to storm water pollution has increased.

The findings and recommendations of the 2003 evaluation were used to revise the WEO Strategy developed in 1999. The Campaign is now using specific “actions” in its advertising and other outreach to educate people about integrating pollution prevention behaviors in their daily lives.

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Watershed Watch displays at community events.