

## Russian River Watershed Association

### 2009 Storm Water and Watershed Awareness Survey

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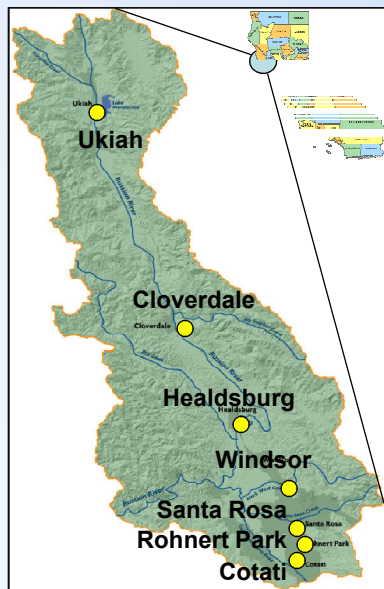
## Presentation Outline

- RRWA Overview
  - Background
  - RRWA's Role in the Watershed
  - RRWA Programs
- 2009 Storm Water and Watershed Awareness Survey



## Background

- 9 Member Agencies
- Formed in 2003
- **Mission:** RRWA is an association of local public agencies in the Russian River Watershed that have come together to coordinate regional programs for clean water, fisheries restoration and watershed enhancement.



## RRWA's Role in the Watershed



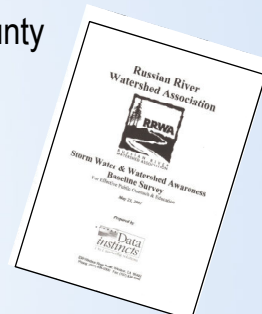
## RRWA Programs

- Stormwater Awareness/NPDES Permit Support
  - Stormwater Survey
- Stormwater Training for Contractors and Inspectors
- Residential Fats, Oils and Grease Control
- Mercury Pollution Prevention
- Safe Medicine Disposal
- Russian River Friendly Landscape Guidelines
- Grants and Funding Support
- Outreach and Education



## 2009 Storm Water and Watershed Awareness Survey

- Baseline survey conducted in 2005
- Update and comparison to 2005 baseline survey
- Provide statistically valid results
  - Unincorporated Sonoma County
  - Healdsburg
  - Windsor
  - Rohnert Park



## Research Purpose & Objectives

### Three informational components

#### 1. Resident behavior and knowledge

- Car washing
- Motor oil disposal
- Applying yard fertilizer
- Yard waste disposal
- Dog waste disposal
- Pool & spa maintenance



#### 2. Resident knowledge of watershed area

#### 3. Demographics



## Methodology

- 125+ phone surveys in four geographical areas
- TOTAL sample size 502
- Random sampling methods
- Spanish translation provided



## Behavior & Knowledge

- As in 2005, in 2009 household activities of greatest concern are:

- Washing the car
- Fertilizing the yard
- Pool/Spa Maintenance



## Behavior & Knowledge

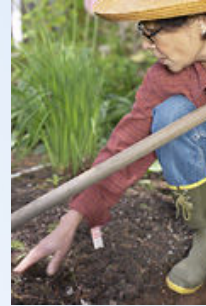
- Car washing shows improvement:
  - 38% of population wash cars on paved surface (48% in 2005)
  - 32% of home car washers know unpaved surface is better (19% in 2005)
  - Both years, about half don't know or think it does not matter





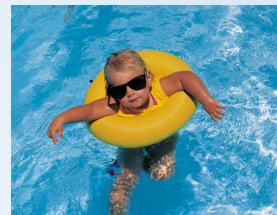
## Behavior & Knowledge

- Fertilizer runoff shows little change:
  - Both years, about 13% of population experience runoff after using fertilizer
  - About 63% of those who experience runoff know it is hazardous to the environment



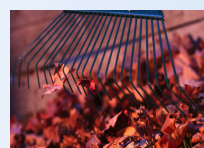
## Behavior & Knowledge

- Home pool and spa maintainers continue to pose some concern:
  - About 17% of population maintain pool/spa
    - About 21% of them use algaecide other than chlorine or bromine
    - 12% of pool/spa owners drain pools or spas directly into storm drains
    - 7% think draining to storm drain, drainage ditch or creek is best method (14% in 2005)



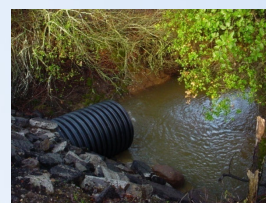
## Behavior & Knowledge

- Both years, 20% of the population changes motor oil at home:
  - Two individuals pour used oil into storm drain (one in 2005)
- Household activities of least concern:
  - Dog waste disposal
  - Yard waste disposal



## Behavior & Knowledge

- Improvement in some measures of watershed knowledge:
  - 53% knows storm drain water goes directly to river or waterway (42% in 2005)
  - 18% believes water goes to sewage treatment plant (27% in 2005)



## Behavior & Knowledge

- 52% getting enough information about protecting water quality (44% in 2005)
  - ¼ agreed to receive educational e-mail messages
- People continue to feel empowered:
  - 76% believe they can influence Russian River water quality (both years)



## Conclusions & Recommendations

- Subgroups most likely to perform the evaluated household activities:
  - Single-family dwellers
  - Homeowners





## Conclusions & Recommendations

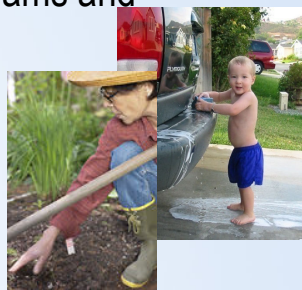
- Focus larger education programs and outreach on:

- Home car washing
- Fertilizer runoff

- Target people living in single-family dwellings

- Target pool/spa owners through:

- Pool/spa sellers and installers
- Retailers that sell pool/spa supplies



## Conclusions & Recommendations

- 44% of watershed residents get water quality information from newspapers

- Local papers should be major educational component
- Prepare press release highlighting survey findings



- Internet now among top five information sources

- Include URLs for education-dedicated Web pages on all educational materials



## Conclusions & Recommendations

- Send periodic e-mails to 26% who gave e-mail addresses this year and 22% from 2005
  - Survey highlights, accompanied by related educational message
- **Share report and continue to collaborate with Waste Management Agency**



## Conclusions & Recommendations

- Education and outreach programs:
  - Make connection between household activities and watershed health
  - Emphasize specific hazards of fertilizer-tainted and car-washing runoff
  - Offer simple alternatives to fertilizing and home car washing and/or ways to eliminate runoff
  - Continue message that storm drains lead to river
  - Target single-family dwellers; but don't ignore rest of population



## Contact Us

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*Thank you!*

