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

- individual citizens
- regulatory agencies
- local non-profits
- regional partners
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!