



**City of Santa Barbara**  
Parks and Recreation Department

**Memorandum**

**DATE:** December 15, 2021

**TO:** Creeks Restoration/Water Quality Improvement Program  
Citizen Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Liz Smith, Creeks Outreach Coordinator

**SUBJECT:** **Education and Outreach Program Update**

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COMMITTEE DIRECTION – FOR DISCUSSION

That the Committee receive an update on the Creeks Division's education and outreach program.

BACKGROUND

The overall objectives of the Creeks Division education and outreach programs are to increase awareness of the causes of and actions to help prevent water pollution, foster community stewardship of our local creeks, watershed, and ocean, and communicate the efforts of the Creeks Division to the residents of Santa Barbara.

Outreach efforts are guided by the Creeks Division's Public Education Plan, as well as the City's Storm Water Management Program (SWMP), which outlines measurable goals that must be met each year including youth education, event participation, and media campaigns.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of outreach efforts, the Creeks Division conducts Public Awareness Surveys (2002, 2008, 2013, and 2018) to gauge the community's knowledge of water quality issues, recall of Creeks Division messaging, and willingness to change behaviors in order to protect local creek and ocean water quality. The most recent survey was completed in 2018, with results presented to the Creeks Advisory Committee in April 2019. The next survey will be conducted in 2023.

YOUTH WATERSHED EDUCATION

*Creek Kids Series and Watershed Resource Center Field Trips*

The Creeks Division contracts with Explore Ecology to provide youth watershed education to students in kindergarten through twelfth grade in the City of Santa Barbara. The Creek Kids series normally consists of two in-class presentations, a field trip to a

local creek, and a visit to the Watershed Resource Center (WRC) at Arroyo Burro Beach, where students participate in a beach clean-up. During the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Explore Ecology quickly pivoted to providing online presentations and virtual field trips, and continued to provide valuable educational programming for students in our community. The students learn about watersheds, creeks, marine debris, sources of water pollution, and what they can do to help improve local water quality. In Fiscal Year 2021, nearly 2,600 students participated in Explore Ecology programs.

Creeks Division staff are also available to provide presentations and project tours to youth in our community upon request. In Fiscal Year 2020, staff joined Adams Elementary School's Ocean Guardians Program for a creek walk and presentation.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

Community events are an important component of the Creeks Division's outreach efforts. Various informational brochures, flyers, activity books, and water quality enforcement magnets are distributed at each event, and new posters and display materials are produced for particular programs and projects as needed. At each event, visitors are invited to take a "Clean Creeks Pledge" and make a personal commitment to adopt behaviors that will help protect local water quality, and to sign up for the Creeks Division's email newsletter.

### *Earth Day Festival*

Each year the Creeks Division tables at the City's booth at the Community Environmental Council's Earth Day Festival at Alameda Park. The 2020 Festival was cancelled due to the ongoing pandemic, and in 2021 the Festival took place online. The City hosted a virtual booth, and Creeks Division staff were available for a live chat session during the event. The virtual booth offered information about various City and Creeks Division projects and programs, with the Creeks Division highlighting our Enforcement Program, Certified Clean Creeks Businesses, and the 20 Year Report.

### *Creek Week*

The Creeks Division partners with County of Santa Barbara, the City of Goleta, the City of Carpinteria, UCSB, and Explore Ecology each year to organize Creek Week, a full week of events celebrating our local creeks and watersheds. While the past two Creek Week celebrations took place during the pandemic, organizers were able to provide a variety of events including virtual talks and presentations, in-person and self-guided tours, online art workshops, and more.

This year's Creek Week took place September 18 - 23, kicking off with Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 18. The Creeks Division hosted a tour of the Upper Arroyo Burro Restoration at Barger Canyon, and an online presentation about Microplastics in Santa Barbara's storm water (this presentation can be viewed online at [YouTube.com/SBCreeksDivision](https://www.youtube.com/SBCreeksDivision)). Interested community members and organizations who would like to participate are invited to visit [SBCreekWeek.com](https://www.SBCreekWeek.com) or follow us at [Facebook.com/SBCreekWeek](https://www.facebook.com/SBCreekWeek) to learn more.

### *Volunteer Events*

The Creeks Division works with various local schools and organizations to plan volunteer creek and beach clean-ups, native planting days, storm drain marking events, and field trips. While the number of volunteer events has dropped during the pandemic, staff have recently collaborated with LinkedIn, Urban Creeks Council, Nomad, The Big Speak, Herbl, and Cate School on beach and creek clean-ups. The Creeks Division also hosted a clean-up of West Beach as part of the Waterfront Department's Harbor Clean Sweep event. Individual community members have also reached out to staff, and we have provided clean-up materials so they can volunteer on their own time.

### *Adopt-a-Beach*

The Creeks Division administers the California Coastal Commission's Adopt-a-Beach Program in the City of Santa Barbara. Recent beach adoption groups include Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council, Starbucks Coffee (Cliff Drive), RightScale, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Sea Center, US Coast Guard MSD Santa Barbara, Invoca, and Phi Theta Kappa of Santa Barbara City College.

## ADVERTISING

### *Television Public Service Announcements and Programs*

In spring 2021, the Creeks Division worked with City TV to produce a new series of public service announcements called "Creeks to the Beach," which include the tagline "We're All the Solution to Water Pollution," and original music by local musician Zach Gill. The TikTok-inspired ads feature over a hundred community members (and six dogs) who volunteered their time to participate in filming. The ads have been running in English and Spanish on local Spectrum (Cox) Media television stations, KEYT, Univision, as well as online. This year we have also expanded over-the-top (OTT) advertising efforts to reach individuals watching video through streaming websites and apps such as Hulu, Amazon Video, SlingTV, and others. The "Creeks to the Beach" campaign is available for viewing online at [YouTube.com/SBCreeksDivision](https://www.youtube.com/SBCreeksDivision).

### *Inside Santa Barbara*

The Creeks Division works with City TV staff to produce segments for the television magazine program "Inside Santa Barbara" several times a year. Recent segments have highlighted Santa Barbara's lagoons and estuaries (September 2019), Watershed Wednesdays presentations (August 2020), neonicotinoid pesticides (December 2020), the Bohnett Park Storm Water Improvement Project (April 2021), and Phase II of the Arroyo Burro Open Space Restoration Project (July 2021 and October 2021). All Inside Santa Barbara programs are available online at [YouTube.com/CityTV18](https://www.youtube.com/CityTV18).

### *Radio Public Service Announcements*

The Creeks Division works with Rincon Broadcasting to produce and air radio PSAs on local English and Spanish-language radio stations each year. Currently, ads that coincide with the "Creeks to the Beach" television ads are being broadcast.

### *MTD Bus Advertising*

The Creeks Division runs advertisements on the interiors and exteriors of Metropolitan Transit District buses each year, in a partnership with the County of Santa Barbara Project Clean Water and the City of Goleta. Exterior ads run during the summer months on 12 buses, and interior ads run on the full fleet of buses year round. This year's exterior ads featured the tagline "We're All the Solution to Water Pollution," and included photos of the volunteer actors from our "Creeks to the Beach" television campaign. Bilingual interior ads will be installed this month featuring the same campaign.

### *Print Advertising*

The Creeks Division runs print advertisements in the *Independent* and *Food & Home Magazine* promoting Certified Clean Water Businesses. The full Creek Week schedule and associated ads are run in the *Independent*, *Voice Magazine*, and *Coastal View News* each year. Public meeting notices and other event promotions are printed in various local publications as needed. The Creeks Division also frequently includes advertisements and brief articles in the City's water bill insert *the Brief*, a newsletter that is mailed to over 25,000 City water customers every other month.

## COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING

The City's Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) requires that the City undertake Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) projects. While traditional media aims to provide information and increase awareness to inspire behavior change, CBSM is focused on measurable behavior change. The Creeks Division has collaborated with the County and the Cities of Carpinteria, Goleta, Lompoc, Buellton, Solvang, Santa Maria, and Guadalupe to conduct a CBSM campaign targeting lawn and garden chemicals called "Our Water Our World." Outreach materials and education have been provided to local hardware stores and nurseries to encourage shoppers to choose organic and less harmful gardening products. Staff from each jurisdiction visits and replenishes store displays regularly. For more information on the program, please visit [OurWaterOurWorld.org](http://OurWaterOurWorld.org).

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET-BASED OUTREACH

### *SBCreeks.com*

The Creeks Division's website, [SBCreeks.com](http://SBCreeks.com) (or [SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Creeks](http://SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Creeks)) received over 22,000 visits during Fiscal Year 2021, a substantial increase over previous years. Analytics of website traffic showed that the Creeks Division's update of the Storm Water Technical Guidance Manual brought in more visitors, and there was also a smaller increase in traffic when the Code Enforcement Officer position was open for applicants.

The website provides information on various projects and programs, Creeks Advisory Committee meeting notices and videos, a full list of Certified Clean Creeks Businesses, and much more. Reports and studies produced by and for the Creeks Division are posted, and a page is dedicated to science project ideas and resources for students. Most printed outreach materials are available online in digital format, often in English

and Spanish. The City is currently working with a contractor to develop a new website, anticipated to launch next summer.

#### *E-News*

The Creeks Division sends out an email newsletter to over 930 subscribers, which includes project and program updates, Certified Clean Water Business announcements, and information on upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. Interested community members can sign up for the newsletter and view past issues at [SBCreeks.com](http://SBCreeks.com). Updates and news items are also included in the City Administrator's weekly City News In Brief email newsletter, which is sent to more than 1,200 community members and all City employees.

#### *Social Media*

At the time of this report, the Creeks Division's Facebook page has 943 followers. Anyone is welcome to view the page, follow, and interact with the Creeks Division at [Facebook.com/SBCreeks](https://Facebook.com/SBCreeks). There is also a Facebook page dedicated to the annual Creek Week event with 549 followers, which can be viewed at [Facebook.com/SBCreekWeek](https://Facebook.com/SBCreekWeek). The Creeks Division's social media outreach also includes an Instagram account at [Instagram.com/SBCreeks](https://Instagram.com/SBCreeks) with 1,077 followers, and a Twitter account at [Twitter.com/SBCreeks](https://Twitter.com/SBCreeks), with 546 followers. Staff also works with City TV upload video programs and PSAs to YouTube at [YouTube.com/SBCreeksDivision](https://YouTube.com/SBCreeksDivision). The Creeks Division uses [Nextdoor.com](http://Nextdoor.com) to share project information and events with community members, and recently established a TikTok account at [TikTok.com/SBCreeks](https://TikTok.com/SBCreeks).

#### *Watershed Wednesdays*

During the early months of the pandemic, with opportunities for outreach at community events limited, staff began a series of live, online events called Watershed Wednesdays. Using Facebook Live, staff led community members on tours of restoration projects, craft projects, explorations of local creeks, and webinar style presentations, answering live questions from viewers as the events took place. Videos of Watershed Wednesdays presentations are available for viewing at [YouTube.com/SBCreeksDivision](https://YouTube.com/SBCreeksDivision).

### PROJECT AND PROGRAM OUTREACH

#### *Clean Water Business Program*

Since 2007, the Creeks Division has certified 257 local businesses, including 175 restaurants and caterers, 34 automotive businesses, 39 mobile washers, and nine contractors, who have committed to making an everyday effort to keep our creeks and ocean clean. The program is promoted through postcard mailings, direct contact with targeted business segments, enforcement actions, and at community events.

Once certified, businesses are listed online at [SBCreeks.com](http://SBCreeks.com), promoted in the Creeks Division e-News, as well as in print ads in the *Independent* and *Food & Home Magazine*, and on social media. Once a business is inspected and certified by staff, they receive a certificate signed by the Mayor and the Creeks Division Manager, and a

decal to place in their window or on their vehicle identifying them as a certified business.

*Capital Project Outreach and Interpretive Signage*

With creek restoration and water quality improvement projects come many community meetings, project tours, presentations, and ribbon cutting celebrations. In the early design phase, the Creeks Division provides presentations to various stakeholder groups, and holds public meetings to seek community input; project tours are often provided during and after construction. Upon completion of capital projects, the Creeks Division often installs interpretive signage to inform the public of what was done and why.

*20 Year Report*

To celebrate 20 years since the Creeks Division was established in 2001, a 20 Year Report was produced and presented to the community earlier this year. The Report included program achievements and highlighted creek restoration and water quality improvement projects completed over the past 20 years. The Report was provided in both English and Spanish, in PDF format as well as an online, responsive format.

cc: Cameron Benson, Creeks Division Manager  
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