

How would you like to live in a community of over 50,000 residents with no sewer system?

Over 50,000 dogs live in Santa Barbara County, and of course, do not use the toilet.

Pet waste washes into our creeks and oceans if pet owners do not dispose of it properly.

When it rains, or sometimes during irrigation, animal waste left uncovered or stored improperly near creeks and storm drains can flow, untreated, directly to the ocean.

Animal waste contains bacteria, which is detected in oceanwater sampling and can trigger beach advisories.

When the bacterial level in ocean water at the beach gets too high, the beach is posted with warning signs to protect the public.



Solutions...

On a walk

Picking up after your pet ensures that waste will not wash into catch basins that drain to creeks and eventually to the ocean. Also, picking up after your pet on the beach stops the direct flow of waste to the ocean. **Remember, in public parks it is illegal not to pick up your dog's waste.**

- Always carry a plastic bag with you when you take your dog for a walk. Although some parks and beaches provide plastic bags, don't assume you will find a public dispenser.
- Plastic grocery and vegetable bags work well. Place your hand in the bag, pick up the waste. Turn the bag inside out, and then drop it in a trash receptical.
- Commercial "scoopers" can also be purchased to make proper disposal of pet waste even easier. Some are disposable and available with biodegradable, sealable bags. Check pet stores and catalogs.
- Urge your neighborhood or community organization to sponsor a mutt mitt station. Call County Parks (568-2461) or City of Santa Barbara (564-5418) for more information.

Clean up at home

Pet owners have many different ways of cleaning up after their pets at home. Here are a few that are creek- and ocean-friendly:

- Smaller quantities of pet waste can be raked or turned into the soil of lawns or gardens to decompose slowly.
- Larger amounts should be scooped and placed in the trash. One method suggested for this is to place a plastic bag in a 5 gallon trash can with a lid. When you pick up dog droppings in your yard, put them in that trash can, then cover them with a sprinkling of powdered lime (available at building supply stores) and close the lid. Each time you clean up the yard and add droppings to the container, add more lime. When the container is full, tie the bag closed and put it in your regular trash container.
- A more innovative method, which not only disposes of pet waste but also creates fertilizer, is to install a disposal system, commercially available through pet owners' and gardening catalogs. These systems use bacterial and enzymatic cultures. These cultures reduce the waste to a liquid, which is then absorbed into the soil.

Dumping *anything* into a creek, gutter or storm drain is ILLEGAL

Would you believe...?

MYTH #1

Runoff from streets and storm drains is treated at wastewater treatment plants.

FACT Storm drain runoff in Santa Barbara County is not treated and goes directly into our creeks — what goes into the storm drain ends up at the beach. That is why it is important to insure that pollutants such as animal waste, automotive fluids, garbage and chemicals do not end up in storm drains.

MYTH #2

Most creek pollution comes from a few big polluters.

FACT The well-known stories about environmental problems tend to focus on big, recognizable targets such as industrial factories, leaking toxic waste dumps, and oil spills. As a result, people often forget that the majority of water pollution comes from small sources — especially at the household level.

MYTH #3

The impact of one household doesn't really matter.

FACT Although an individual home might contribute only minor amounts of pollution, the combined effect of an entire neighborhood or city is serious.

MYTH #4

Creek contamination and beach postings are usually caused by chemical pollution such as paints, solvents, and motor oils.

FACT Chemical contamination is always a concern. Yet, bacterial contamination from animal waste, litter, leaking septic tanks, garbage, and green waste also threaten creeks, beaches, wildlife and your health. Beach postings are actually triggered by bacterial contamination.

Want to know more?

Call 1-877-OUR-OCEAN if you see

- illegal dumping
- pollution in a creek
- a clogged storm drain
- a pollutant spill near a gutter, storm drain or creek
- disposal of wastewater into a gutter or storm drain

If you need to dispose of a pollutant:

- Used motor oil, call:
Used Oil Hotline - 800-CLEANUP
- Hazardous waste, call:
(Paint, paint thinner, garden chemicals, etc.)
Community Environmental Council
805-963-0583

For more information on clean water programs

- City of Santa Barbara Creek Restoration & Water Quality Improvement Program:
805-897-2658



www.ci.santa-barbara.ca.us

- Santa Barbara County Project Clean Water:
805-568-3440
www.co.santa-barbara.ca.us/project_cleanwater



A Dog Owner's Duty



Part of a unified community effort to clean up Santa Barbara County's creeks and beaches



So what's the problem?

Our ocean and creeks are polluted

Bacteria and other types of pollution have been found in local creeks and the ocean. Ongoing contamination of these waters has resulted in beach and creek closures, and unconfirmed reports of illness from contact with these polluted waters. Remember, everything that flows into a storm drain or creek ends up in the ocean without being treated.

Our community is working to solve this problem

Project Clean Water is a coalition of nonprofit organizations, businesses, government agencies and concerned citizens. All of these groups have these goals: to improve water quality in our creeks and the ocean, to promote public health and to protect the quality of life in Santa Barbara County for everyone.

You can help

By implementing the solutions in this pamphlet, you can take part in protecting and improving the water quality of local creeks and making our beaches safe again.

