

# P<sup>3</sup> POLLUTION PREVENTION POST

YOUR NEWS AND INFORMATION SOURCE ABOUT: RECYCLING, POLLUTION PREVENTION, LESS TOXIC PRODUCTS

## Earth Day 2011

It's been over 40 years since the first Earth Day, and being green isn't just a trendy term anymore - it's a way of living. Being green means something different to each of us, but it all begins by taking simple steps in trying to improve our individual relationship with the one planet we have to live upon. Let's all come together on Earth Day and everyday to "greenify" both ourselves and the community we live in.



Many organizations in San Mateo County sponsor Earth Day events. Visit [www.flowstobay.org](http://www.flowstobay.org) for a list of local events. You can also develop some easy daily routines that will eventually become a habit and help the environment. For example: participate in a recycling program, avoid disposable items, drive a car that is eco-friendly, use cloth bags at the grocery store, ride your bike or walk, pay attention to how you as a consumer are affecting the environment, etc. Together we can make a difference, let's start today!

## Get Schooled: Water Pollution Assemblies

Has your child come home singing songs about preventing water pollution? Is your high school student educating YOU about where to drop off used oil? The culprit is most likely the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program's school outreach sponsorship. Environmental educators have been hired to go into schools and teach children about ways to prevent water pollution.

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## Permanent Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Facility Now Open in San Mateo on Thursdays

For years, San Mateo County residents could drop off their household hazardous waste (HHW) at the County's permanent facility on Fridays or Saturdays. In addition, the HHW crew set up temporary collection events in locations around the County to increase convenience.

Now the permanent facility (in San Mateo, near the junction of 280 and Hwy 92) is also open on Thursdays! With so many choices available, why not clear out your garage or cellar? To make an appointment online, visit [www.smhealth.org/hhw](http://www.smhealth.org/hhw).

No internet? You can also call 650-363-4718 to schedule your drop-off.



## Free Car Wash Coupon

Car washing at home causes soap and other pollutants to end up in the storm drains that lead to the bay or the ocean. Commercial car washes use less water and any discharge goes into the sanitary sewer system. The San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program is partnering with



11 commercial car washes located throughout San Mateo County to offer a discount coupon for a car wash. Call (650) 372-6245 or email [pollutionprevention@co.sanmateo.ca.us](mailto:pollutionprevention@co.sanmateo.ca.us) to find out how to get your coupon. (Coupon is valid through 2011.)



### Is Your Organization a “Business”? Household Hazardous Waste vs. Business Waste

If you work with a school, library, community center, church, civic group, or a non-profit, you probably don't think about that organization as a business. None the less, the laws allowing local governments to accept and dispose of household wastes that contain toxic elements from their residents consider every kind of entity other than an actual household to be a business, whether it has any profit motive or not.

The County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) program accepts a wide range of items that County residents use at home but cannot be put into the trash. Many organizations use these same types of items – batteries, fluorescent lights, fertilizers and pesticides, cleaning fluids, auto care products, and painting supplies, for instance. But a business/organization cannot bring them to the HHW collections as if they were from a household (for free, on public appointment days).

If your organization needs to dispose of these sorts of wastes, they should either contract a commercial hazardous waste hauler or use the County's Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG) program. To learn more about the process, types of wastes accepted, and costs involved, please visit:

[www.smhealth.org/vsqq](http://www.smhealth.org/vsqq)



Is that insect really a pest?

Less than 2% of the insects you encounter in the garden will be pests. The vast majority of insects in your yard are not harmful - they're either beneficial or neutral.

Next time you think of stomping or spraying any unfamiliar bug, make sure you know the good guys from the bad guys. The brochure "The 10 Most Wanted Bugs in Your Garden" will help you to identify some of the most common beneficial bugs (both adults and their young) in your garden.

If you do have a pest problem in your garden, the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program has partnered with retail stores to make less toxic pest control and gardening products more available to consumers. Participating stores provide fact sheets and Shelf Talkers to make it easy for you to choose a less or non-toxic product. For a list of participating stores and the informational brochure visit:

[www.flowstobay.org/pestcontrol](http://www.flowstobay.org/pestcontrol)

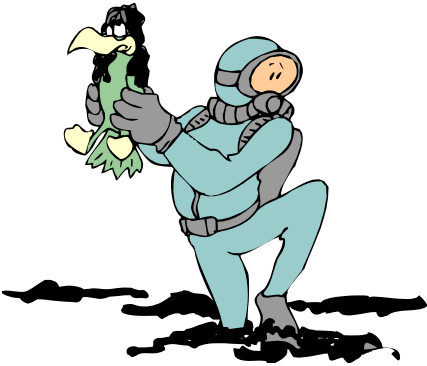


Look for this shelf talker!

Less toxic to people and pets!

## How You - Yes, You - Can Prevent Oil Spills

Last year, the world witnessed the Deepwater Horizon explosion, and with it terrible environmental and economic uncertainty. It could be years before the spill's



effects are truly understood. The disaster in the Gulf of Mexico made us aware of the damage oil can create and how it affects water quality, animals, and plant life.

California also suffers from oil spills. Though it cannot be seen as a one time spill, our spills result from the improper disposal of used oil and oil filters every day. A 1998 study revealed that 20 million gallons of motor oil are unaccounted for and possibly improperly disposed of down storm drains, into lakes or streams, or thrown in the garbage.

Improper disposal of oil is not only bad for the environment and public health, but is also illegal.

In California, the State Legislature passed the Oil Recycling Enhancement Act to address the significant threat to California's environment from illegally dumped used oil. As a result there are over 60 used oil collection centers in San Mateo County that will take used oil free of charge from the public.

Recycling your used oil and filter is easy. Drain your oil into a clean container with a secure lid and if possible drain the filter for 24 hours and place it in a leakproof container like a plastic bag or coffee can. Take your used oil and filter to a certified center near you. If you live in a single family residence check with your local garbage service provider for used oil curbside recycling service. Visit [www.flowstobay.org/usedoil](http://www.flowstobay.org/usedoil) for more information and to see a list of certified centers or call 1-800-CLEANUP. Some centers will accept up to 3 gallons per day from residents. Call ahead for limits and

hours of operation.

Used oil is very recyclable. Motor oil does not wear out - it just gets dirty; so recycling it saves a valuable resource. It takes 42 gallons of crude oil, but only 1 gallon of used oil, to produce 2.5 quarts of new, high-quality lubricating oil. So next time you change your oil please "Take It To The Finish Line" and recycle your used oil and filter. A complete list of certified centers can be found at:

[www.flowstobay.org/usedoil](http://www.flowstobay.org/usedoil)

### Remember:

Do not mix oil with any other fluids such as water, solvents, gasoline or antifreeze. Certified centers cannot accept contaminated oil.

Contaminated oil is only accepted at the Household Hazardous Waste Facility. To make an appointment to dispose of contaminated oil visit [www.smhealth.org/hhw](http://www.smhealth.org/hhw) or call (650) 363-4718.



### FREE USED OIL RECYCLING CONTAINER

San Mateo County is giving away used oil recycling containers to the first 50 residents that email us with a request at:

[pollutionprevention@co.sanmateo.ca.us](mailto:pollutionprevention@co.sanmateo.ca.us)

( Limit of 1 container per household. )



## School Presentations (con't)

At the elementary level, the Banana Slug String Band has been spotted throughout the county performing songs like "It's a Blue Planet," "Water Cycle Boogie," and "We All Live Downstream." Between songs, the band engages the children on topics related to nature, ecology, and the impact of humans on the environment. The band presents concepts such as the water cycle, water quality, and urban runoff. The entire performance is uplifting and brings the children to their feet as they sing along with the band. Supplemental lesson plans are available to teachers to follow up the presentation.



At the high school level, Rock Steady Science has begun presenting a course on automotive care and its relationship to storm water pollution. "Water Pollution Prevention and Your Car" is a fifty-minute multimedia, interactive, and hands-on classroom presentation targeted to grades 10–12. The presentation

includes a 'how to' oil change demo that focuses on proper disposal of motor oil and filters, and discussion of car washing to keep pollutants out of the storm water system. Topics also include background information on watersheds, storm drains, and the County's Green Streets and Parking Lots program.

To learn more about the school presentations or to schedule a presentation at your school visit [www.flowstobay.org/teachers](http://www.flowstobay.org/teachers).

### Kids can make a difference...

For more information about ways to educate your children about water pollution, go to [www.flowstobay.org](http://www.flowstobay.org) and select the Community tab. On the left side, click on "Kids" and you will find games, a glossary, and activity books that can be downloaded.

## The Cars of the Future are here...

Do you remember when you saw the first hybrid car several years ago? Fast forward to a few years later and now manufacturers across the board are becoming more responsive to the marketplace and providing consumers with more fuel efficient and environmentally friendly vehicles. Today you can drive down the highway or look outside your office window and see some sort of energy efficient car. Even the President has issued a mandate that boosts fuel-efficiency standards for model year 2011 vehicles.

Competing now with hybrid models are the all-electric vehicles. A Redwood City resident was the first US resident to reserve one of the new all electric plug-in Nissan Leaf cars. However, the Leaf isn't the only plug-in vehicle we'll see here in San Mateo County, as Tesla vehicles have been around for a few years. Now GM, Toyota, and other car manufactures will also be introducing their plug-in vehicles soon.



We are currently seeing more hybrid and all-electric cars on the market than ever. You may recognize some industry regulars, but keep an eye out for some new models from manufacturers who are just getting started. Which vehicle will you choose?