



News from

Office of the Mayor

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CONTACT: Paul Rose
(510) 238.7914
(510) 388.6721
Lesley Estes, Watershed Program Supervisor
(510) 238.7431

OAKLAND WINS NATIONAL CLEAN WATER AWARD

OAKLAND, CA – Mayor Dellums is pleased to announce today that the City of Oakland continues to be recognized nationally as a leader in the movement towards a cleaner and more sustainable environment.

On Monday, on behalf of the City of Oakland, representatives from the City accepted the Environmental Protection Agency's First Place National Storm Water Management Program Excellence Award at the 22nd Annual U.S. EPA's National Clean Water Act Recognition Awards Program in San Diego.

“This award is yet another shining example of the commitment on the part of the City of Oakland and our many partners to develop programs to ensure that Oakland remains a leader in the challenge to improve the environment and water quality for our residents.”

The EPA recognizes municipalities, wastewater treatment programs, facilities, and individuals on a national level as examples of outstanding commitment to protect and improve the quality of the nation's waters. The City of Oakland was recognized for having demonstrated exceptional technological achievements, innovative processes, and methods and for creative and cost-effective stormwater programs.

Nominated last July by the San Francisco Bay Water Quality Control Board for the City's watershed program and its numerous initiatives to protect creeks, shorelines, and stormwater quality, Oakland is being celebrated nationally for its creek restoration projects, the Lake Merritt water quality program, the creation of the creek ordinance and the fact that since its inception, the watershed program has been funded almost entirely from grants, bonds and foundations.

City leadership and the citizens of Oakland are also deserving of credit. In 2006, the City Council passed a “litter tax” on fast food businesses, convenience marts, gas stations, and liquor stores. This tax is part of a city-wide ordinance which includes anti-litter education in the Oakland schools and increased enforcement and penalties for those who disobey the litter policy. The City Council also banned polystyrene foam (such as Styrofoam) food containers as of January 2007, and this summer banned non-biodegradable plastic bags.

“Oakland's creeks, lakes and estuary are vital to our residents' quality of life,” said District 3 Councilmember Nancy Nadel. “I am honored to serve on the council with colleagues who, with me, have passed policies to reflect our constituents' priorities: to protect the waters from litter, Styrofoam and plastic bags, as well as assure sensitive creekside development.”

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In addition, in November 2002, over 80 percent of Oakland voters passed Measure DD, a \$198.25 million bond measure which included funding for creek restoration projects, water quality improvements, and creek property preservation.

“The success of these award winning initiatives is rooted in the willingness of every city agency to embrace innovative and creative solutions,” said Lesley Estes, Watershed Program Supervisor for the City of Oakland. “Very few cities in the country are guiding the type of environmental initiatives that have been overwhelmingly approved by the leadership in the City of Oakland.”

City of Oakland Watershed Program Accomplishments

- Watershed management approach for stormwater from the headwaters to the estuary
- Creation of the Creek Preservation Program to acquire land and conservation easements to protect valuable headwater and creek habitat
- Creation of the Creek Restoration Program to implement numerous creek restoration projects including removal of concrete channels, culverts, bypasses to restore natural, hydrologically balanced flows and riparian habitat
- Amending the Stormwater Management and Discharge Control Ordinance to include requiring a creek protection permit for any work on a creekside property
- Creation of Creek permit guidelines including use of bioengineering and infiltration techniques, installation of native vegetation, stormwater site design and source controls, and erosion controls
- Creation of a creek website with creek permit guidelines, resource documents for creekside and hill property owners and links to many valuable technical and stormwater websites
- Development of a creek database to capture creekside properties in the City
- Establishment and support for Friends of Creeks watershed groups to foster creek stewardship
- Creation of large-scale citywide volunteer creek cleanups and vegetation management with establishment of a fall Creek to Bay event and inclusion of creek cleanups in the spring Earth Day citywide volunteer cleanup event
- Development of riparian friendly vegetation management guidelines for fire prone areas of the City of Oakland
- Establishment of an Adopt-a-Creek Program
- Establishment of a Lake Merritt Water Quality Committee to address water quality issues in Lake Merritt
- Development of a trash implementation plan, including piloting new technologies and installing structural trash controls
- Education and training of City staff and residents
- Creation of an outdoor creek education center at the Oakland zoo

Among the attendees for the reception in San Diego included: City Administrator Deborah Edgerly; Director of Development Claudia Cappio (CEDA); Public Works Agency Assistant Director, Brook Levin; Watershed Program Supervisor Lesley Estes; Watershed Program Specialist, Kristin Hathaway; Planner, Ed Manasse; and Measure DD Program Manager, Joel Peter

There will be a local award presentation by the San Francisco Bay Water Quality Control Board at the November 1, 2007 board meeting at 10:30am in the first floor auditorium of the Elihu M. Harris State Office Building.

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