

# Post Event Summary

## Event: West Ventura WaterTalk

IRWM Region	Ventura County	Date and Time	January 25, 2020 10:00 AM
Community Engagement Partner	CAUSE	Location	Kellogg Park Ventura Ave at Kellogg St Ventura, CA 93001
Event Facilitator Contact	Cameron Yee	Community Member Attendance	Under 18 years old: (1-5) Over 18 years old: (21-30)
Event Facilitator Contact Email	cyee@causenow.org	Water Service Provider Attendance	Ventura Water, Monica Noeng, Environmental Services Specialist & Haili Matsukawa, Environmental Services Specialist

CAUSE hosted the WaterTalk event for West Ventura on January 25, 2020 from 10:00 to 11:00 am at Kellogg Park. This third event hosted by CAUSE of the WaterTalk's project focused on educating the community of West Ventura on local water issues and systems. Community residents who participated came from Ventura with a majority from the Westside. Prior to the day of the WaterTalk, CAUSE had conversations in Spanish and English about the WaterTalk with over 400 residents, of whom over 364 provided their phone number. We called each one to remind them about the meeting. The residents that attended were made up of 23 adults ranging in age from their 20's to their 70's, two high school youth, and six children. The participants were mostly evenly divided between Spanish and English speakers. English and Spanish translation was provided to the participants based on the presenters that were speaking. Children were provided with educational activities using Ventura County Watershed coloring books.

The event's agenda began with a welcome and introduction to WaterTalks by CAUSE Organizer, Alex Garcia, where she explained the objectives of the meeting: to share information about WaterTalks and local water issues, empower community members to engage in water planning and discuss community strengths and needs. This was followed by an icebreaker where everyone formed a circle to introduce themselves and answer the question, "what is a memory you have about growing up near a body of water?" This icebreaker allowed residents to connect with the material that was being presented, and express their concerns pertaining to water. Many of the residents mentioned how growing up they would often go to their local rivers and drink from the water or how after playing outside for a while they would drink the water from the hose. However, in Ventura, they do not feel that the river is easily accessible nor do they trust that water is safe to drink—with the exception of filtered water. Many residents also shared their concerns on water conservation.

The next part of our agenda had participants rotate among three information and interactive stations: (1) Our water in Ventura, (2) Rain, surface water and groundwater flooding, and (3) Flooding and emergency responses. We split the participants up into two groups (one Spanish speaking and the other English speaking) to rotate among these three informational stations where attendees could interact directly with presenters and ask questions in a smaller setting. Ocil Herrejon, associate organizing director in CAUSE, began the presentation on water in Ventura with a report on where Ventura County's water comes from, followed by a visual aid giving a general overview on our water consumption. She stated that Ventura's and the Westside's water is unique because it relies 100% on local sources including Lake Casitas, the Ventura River, groundwater basins, and recycled water. She also shared that Ventura residents actually use less water per day than the state average resident. Afterwards, Monica Noeng and Haili Matsukawa, from Ventura Water, answered questions on Ventura's water, how much water is consumed in Ventura, and spoke on current water conservation programs.

The next station was hosted by CAUSE WaterTalks interns Jazmin Jacquez and Evelyn Espinoza, along with City of Ventura Stormwater Supervisor Peter Shellenbarger. Evelyn provided an overview of where our water comes from, where it goes, and how our water can get contaminated. Then, Jazmin presented on how to capture and store water through the creation of rain gardens, ponds, protection of our open spaces and collecting water with cisterns. Their presentation was followed by Peter who spoke about stormwater runoff and capture, Kellogg Park and its stormwater capture features, and how pollutants are washed out into the rivers and ocean untreated. He went on to answer any questions the residents had, informing them on the free services the city offers and handing out pamphlets and swag.

The third station was led by Alex Garcia and Tyler Barns from the Ventura County Watershed Protection Agency (WPD). Alex began the discussion on existing land use accompanied by a small chart that detailed the effects that land uses have on how water moves. She showed how untreated water and urban runoff can carry automotive fluids, trash, pesticides, and other pollutants into our rivers and oceans. Tyler then spoke on the Ventura River Levee project (VR1) that directly impacts the Westside community of Ventura. He explained how the current levee conditions are not the best because some areas are weak and others are too short. The WPD was able to draft multiple options on how to fix the area, however, they do not have funding at the moment for these repairs. He passed around a map showing the residents what would happen if we had a 100-year flood and what areas would be impacted if this levee was not fixed. He wrapped up by informing them on a community meeting the WPD is planning pertaining to the levee project in the Fall of 2020.

Based on the feedback that was received through the comment forms, the residents enjoyed the presentations but wished the duration of the event was longer. At each station, the participants were actively engaged. Notetakers recorded any questions that were brought up along with the answers that were provided by the presenters. The attendees expressed concerns on the quality of the surface water and their water at home, the conservation of water, disposing of chemicals safely, and flooding within their community. The presenters addressed all of these concerns effectively and offered additional information with each response. The majority of the

residents revealed a strong interest in staying informed and engaged with the local projects in regards to water.

A challenge that was presented on the day of the event was signing everyone in and getting the contact information of those who showed up late. Only 25 adults signed in but there were a few more people who attended. Usually when a couple showed up, only one partner wanted to sign in. Overall, everything ran smoothly and in a timely manner. The biggest challenge was that the open space of a park made it feel less intimate. Yet, the residents showed great appreciation for the information they received and that it was a family-friendly event outdoors where food and educational activities were provided. They were also particularly excited for the raffle that took place at the end of the event where there was a chance to win a "Shower Flower" (a water conservation device) and a gift card for a free used bike at Bike Ventura.