

Post Event Summary

Event: Oxnard Water Talk

IRWM Region	Ventura County	Date and Time	November 21, 2019 6:00 PM
Community Engagement Partner	CAUSE	Location	South Oxnard Community Center Cafeteria 200 E Bard Rd Oxnard, CA 93033
Event Facilitator Contact	Cameron Yee	Community Member Attendance	Under 18 years old: (1-5) Over 18 years old: (21-30)
Event Facilitator Contact Email	cye@causenow.org	Water Service Provider Attendance	Barbara Wulf Outreach/Education Specialist City of Oxnard Water Division

CAUSE hosted the Water talk in Oxnard on November 21, 2019 from 6:00 to 7:15 pm at the South Oxnard Community Center. This first event of the WaterTalks project focused on educating the Oxnard community on local water issues and systems. Community residents who participated came from Oxnard with a majority from the South Oxnard community. Prior to the day of the Water Talk over a three week period, CAUSE had conversations in Spanish and English about the Water talk with 400 residents, of whom over 300 gave us their phone number. We called each one to remind them about the meeting. Thirty residents attended made up of 24 adults and six high school youth. The majority of participants' primary language was Spanish.

CAUSE decided to conduct the meeting in Spanish with translation to English to help create a space that was welcoming and inviting to the community. The event agenda began with a 30 minute presentation by CAUSE organizer Jaime Flores that served as a short introduction into water issues and set the foundation to be able to discuss potential water related needs. He first explained basic water related subjects including rain water, storm water and groundwater. Through this presentation we attempted to educate participants on the cycle of how we use water, where our water comes from, and where it goes to reveal any potential strengths or weaknesses of the current system in Oxnard. Jaime also presented what goes into our tap water and how we can more efficiently use it at the household level.

The second part of the agenda allowed attendees to interact directly with local community organizations and partners on water projects and related issues. We split the participants into three groups (two Spanish speaking groups and one English speaking group) to rotate among three informational stations where attendees could interact directly with presenters and ask questions in a smaller setting. The Ventura County Watershed Protection District station shared the J Street drain flood project that would provide a biking and walking path over the water drain that is now fenced off and is a barrier in the community. They also brought their Flood model

that visually shows how water either runs off and or is absorbed by the land in a given watershed area. The city of Oxnard hosted the second station where residents could ask any water bill related questions or issues, as well as find out additional information about water saving incentives. The Nature Conservancy hosted the third station where they shared their project that will eventually give public access to walking trails through the Ormond Beach Wetlands that are currently being restored and the important role that wetlands have in protect our groundwater from salt water intrusion.

Residents appreciated the smaller group and had more opportunities to speak and give input they in the larger group setting. Small intimate break out groups were one of the many strengths of the event. At the station sessions, notetakers recorded any questions people had along with answers provided by the presenters on easel pads. Most of the attendees were excited at the potential park that would happened if the J Street drain was capped and converted into a park and biking and walking path. This was also confirmed in participants' evaluation comments. They were also equally enthusiastic at the proposed public access to the Ormond Beach Wetlands, although they would prefer access closer to the Saviers Road and Hueneme Road intersection. At the City of Oxnard's station, they answered many questions on if the water that was at people's home was clean and safe to drink.

One challenge of the event was that many of the attendees needed help filling out the comment cards, since for many of them Spanish is their second language. CAUSE staff and volunteers took the time to sit down with them and help them fill out the comment cards. This was unforeseen and caused the Water Talk to go past 7:00. Also according to comment cards, participants wanted to see videos or more visual examples while confirming that for many Spanish was there second language by requesting to have the presentation in other languages or dialects. Overall, residents appreciated the family friendly event where we provided food and educational childcare where children used Ventura County Watershed coloring books to learn about the local water cycle and left with water saving kid friendly educational materials. We have all participants' information to contact them to participate in future Water Talks.