

Post Event Summary

Event: Santa Paula Water Talk

IRWM Region	Ventura County	Date and Time	November 8, 2019 6:30 PM
Community Engagement Partner	CAUSE	Location	Barbara Webster Elementary 1150 Saticoy St Santa Paula, CA 93060
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	The city of Santa Paula was not available to attend.

CAUSE hosted the Water talk in Santa Paula on November 8, 2019 from 6:30 to 7:45 pm at the Barbara Webster Elementary School Cafeteria. This first event of the WaterTalks project focused on educating the Santa Paula community on local water issues and systems. Prior to the event over a three week period, CAUSE had conversations in Spanish and English about the Water talk with over 350 residents, of whom over 250 gave us their phone number. We called each one to remind them about the meeting. Twenty-eight residents attended made up of 23 adults and five 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 Santa Paula. Jaime also presented what goes into our tap water and how we can better 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 their flood model that visually shows how water either runs off and or is absorbed by the land in a given watershed area. CAUSE hosted the second station where we presented the city of

Santa Paula's water quality report and residents could ask any related questions. The Nature Conservancy hosted the third station where they shared their Hanson project that will eventually give public access to walking trails at the Santa Clara River that is currently being restored and the important role that the river plays in our ecosystem.

Residents appreciated the smaller groups as they had more opportunities to speak and give input than 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. At the flood model station, residents expressed concerns that new development weren't addressing stormwater retention and wonder if the city could implement preventative measures. For the Hanson project, participants asked the Nature Conservancy when they would get public access and how they can get involved. The Nature Conservancy plans to hold public meetings and hopes that public access to the Santa Clara River will happen in two years. In the water report station, residents had questions on how to read the report and were interested in how home water filters could help provide safe drinking water.

At the end of the event, comment cards were distributed to collect participants' feedback on the event. While participants filled it out, the floor was open to a Q&A session. The main community concerns identified were about the safety of their drinking water, a lack of consideration for the Latino community in Santa Paula, and questions on the water rate increases. The community was appreciative of CAUSE and the public agencies for taking time to include this underrepresented area in a discussion they are so often left out of, for the program being in Spanish, and for the organizations and agencies that came to educate them on specific water projects happening in their area.

However, a challenge we faced was the time-constraint of the event when trying to balance a presentation, break-out sessions, and a Q&A within an hour. During the Q&A, the residents demonstrated an understanding of the importance of water, with an interest in becoming more involved in future projects. However, they would have liked to have more Spanish online resources. Many of the residents also had trouble filling out the comment cards in a timely fashion, as staff provided assistance in helping participants who needed more time and additional explanations fill out comment cards.

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. We have all participants' information to contact them to participate in future Water Talks.