



## NorCal Public Media Launches 5-Year Series *Refreshing the Watershed: Steps You Can Take to Make a Difference*

**For immediate release—San Jose, CA, September 9, 2025**—Northern California Public Media (NorCal Public Media) has launched its first six installments of *Refreshing the Watershed: Steps You Can Take to Make a Difference*, a 5-year series of television and social media content in partnership with the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water).

Made possible by a generous \$50,000 grant as part of Valley Water’s tax-supported Safe, Clean Water Grant Program, *Refreshing the Watershed* focuses on supporting volunteer cleanup, education, outreach and watershed stewardship activities in the South Bay that can serve as inspiration for community engagement and volunteering around the entire Bay region.



Through the documentary-style 60- and 90-second spots, viewers are introduced to dedicated volunteers who are committed to watershed conservation, each in their own distinct way. The nonprofit organizations profiled in the first season are Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, Grassroots Ecology, BeautifySJ, Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful, South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition and The Trash Punx. The stories included in the NorCal Public Media coverage over five years take place within the Coyote, Guadalupe, Lower Peninsula, Uvas-Llagas, and West Valley watersheds.

NorCal Public Media producers will create 30 mini-documentaries within the 5-year timeline. Each video will be provided in English and Spanish.

“It has been a true pleasure to partner with Valley Water in showcasing the vital volunteer efforts that restore our local creeks and watersheds, making them healthier for plants, wildlife, and our community,” remarked Paul Swenson, Executive Producer for Video Content & National Program Distribution. “With our Center for Environmental Reporting, we are proud to support organizations whose mission—to provide safe, clean water for a healthy life, environment, and economy—is essential to the future of our region.”

Each year the video spots will be accompanied by a new Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) lesson plan for students that is inspired by the featured conservation work, to be created and distributed to area educators by San Jose-based Resource Area for Teachers (RAFT). The





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lesson plans will be used by teachers in Santa Clara County alongside classroom activities to teach their students about the importance of clean watersheds. Each lesson will focus on hand-on assignments to enhance learners' design thinking abilities, aligned with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) recognized by the State of California. These lessons will also be provided free of charge and designed to utilize common household materials.

NorCal Public Media senior TV producer Rick Bacigalupi is acting as primary producer/editor/camera on the project. He is an Emmy-Award winning Bay Area broadcast TV veteran with over 30 years' experience working on environmental and social justice issues.

"Producing these stories, two things immediately become clear," said Bacigalupi. "First, the tremendous area-wide need to address the significant impact of pollution and development around our waterways. And most importantly, the limitless potential of volunteers to show up time and again to address the problems. Many hands really can tackle daunting tasks, working together."

Overall, the campaign's goal is to paint a compelling picture of the complex, interconnected issues that affect the health of our watersheds. The series aims to engage community members and support watershed stewardship by amplifying the education and outreach programs of local conservation groups. NorCal Public Media hopes to inspire community participation in those organizations' volunteer stewardship activities.

"Northern California Public Media is proud to expand the coverage we provide through the Center for Environmental Reporting to the unique needs of watersheds in the Santa Clara valley region. Clean creeks and watersheds are vital to the health of our community and the environment," said Darren LaShelle, CEO of NorCal Public Media.





***About NorCal Public Media and the Center for Environmental Reporting***

*Refreshing the Watershed* is the most recent of numerous projects under the Center for Environmental Reporting at NorCal Public Media– a multi-year, multi-platform ongoing project, offering informative, engaging and educational content across all television, radio, news, podcasts, digital and streaming platforms offered by the public media organization.



***About Resource Area for Teaching (RAFT)***

Since 1994, the Silicon Valley nonprofit Resource Area for Teaching (RAFT) has provided educators with engaging hands-on learning resources aligned to national content standards. Their “found engineering” process encourages the reuse of materials that otherwise may be sent to landfills.

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***More information and links:***

[Watch the 2025 video series in English on YouTube](#)

[Watch the 2025 video series in Spanish on YouTube](#)

[Visit the Center for Environmental Reporting’s Waterwise Education page](#)

[Follow NorCal Public Media on Instagram](#)

[Santa Clara Valley Water District/Valley Water](#)

[Resource Area for Teachers \(RAFT\)](#)

[Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority](#)

[Grassroots Ecology projects in Santa Clara](#)

[BeautifySJ](#)

[Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful](#)

[South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition](#)

[The Trash Punx](#)

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Volunteers set out for a morning creek clean-up with BeautifySJ



Planting natives for riparian restoration with Open Space Authority





The Trash Punx get an old chair out of Guadalupe River