



NEWS RELEASE

ORANGE COUNTY COASTKEEPER
3151 Airway Avenue, Suite F-110
Costa Mesa, California 92626
714-850-1965
www.coastkeeper.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Garry Brown, Executive Director, 714-850-1965
Ray Hiemstra, Project Manager, 714-850-1965

DOING MORE WITH LESS: COASTKEEPER PROJECT FINDS WAYS TO CONSERVE WATER AND ENHANCE YOUR GARDEN

COSTA MESA, Calif. – Coming from Boston, Marsha Westropp is pretty aggressive about adopting green practices. She and her husband have installed solar power in their Laguna Hills home. They make biodiesel in the garage for their cars. Most recently, they took a second look at their front yard.

“There’s a whole disconnect, living in a desert climate and having a home with a lawn,” Marsha said.

The Westropps are among a dozen or so households finding ways to reduce their water consumption at home, while developing methods to also cut down on the amount of water runoff that flows into the gutter and eventually, the ocean. Each of these homeowners is taking part in a Low Impact Development Retrofit program being offered through Orange County Coastkeeper.

As part of a grant program funded by the Metropolitan Water District, Coastkeeper networks interested homeowners with design and installation professionals. Homeowners make their own choices based on recommendations from the professionals and implement those they like, while Coastkeeper monitors the runoff and water use at each site. At the end of project, data collected will be submitted to the water district.

“We want to get this word out to everybody,” said Ray Hiemstra, project manager. “We really hope to find people who want to go overboard on this. Everybody’s home and everybody’s property is different. The more people who participate, and the more projects they take on, the better our findings will be.”

The Low Impact Development Retrofit program began last year and will continue through spring of 2009. So far, more than 10 homes have signed up for the program, Hiemstra said. The goal of the project is to encourage people to reduce water

consumption and protect local watersheds, too. In some instances, financial assistance is also available, depending on the scope of work being done.

Funded through the Metropolitan Water District, the program seeks to educate people on simple-to-use practices that can reduce the need for water and protect the oceans, too.

Other Orange County residents participating in the program and willing to be interviewed include:

- Ron May of Laguna Niguel, a green builder involved with the U.S. Green Building Council. “As a longtime surfer, water is a real passion for me. As a contractor, I often leave early in the morning for work, and see the floods coming down the street from people over-watering their lawns,” he said. He installed weather-sensitive irrigation devices and a system of gutters and infiltration system with a stream bed and desert and coastal landscape zones on his property.
- Curtis Buck of Fullerton, an affable actor whose 1925 home, in the midst of restoration, was hit by fire. Buck is rebuilding with an eye on historical integrity, alternative energy sources and low-water consumption. His project involves capturing water from three sources, and diverting it into above ground tanks and subsurface cisterns that will operate on gravity or solar-powered pumps. The stored water will be used to irrigate his California native landscaping, vegetable garden, fruits and berries. “Being a man’s garden, it needs a place to rest, so we’ll have the customary hammock, bench, and so on,” he added.
- Interviews with these and other homeowners from other cities can be arranged by request.

Orange County Coastkeeper was founded in 1999 to identify pollution issues affecting water quality in local rivers, bays and coastal regions, and to remedy them through education, advocacy, restoration and enforcement. Water runoff is a major pollutant to these water sources, carrying pesticides, fertilizers, roadside contaminants and bacteria from animal feces into the waterways.

For information on Orange County Coastkeeper and its programs, visit www.coastkeeper.org

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