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***Refreshing the Watershed* conservation video series by NorCal Public Media: Communities making a difference**



**For immediate release—San Jose, CA, February 12, 2026—**

Northern California Public Media (NorCal Public Media) is producing *Refreshing the Watershed: Steps You Can Take to Make a Difference*, a 5-year series of television and social media video content in partnership with the Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water).

*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.





The series goal is to paint a compelling picture of the complex, interconnected issues that affect the health of our watersheds. The videos aim 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.

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.

“Working together, these volunteer watershed stewards don’t indulge in a pessimistic mindset. At the direction of dedicated activity staff, they rise to the task, starting at the beginning and seeing it through to the end of their planned work period,” said Bacigalupi. “The volunteers’ superpower is positive thinking. If enough people step up to lend a hand in just this way, stretches of rivers and creeks in the watershed have a chance of regaining their own natural balance.”

Clean-up group leaders carefully track the progress they are making and monitor results over time. Native plants and animals are returning, and importantly the public’s attitude toward these special habitats are beginning to improve.

Paul Swensen, Executive Producer for Video Content & National Program Distribution says, “With our Center for Environmental Reporting, we are proud to support organizations like Valley Water whose mission—to provide safe, clean water for a healthy life, environment, and economy—is essential to the future of our region.”



Resource Area for Teachers (RAFT) is creating free Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) lesson plans for local students enhanced by these featured conservation videos, to be distributed to area educators.

The first lesson is [Riparian Biodiversity Sampling](#) for grades 3-5 and the companion videos by NorCal Public Media are [Riparian Restoration](#) and [Grassroots Ecology: Weeding Wisdom](#).





Six community 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 a total of 30 mini-documentaries within the 5-year timeline. Each video will be provided in English and Spanish.

“By the end of my shoot for one of these episodes, often municipal teams are loading the trash collected by the volunteers into city trucks to haul away to the appropriate destinations. Clean-up crews are tired, dirty, and in high spirits—they can see they’ve made a difference that day,” Bacigalupi noted. “And if I have avoided dropping my gear into the water, I take my footage home and with any luck begin to do justice to a compelling story of people power, civic pride and environmental conservation right where we live.”



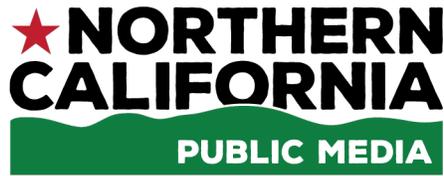
***About NorCal Public Media  
and the Center for Environmental Reporting***

*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.

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**Press contact at NorCal Public Media:**  
**Darren LaShelle**  
**707.584.2000**  
**[darren\\_lashelle@norcalpublicmedia.org](mailto:darren_lashelle@norcalpublicmedia.org)**





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[Images for media use are available for download here.](#)

*More information and links:*

[Watch the first season in English on YouTube](#)

[Watch the first season in Spanish on YouTube](#)

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

*Agencies featured in Season 1:*

[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](#)

