

INLAND EMPIRE WATERKEEPER®
Advocacy • Education • Restoration • Enforcement



ANNUAL REPORT 2006

Inland Empire Waterkeeper – A Water Quality Presence in the Inland Empire

In November of 2005, Orange County Coastkeeper (OCCK) initiated Inland Empire Waterkeeper (IEWK) as a means of advocating on behalf of the entire Santa Ana Watershed. As an expansion of OCCK, it is the mission of Inland Empire Waterkeeper to enhance and protect the water quality of the Upper Santa Ana Watershed and other waterways of the Inland Empire through advocacy, education, restoration, and enforcement. Our first annual report memorializes our first year's successes in advocating for water quality in the Inland Empire, and where we wish to direct our attention in the years ahead.

The name Inland Empire Waterkeeper reflects not only our interest in protecting the Upper Santa Ana River, but also the surrounding water bodies located in the Inland Empire. IEWK began the year by blazing a trail for water quality advocacy where none had previously existed. In addition to the creation of our new name, logo, and mission, 2005 saw Inland Empire Waterkeeper slowly become more recognizable within the community as the only hands-on-the-water citizen action group dedicated to preserving the water quality of inland lakes, creeks, and streams. The following report highlights the achievements of our first year.

Getting Started

Inland Empire Waterkeeper officially opened its office doors in May of 2006. The first several months were dedicated to locating and setting up our office in Riverside, which included installing phones, computers, internet connections, and setting up all the technical connections necessary for a new functioning office. We developed our logo, website, business cards, letterhead, and brochures. In late 2006 we printed our first brochures intended to convey IEWK's mission and strategies to Inland Empire residents and potential donors.

Inland Empire Waterkeeper in the Community

Education



In the field and in the Classroom – Inland Empire Waterkeeper's High School Education Program

In April of 2006, Inland Empire Waterkeeper initiated its high school watershed education program, which engages high school students in hands-on water sampling and wetlands restoration.

This year, students from Corona High School was the first inland school to participate in a series of classroom activities and field trips designed to promote stewardship and community involvement. Their field activities included water monitoring and habitat restoration of the constructed wetlands behind Prado Dam, which created habitat for birds like the endangered least Bell's vireo.

Internships and Volunteerism

Inland Empire Waterkeeper engages local high school, college, graduate, and law school students in internships and volunteer opportunities to facilitate their hands-on experience in all aspects of an environmental organization. This year we managed two law school students from the University of San Diego and Loyola Marymount University interested in environmental and water law, providing them with invaluable experience in a fledgling environmental organization while utilizing their research in our various advocacy and enforcement efforts.

Outreach

Citizen Water Monitoring

Inland Empire Waterkeeper initiated several "first annual" events in 2006 aimed at engaging local citizens in hands-on participation activities. In May of 2006 volunteers of Inland Empire Waterkeeper and the Riverside/Corona Resource Conservation District participated in "**Snapshot Day**", which is a **citizen water monitoring** event aimed at creating a "snapshot" of water quality in our area. Fourteen Inland Empire sites were tested, the analysis of which demonstrated poor inland water quality. The volunteers included non-profit environmental groups, as well as interested citizens. The samplers were trained in collecting samples and used analytical methods approved by the state to assure data accuracy. The data gathered during this monitoring event was used to increase public awareness of the water quality issues affecting our inland watersheds which eventually impact the ocean, to emphasize the importance of water quality monitoring, and to demonstrate the key role volunteer monitors play.



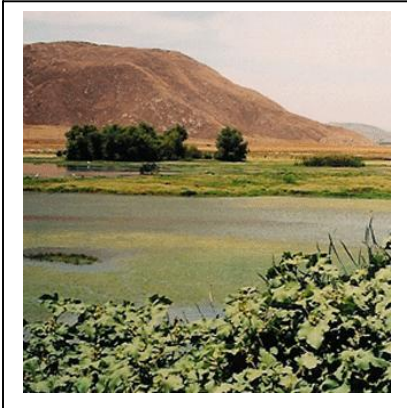
Inland Stream Cleanup

Inland Empire Waterkeeper, in conjunction with several other organizations managed a crew of 80 community volunteers who participated in **Inland Stream Cleanup Day**, in which we cleaned up 34 TONS of garbage from an open space around Mill Creek, an

inland stream, near Prado Wetlands in Chino. Volunteers, with the assistance of 3 tractors, removed 34 tons of garbage and 600 lbs of recycling, including a treadmill, furniture, construction materials, a bathtub, and a recreational boat. The site, used as an illegal dumping ground, drains rainwater from the area into Mill Creek, which flows into the Santa Ana River, providing drinking water for Orange County residents and habitat for native wildlife. The Mill Creek area has long been used as a dumpsite by trespassers. Plans are underway to install gates and create boulder and earthen berms to discourage future dumping at Mill Creek.

Public Policy

San Jacinto River Watershed Council



In the spring of 2006, Inland Empire Waterkeeper was invited to share the environmental seat on the San Jacinto River Watershed Council with the Sierra Club. The Council is a non-profit organization of community groups, tribal, farming, dairy, water agencies, government agencies, businesses, and all interested stakeholders working cooperatively to address problems in the San Jacinto watershed. The San Jacinto River Watershed is located in the southern portion of the Santa Ana River Watershed, and is heavily influenced by agriculture and housing development pressure. The San Jacinto River Watershed Council has initiated its Integrated Watershed Management Plan, and IEWK attends monthly meetings to advocate on behalf of beneficial and recreational uses on the San Jacinto River so that they may be included in the plan.

Storm Water Quality Standards Task Force

IEWK also attends monthly meetings at the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) with members of the Regional Water Quality Control Board and other major stakeholders in the watershed on the Stormwater Quality Standards Task Force. This task force reevaluates water quality standards as they relate to stormwater and dry weather flows within the watershed necessary to protect REC-1 beneficial uses. Our presence at these meetings is very significant, as IEWK and Orange County Coastkeeper are the only nongovernmental organizations representing environmental and water quality interests on this task force. The Task Force is currently in Phase II of the work plan.

Public Commenting

IEWK has commented on and participated in several projects in an effort to strengthen storm water permits and to improve overall water quality standards in the Inland Empire. IEWK continues to closely monitor the regulatory process of the Lake Elsinore Advanced Pumped Storage Project, which will have a detrimental impact on Lake Elsinore and the Cleveland National Forest if developed. IEWK also commented on the priority list for the Regional Water Board's Triennial Review of the Water Quality Control plan for the Santa Ana River Basin. We also commented on the updated 303(d) list of Impaired Water Bodies as it related to impaired water segments in the inland empire.

Conference Participation

IEWK also attended several conferences and seminars in 2006 in an effort to promote the organization and enhance our perspective on environmental and water quality issues facing Southern California and the Santa Ana River Watershed. The conferences included: the Annual Waterkeeper Alliance Conference in San Francisco, the River of Life Conference in Orange, and the California Coastkeeper Alliance Conference in Sonoma County. The most recent and rigorous of these conferences was the two-week Watershed Partnership Seminar sponsored by the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, where IEWK participated with many local stakeholders to develop a Watershed Management Plan for Lytle Creek located in San Bernardino County. IEWK was awarded a full scholarship to attend this conference at the Mission Inn in Riverside.

Advocacy and Enforcement

The establishment of Inland Empire Waterkeeper has thus far contributed to identify, solve, and where necessary, prosecute non-compliance violations. In 2006, IEWK focused on our developer campaign and on investigating the worst offending industrial dischargers in the Inland Empire.

Developer Campaign

Spot Checking and Site Investigation

This year we initiated the investigation component of our developer campaign in an effort to identify developers in the Inland Empire that are violating the Clean Water Act. IEWK conducted spot checks and field investigations to identify violators, systematic non-compliance, and lack of enforcement to the Regional Water Quality Control Board. In 2006 IEWK conducted investigations of 12 developments in Riverside County, and will continue to closely monitor these locations during rain events as they occur.

Our first case

As part of this campaign, in March of 2006, IEWK filed its first enforcement action against a development corporation arising out of egregious runoff violations in Big Bear, California, which led to further investigation and discovery of additional violations at other development sites of the same corporation within the Inland Empire. Through this enforcement action, not only have we been successful in stopping polluted urban runoff from all of their development sites, we feel this enforcement action has positively influenced the development industry in the Inland Empire which contributes to better source control of urban runoff. IEWK has achieved this through settlement negotiations that have stipulated: More than half of the developer's new projects will implement Low Impact Development (LID) technologies. LID is a new comprehensive land planning and engineering design approach with a goal of maintaining and enhancing the predevelopment hydrologic regime of urban and developing watersheds. We have also agreed that through the collaborative process with Inland Empire Waterkeeper, the development corporation will create an education program aimed at the development industry to convey the economic feasibility and environmental sustainability of LID.

Industrial Pollution

IEWK also investigated the worst cities in the Inland Empire facilitating illegal industrial discharges. This investigation resulted in the formation of a strong Clean Water Act case against 25 industrial dischargers for violations of their individual discharge permits. In November of 2006 IEWK sent notices of intent to sue the 25 individual corporations, and we are currently strategizing enforcement actions against the worst offenders.

A look Ahead

We believe that the upcoming year will facilitate IEWK's ability to reap the benefits of foundational efforts made in 2006. Our goals for 2007 are as follows:

Community Programs

- Increase the number of inland schools participating in our High School Education Program to 5
- Hold two more inland stream clean up days, engaging 200 more citizens in cleanup efforts
- Continue engaging citizens in water monitoring activities. Organize another inland "Snapshot Day" Citizen Water Monitoring Event with a more

comprehensive sampling strategy in mind so as to increase the utility of the data gathered

- Increase internships by maintaining a better relationship with local high schools, colleges, universities, and law schools.

Advocacy and Enforcement

- Comment on and actively participate in the development of the new MS4 permits for Riverside and San Bernardino Counties this year
- Reach final agreement on both enforcement actions taken in 2006.
- Continue to monitor projects in the Inland Empire that may detrimentally impact the Santa Ana Watershed.