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WET “GREEN” MEASURES ARE URGED TO PREVENT POLLUTION
Demonstration Scheduled to Show How
Simple Changes Protect & Conserve Water

SACRAMENTO—As temperatures rise and gardening and outdoor home maintenance activities beckon, the State Water Control Board has some wet “green” tips that can benefit you and the environment, at the same time. “If people would make a few changes in their daily activities like washing their cars, watering their lawns, and cleaning their sidewalks, it would make a difference in protecting our precious water and waterways,” said Tam M. Doduc, Water Board chair. “Many people aren’t aware that there’s a big difference between a street (storm) drain and a sanitary sewer drain, and that’s where the problem begins.”

The difference is that dirty water flows into a street (storm) drain and ends up in waterways, while water from sanitary sewer drains is treated and cleaned before it is released. Scientific studies have determined that chemicals and debris, like grass clippings and leaves, are harmful to fish, plants and other aquatic life by polluting the water where they live. Beaches, lakes, and creeks have been closed or their recreational use has been restricted because of contaminated storm drain water.

The State Water Board endorses the following measures to protect water quality:

- Sweep driveways and sidewalks clean instead of using water.
- Eliminate piles of grass, leaves and other debris in the street and try composting or recycling.
- Put pet waste in a garbage can, not in the street.
- Adjust sprinklers so that water soaks the ground and does not spray sidewalks or driveways and flows into the street.
- Minimize the amount of lawn and garden chemicals you use so they aren’t carried by sprinklers into the storm drain.
- Go to a car wash where water is cleaned before it is released into waterways or wash your car in an area where the water drains into the ground.
- Drain swimming pools into grass or gardens and not into streets.
- Keep items like oil and chemicals out of gutters and storm drains and don’t rinse dirty containers that will send pollutants down the drain.
- Use cat litter to clean up oil on driveways and sidewalks and throw it away in a garbage can.

The State Water Board also recommends that water drainage and conservation be considered before new construction remodeling begins. One measure is called Low Impact Development (LID), which uses techniques that include filtering, storing, and detaining water on site, instead of it flowing down storm drains. Some examples of LID techniques include installing rain barrels to collect roof runoff, using pavement that water can penetrate, and planting trees in parking areas to absorb water and pollutants that could end up in waterways.

A demonstration of some of the Water Control Board's wet "green" tips has been scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on May 23, 2008, at a home at 1604 3rd Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95818.

For more information about what you can do to protect and conserve water, please visit http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nps/lookwhatyoucando.shtml#factsheets

The State Water Control Board and nine Regional Boards are responsible for protecting water quality and water supplies in California. The State Water Control Board is also responsible for the allocation of surface water supplies for agricultural, public trust and urban purposes throughout the state.