Contra Costa County
Flood Control
& Water Conservation District

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Media Advisory

Creek and Channel Safety Awareness Program Update

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Contra Costa County's Flood Control and Water Conservation District continues to partner with the community to educate residents about the dangers of trying to navigate flood control channels. The outreach effort stems from the accidental drowning of two teenage boys on February 19, 2011.

While friends and family of Gavin Powell and Matt Miller will never forget the circumstances of the tragic accident, District managers know that in the years ahead, keeping the message in front of teens will be a challenge. In response, we have developed a program to educate and annually remind the community of the dangers that the creeks and channels can pose.

Creek and Channel Safety Awareness Program leaders have held numerous community meetings, established a website (www.cccounty.us/creekandchannelsafety,) developed safety brochures for parents and distributed information packets through local schools. Warning signs and stencils have been installed at various points throughout the flood channel system to increase awareness. The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors designated October as Creek and Channel Safety Awareness Month, which will serve as an annual kickoff to our education campaign updates.

Additional efforts are underway or planned to continue the program, including bringing students into the picture to help spread the warnings. Recognizing that teens are more likely to listen to messages from other teens, a video project is getting underway to let student films tell the story. The channel structures themselves are also being evaluated for any physical improvements that might help.

Additional updates will be posted online as the awareness program continues to grow.