



Lindsey Jurca, Surfrider Foundation
education@surfriderwlam.org

Benjamin Kay, Santa Monica High School
benjamin.kay@smmusd.org

Surfrider Foundation and Santa Monica High School Team Together to Raise Awareness of Ocean Water Quality in Los Angeles

Students and activists from Santa Monica High School and the Surfrider Foundation have teamed together to raise awareness of water quality issues at Los Angeles beaches. Through Surfrider's Teach & Test program, Santa Monica High School students monitor bacteria levels in the Santa Monica Bay. The students share their findings with the community through presentations, demonstrations and public outreach in an effort to reduce urban runoff and inspire change.

The students are collecting ocean water samples and testing them in the new Samohi Surfrider Marine Laboratory, funded by Surfrider and several grants. Recently, Surfrider, in partnership with Santa Monica High School, was awarded California Coastal Commission's second highest Whale Tale Grant. Other significant contributions over the past year have been made by The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Santa Monica Co Opportunity and Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots program.

For three years in a row, Los Angeles County has experienced the worst overall beach water quality in the state, including five of the 10 lowest-rated beaches.¹ Each day in Los Angeles, more than 100 million gallons of contaminated water and debris known as urban runoff drain to the ocean. Urban runoff is the greatest single source of beach pollution and puts beachgoers at risk of contracting illnesses such as stomach flu, ear infections, upper respiratory infections and skin rashes.

"Teach & Test is an amazing experiential learning opportunity for students; they conduct real, hands-on scientific research in both field and laboratory settings. The students gain a sense of ownership of their results, which empowers them to be eco-leaders in our community," notes Benjamin Kay, grant co-writer, Marine Biology Teacher, and Teach & Test Adviser at Santa Monica High School.

"These students are the voice of the future. They deserve to surf, swim and play in a clean and safe ocean. Teach & Test is designed to provide them with the experience, knowledge and tools to be heard loud and clear," says Lindsey Jurca, grant co-writer, educational chair of Surfrider's West Los Angeles/Malibu Chapter, and Teach & Test program coordinator.

For more information on the program and to see photo and videos produced by the students, visit http://surfriderwlam.org/?page_id=126.



CALIFORNIA
COASTAL
COMMISSION



¹ Heal the Bay's 2007-2008 Beach Report Card