

# New pesticide awareness effort under way

**Occidental Arts & Ecology Center project aims to protect salmon streams with point-of-sale consumer awareness campaign**

*by George Snyder - Sonoma West Staff Writer*

OCCIDENTAL - The WATER Institute of the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center has begun a retail-focused campaign to help urban consumers avoid buying pesticides harmful to area salmon streams.

The program is also asking retailers to post signs advising in-store alternatives to such pesticides.

Brock Dolman, WATER (Watershed Advocacy, Training & Research) Institute director, said the Sonoma County campaign is not only aimed at preserving local salmon runs but in a bigger picture, ensure the county's surface water supplies are kept safe for both wildlife and residents.

"Pesticide alternatives are key," he said, "because they protect the health of our community, especially our children, and they represent a business opportunity for lawn and garden product retailers in our county. Pesticide use is as much a human health issue as it is a water quality and salmon safety issue."

"Given the current emphasis on reducing water use," he added, "we want to ensure that the water we do have is not only safe for fish but for the adults and children in the community at large," he said. "If we are facing a water crunch, it's a lot better to be able to use what we have rather than rely on a big pipe to bring more of it in."

The campaign, which targets urban retailers across the county, grows out of a January, 2004, Seattle U.S. District endangered species decision that in addition to require agricultural users to not use more than 30 toxins harmful to salmon with aerial spraying within 100 yards of a salmon stream or ground applications of within 20 yards.

The decision, which was applauded by environmentalists and the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations at the time, also required in-store warnings to urban consumers that seven urban-use pesticides may also harm salmon.

Dolman and the campaign's local coordinator, Viviana Coloma, said they have already sent out packets including government warning signs merchants should have been using for the past couple years in their stores to alert consumers of

dangers to spawning streams, as well as signs advising them of the alternatives.

Some retailers, such as the Sebastopol Hardware Center, already exhibit the warning signs.

Urban users affect local spawning streams, including the Russian River, from urban storm drain and irrigation runoff.

Although Coloma said they have compiled a list of county home use pesticide retailers that runs into "the hundreds," they will concentrate their effort on larger chain stores, such as Wal-Mart, Home Depot and Longs.

"The larger stores have more customers and so we believe it is more effective to target those retailers," she said.

So far, according to Coloma and Dolman, it is unclear many retailers are following the court order, which affects California, Oregon and Washington State.

"What we will do is monitor to see if the signs are there and ask them to put up the signs if they haven't done so," she said. "We will call them and schedule an appointment with the managers so that we can convince them of the importance to do so through a presentation we will be giving."

According to Dolman and Coloma, the 2004 federal court ruling the government sign, which reads "Salmon Hazard," is supposed to be displayed next to pesticides containing 2,4-D; Carbaryl; Diazinon; Diuron; Malathion; Triclopyr BEE and Trifluralin sold anywhere in Cotati, Graton, Healdsburg, Larkfield-Wikiup, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol and Windsor.

The WATER Institute's sign reads "Salmon Safe," and advises there are pesticides that do not contain ingredients harmful to salmon or steelhead and won't pollute their spawning streams.

"We believe that given the awareness of environmental issues in Sonoma County, we believe promoting the alternatives will provide an economic benefit for the retailers as well," said Dolman.

He said although the Institute does not advocate any particular product, he hoped the public will become aware of the campaign and request retailers to not only post both the "Salmon Hazard" and "Salmon Safe" signs but offer information on the safer products.

Some safer products, according to the Institute, include herbicides such as Turf Maize, Bio-Weed, Weed & Grass Killer, Matran, Bio-Film and BurnOut II Weed & Grass Killer, Weed Shield, Poison Ivy Defoliant, and Quik II.

Safer insecticides and fungicides include Surround, Serenade, Stylet-Oil, Pyrethrum, Rosemary Oil Crawling Insect Killer, EcoEXEMPT, and Sharp

Shooter, Diatomaceous Earth (DE), Lentek Pest Repeller and Slugoff.

There are also dozens of additional salmon safe products ranging from old-fashioned flytraps to insect predators to high-tech devices.

A complete list of salmon safe pesticides and non-polluting consumer products are available at [www.oaecwater.org/education/salmon-safe-pesticide-awareness-campaign](http://www.oaecwater.org/education/salmon-safe-pesticide-awareness-campaign).