

Trust for Public Land & Cox Communications Honor Michael Beanan as OC Cox Conserves Hero and his “non-profit of choice” Laguna Bluebelt



Laguna Beach, CA - The Trust for Public Land & Cox Communications today announced the 2012 Cox Conserves Heroes Award at a reception that included former Laguna Beach Mayor Toni Iseman and other community as well as business leaders.

<http://www.coxconservesheroes.com/orange-county-ca/press-release.aspx>

Laguna Bluebelt ocean activist Michael Beanan received Orange County's first Cox Conserves Hero Award and a \$5,000 contribution to the Laguna Bluebelt Coalition – a community based effort to protect marine life and restore coastal “hope spot” habitats. (Visit & join: www.lagunabluebelt.org). The Laguna Bluebelt Coalition is a non-profit organization that joins together ocean recreation and sports enthusiasts, conservationists and community leaders in a common effort to restore marine life along the California coast. The Laguna Bluebelt received the 2012 Environmental Award from the City of Laguna Beach for their dedication and remarkable accomplishment of gaining city-wide marine protection for Laguna making it the first American city with a contiguous greenbelt/ bluebelt surrounding the community's rich natural heritage.

While serving as Vice President for the South Laguna Civic Association, Beanan worked tirelessly to network among water district officials, county & city government, private industry and other environmental groups to advance reuse of contaminated urban runoff in Aliso Creek. Aliso Creek – federally listed as a CWA 303(d) Impaired Water Body - conveys water pollution from South Orange County cities to Aliso Beach in Laguna Beach.

The “Aliso Creek Urban Runoff Reuse, Recovery and Conservation Project” will capture 800,000 gallons of urban runoff for filtration and beneficial reuse in the District's water recycling system (scwd.org/aliso). “This Award is deeply appreciated and means much to me and our community. The Trust for Public Land & Cox Communications recognizes the importance of community teamwork in achieving sustainable solutions to pressing environmental challenges. The Aliso Creek Project shows what can happen when we work together...as a team.”

Michael Beanan brings a long history of activism and community teamwork to his work. As a young Viet Nam veteran, Mike taught the first SCUBA training classes at the University of California to paraplegic and polio trainees. Teamwork development allowed the innovative therapy program to grow organically into a global project with countless leaders teamed up to help one another to enjoy the ocean.

“When we genuinely love something, we will do our best to nurture and protect it from harm. Urban runoff from inland residential developments and golf courses pollutes our beaches. Capturing this polluted water before it arrives at the beach for filtration and, then, sold as irrigation water for golf courses and residential developments makes sense,” notes Beanan. His art students at Orange Coast College posted simple illustrations at www.coastcartoonstudio.com to explain the process and multiple community benefits.

To promote ocean education, Michael Beanan teamed-up with Nancy Caruso to work with a coalition of groups and individuals to bring KelpFest to Laguna Beach for the third year during Earth Week. A true “Laguna Happening”, the annual event brings artists, SCUBA divers, students, water districts, community groups and kelp lovers together at Main Beach to construct a massive kelp forest exhibit with science booths, music, dancers and events for children. Underwater researchers broadcast live images of Laguna’s kelp forest to beach monitor tents while groups make ceremonial open ocean swims to monument point and back – in and out of abundant kelp forests. At the urging of local Girl Scouts, KelpFest (www.kelpfest.org) was proclaimed this Spring as an annual celebration during Earth Week by Mayor Jane Egly.

Teamwork makes a difference. County planners, with Beanan’s efforts and others, anticipate capturing more urban runoff for beneficial reuse throughout inland sites in the Aliso Watershed.

Press Contact

Betty Burnett, General Manager, South Coast Water District
Jinger Wallace, Laguna Bluebelt
Marianne Skorpanich, County of Orange

949.499.4555
949.499.6367
949.