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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**State Awards \$596,698 to Coastkeeper Gardens Project**

*The Nature Education Facilities Grant is part of a \$5.4 billion water act approved in 2006.*

*COSTA MESA, Calif.* – The State Natural Resources Agency has awarded more than half a million dollars to Orange County Coastkeeper to complete its [Coastkeeper Gardens Project](#) at Santiago Canyon College in the City of Orange.

The \$596,698 Nature Education Facilities Grant is part of the \$5.4 billion Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act, (Prop. 84), approved in 2006. About \$93 million of that was designated for facilities that educate visitors about California's resources and inspire environmental stewardship.

Coastkeeper Gardens is a demonstration project featuring six themed native plant habitats including chaparral, coastal sage scrub, riparian forest, grassland, desert scrub and southern oak woodland. Interpretive exhibits and displays will be included, along with ongoing educational programming. Its vision is to:

- Preserve natural resources
- Promote drought-tolerant landscaping
- Reduce urban runoff

Public education and participation is a key part of the project. An Earth Day Garden Volunteer event is scheduled at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 30. Call 714-850-1965 or e-mail [Austin@coastkeeper.org](mailto:Austin@coastkeeper.org) for information or to sign up.

"We are really excited to be receiving this level of recognition and support for our project," said Garry Brown, executive director of Orange County Coastkeeper. "The state received more than 300 applications for Nature Education Facilities Grants, and awarded only 44. This grant will help to complete the garden project and implement programs that increase understanding and appreciation for protecting our natural resources."

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**About Orange County Coastkeeper:** Orange County Coastkeeper was founded in 1999 to identify pollution issues affecting water quality in local rivers, bays and coastal regions and to remedy them through education, advocacy, restoration and enforcement. For more information on the organization, visit [www.coastkeeper.org](http://www.coastkeeper.org)