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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 18, 2022**

**Local Partners Tackle Illegal Dumping in the Coastal Region with New Campaign**

Illegal dumping is not just an unsightly and costly problem in the Texas Coastal Bend region, it can pollute our coastal waters and cause serious health hazards. Three local organizations have joined together to combat illegal dumping and protect water quality with a public awareness campaign called **Up2U+**, where the plus sign stands for the plus-sized trash items dumped in public places.

The Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP), Nueces River Authority (NRA), and the Coastal Bend Council of Governments (CBCOG) are partnering for this three-year public awareness campaign to keep bulk trash from reaching our waterways. At the core of the **Up2U+** campaign are numerous Community Clean Ups and Free Bulk Waste Collection events throughout the coastal bend region from now through 2024.

 A radio jingle performed by the popular Tejano band, Los Palominos, supports the campaign and can be heard on local radio stations reminding listeners that “dumping your trash where it doesn’t belong is more than an eyesore on the land; it pollutes our coastal waters and kills our fish and birds, so please take your trash where it belongs. Take it, do the dump, man. Yea, take it to the dump.”

The first free **Up2U+** Bulk Waste Collection event is scheduled for Thursday, October 20, 2022, from 10 am to 4 pm for the community of Bishop at Bishop City Yard, 500 East Texas Street, Bishop, Texas. Three large dumpster bins will be ready to take bulk items such as furniture, old appliances, tires, and large metal recyclables. Wooden tokens will be distributed at the collection events, giving participants free bulk disposal at a local facility in the future.

The goal of **Up2U+** is to keep bulk trash from reaching our waterways. The project will remove barriers to proper waste disposal (e.g., cost and accessibility) by providing free and easy access to disposal bins, cleaning up existing dump sites, and improving community awareness of problems associated with illegal dumping.

“Dumped materials not only cover plants and feeding areas that wildlife depends on, but many items can also release chemicals into the air, ground, and water as they sit exposed to the elements,” said Kathryn Tunnell, project manager for CBBEP. “Removing these harmful materials from our watershed and taking steps to prevent dumping in the future will benefit our Coastal Bend with cleaner water, healthier habitats, and a more aware and engaged public.”

**Up2U+** has established partnerships with ten rural communities where the campaign program will:

1) provide resources to those communities for annual cleanups at existing dump sites,

2) to place dumpsters at ten accessible locations twice a year for proper disposal of large materials, and

3) deliver an education and outreach campaign targeting awareness and promoting proper disposal of bulk waste in coastal bend watersheds.

(more)

The communities identified that may benefit from this program are Bishop, Premont, Sarita, Riviera/Ricardo, Refugio/Woodsboro, Mathis/Lake Shore Garden, Bayside, Banquette, and Jim Wells County (colonias with the greatest need).

“We’re excited to see how the Up2U brand has grown,” said Julie Lewey, deputy executive director for NRA. “We launched this litter prevention campaign 18 years ago on rivers in the upper Nueces Basin, where it still thrives and where 120,000 Up2U yellow litter bags are distributed annually. As more people move to and visit our Texas coastal region, the message of personal responsibility for litter and trash must be carried here too. The **Up2U+** program makes it easier for people to do the right thing.”

The most common types of illegal dumping involve items that are difficult or expensive to dispose of, such as tires, landscape waste, appliances, and furniture. Communities need assistance to clean up existing dump sites, but more importantly, they need support to try and prevent illegal dumping before it happens. The campaign’s bulk waste collection partners are Dawson’s Recycling & Disposal and Reliable Tire.

“We are committed to assisting where we can with education on proper disposal methods and locations that can take items in the future,” said Theresa Kocurek-Finch, Director of Environmental Planning for the CBGOC. “Being able to provide the **Up2U+** program to our rural communities and residents means we can help alleviate the burden of “where am I going to take this waste? I can’t afford to travel to a landfill; what now?”

**Up2U+** is funded by a $406,377 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Trash Free Waters Program. For more information and a schedule of clean up and bulk waste collection events, go to: [www.cbbep.org/up2u](http://www.cbbep.org/up2u)

***About Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program:*** *The Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program is a local non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to protecting and restoring bays and estuaries in the 12-county region known as the Texas Coastal Bend.*

***About Nueces River Authority:*** *The Nueces River Authority (NRA) was created by the Texas legislature in 1935, to meet the needs of the people and environment, ensuring future citizens will have adequate supplies of clean water where both people and wildlife can live, prosper, and enjoy the natural beauty and biologically rich environment of the Nueces River basin.*

***About Coastal Bend Council of Governments:*** *The Council is a voluntary association of cities and counties in the eleven-county region centered around the Corpus Christi metropolitan area. It is one of twenty-four COGs in Texas and was formed in March 1966. The CBCOG is a governmental agency with legal responsibility for multi-jurisdictional planning in numerous program areas, including solid waste management and environmental protection.*

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**Attachments:**

• Media Alert for Up2U+ Launch Bulk Waste Collection Event, 10/20/22

• Flier for Bishop Collection Event, 10/20-29, 2022

• Mp3 files for radio jingle, Spanish & English

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