2026
HIGH SCHOOL VIDEO CONTEST

Entry guidelines and student resources

RRWA
RUSSIAN RIVER WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Sonoma Water

THIS YEAR'S CONTEST THEME IS: *THE FUTURE FLOWS THROUGH US!*

A PSA, or Public Service Announcement, is a short video aimed to spread awareness and inspire others to take action. This theme reflects that taking care of local creeks is more than just neighborhood pride—it's the first step in protecting an entire watershed.

Each stream plays a vital role in filtering water, supporting wildlife, and buffering communities from floods and droughts. When we care for our local creeks, we are actively safeguarding our water resources, providing rich habitats, and demonstrating climate resilience across the entire region.

Students should inspire their community to see a connection to the environment not as distant or abstract, but as something literally flowing through their neighborhoods. The video will help spark individuals to take simple, meaningful actions—starting with the stream around the corner—to build a healthier, more beautiful watershed for all.

Russian River mainstem

NEED INSPIRATION OR MORE INFORMATION?

Check out these water champions! Learn local issues and how to take action

- Russian River Watershed Association
- Streets to Creeks
- Russian Riverkeeper
- Creek Stewardship, SRCity

WHO MAY ENTER THE CONTEST?

Students in grades 9 - 12 attending high school in Sonoma, Mendocino, or northern Marin counties. Non-public school students are welcome to participate. Entries can be an individual or team effort.

Creators and co-creators are eligible to win prize money.
- A student can submit one entry as a creator OR one entry as a co-creator, but not both.
- Maximum of 5 co-creators per video entry. (Prize money is divided between co-creators).

Contributors would be an actor who had a small role in the video and are not eligible to win prize money.
- Contributor does not need to be a high school student.
- No maximum number of contributors.
- Contributors are welcome to contribute to multiple videos.
- You can be a creator on one video entry and a contributor on multiple video entries.

WHAT IS THE PRIZE FOR WINNING THE CONTEST?

Winners of the contest receive the cash awards which are split with 50% going to the creators and 50% to the school they attend.

1st Place is $1,500
2nd Place is $1,000
3rd Place is $500

Creator(s) will receive additional swag and be recognized at an Awards Showcase in the spring to honor student achievements!

First Place Winners 2025 Analy High School

Need help with getting film equipment or editing your video for submission?

Check out **E-Street Studios** with Sonoma County Library!
- FREE equipment to borrow
- Sound recording studios
- Video editing classes & more!

E-Street Studios is open to Sonoma County residents with an active library card.

The Russian River Watershed Association is a coalition of ten cities, counties, and special districts in the Russian River watershed that have come together to coordinate regional programs for clean water, fisheries restoration, and watershed enhancement.

WHAT ARE THE VIDEO SUBMISSION TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS?

Your production needs to be exactly **55 seconds** in length (this includes the **required closing scene** – see more info below).
Recommended video specifications:
- Resolution- 720p (1280x720), 1080p (1920x1080), 4K UHD (3840x2160) or DCI 4K (4096x2160)
- Codec – H.264 preferred
- Frame Rate – 24
- All text must be in title safe area.
- File Type: .MOV or .MP4

All entries must be student-created. The entry may not contain any copyrighted material of any medium (music, images, etc.) and no professional assistance is allowed. Such use will result in an automatic disqualification.

DO NOT delete your original project file until the winners of the contest have been announced. If you place in the top 3, you may still be asked to make modifications to your entry.

WHAT GOES ON THE CLOSING SCENE?

The last scene must feature:
- The Russian River Watershed Association logo (click link for full size image)
- Scene MUST Include: *For more information visit www.rrwatershed.org*

RRWA
RUSSIAN RIVER
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

DOES THE VIDEO NEED TO BE IN ENGLISH?

RRWA welcomes videos in all languages, but please include English subtitles.

CAN I USE VIDEO EDITING SOFTWARE?

You can use video editing software to help make your video, but it is not mandatory. Creative filming and quality narration stand out too!

CHECKLIST OF CRITERIA FOR YOUR VIDEO

- ☐ Does your video inspire and invite community members to take action in caring for our local creeks?
- ☐ Do you explain why creek health is important to maintaining a healthy watershed?
- ☐ Do your images and/or video focus on the Russian River watershed?
- ☐ Did you ensure your information is accurate and up to date?
- ☐ Is your video entertaining, creative, and original?
- ☐ Is the audio and technical construction clear and high quality? (No blurry or pixelated images?)
- ☐ Does the closing scene contain the Russian River Watershed Association Logo and website URL?
- ☐ Did each creator and contributor to your video fill out the **Entry Release Form**? See QR code link
- ☐ Did you clearly label your video file with the last name(s) of the video creator(s)?

Get Ready to SUBMIT!

Complete Entry Release Forms

Submit your Video, Upload your Release Forms and You're IN!

Use this QR code to submit your video

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
11:59 p.m., Thursday, March 26th 2026

Russian River Estuary

HOW WILL THE VIDEO BE SCORED?

An 8-member judging panel including community members and watershed experts rate the videos on the following criteria:

- **Connection to this year's theme**: The video shares a strikingly unique perspective and/or noteworthy idea(s) related to the theme. Viewer is left deeply engaged and wanting to learn more.
- **Creativity and originality**: Video is original, creative, and provides a unique, interesting approach.
- **Entertainment value**: WOW! This video is memorable, hilarious, or remarkable. Video captivates audience.
- **Accuracy of the information**: All information is clear, appropriate, and correct. Clear evidence of understanding and communicating content.
- **Composition**: Video is well planned with smooth transitions, timing and edits. Sound is balanced and easy to hear. All sound and visual elements coincide with the video's message.