

# Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners Regional Stormwater Education Campaign 2011 Summary



## Campaign Background

The Regional Stormwater Education Campaign was initiated in 2003 to assist localities in leveraging funds to achieve common goals regarding stormwater education and outreach and promote consistent messages for fertilizer and pesticide use, pet waste disposal, and motor oil recycling.

The campaign satisfies MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) Phase I and Phase II permit requirements for stormwater education and documenting changes in behavior.

## Key Accomplishments for 2011

- Doody Calls joined as the Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners first business representative, donating \$1,000 worth of service and contributing in-kind to the effort.
- Throughout the course of the campaign, Google, Facebook, and YouTube advertisements appeared over 26 million times on individual computers, with over 85 percent of these ads including action-oriented messages (banner and YouTube ads).
- Approximately, 700 Northern Virginia residents completed the Dog Trivia Quiz and the "What Kind of Dog are You?" Personality Quiz.
- With support from the advertisements, contests, and simply terrific writing and reader engagement, the Northern Virginia Dog Blog surpassed over 1,000 subscribers during the 2011 campaign season.
- Throughout June 2011, three different ads aired on five radio stations approximately 174 times, reaching out to approximately 967,000 individuals.
- Additionally, the Partners sponsored the "Wag Your Words" Essay Contest, awarding \$5,000 to three local dog-related charities who submitted essays. Visitors cast over 2,300 votes for the various essays, which all included a "scoop the poop" message. Caring Hearts Rescue, Inc won the grand prize with their essay "Great Expectations."
- An online poll survey of 500 Northern Virginia residents took place to determine the effectiveness of the blog and ads, to reveal any changes in behavior, and to aid in directing the future efforts of the campaign.
- In spring 2011, the campaign main website ([www.onlyrain.org](http://www.onlyrain.org)) received a facelift. Traffic on the campaign's website remains steady with over 500 visitors spending an average of two minutes on the site.

For more information or to join, please visit:  
[www.onlyrain.org](http://www.onlyrain.org)

## At a Glance:

Impressions and Visits to Website by Media Type

Media Type	Impressions	# of Visits to the Website
Online	26,266,774	24,257
Text Ads	23,887,641	-
YouTube Ads	11,981	-
Banner Ads	2,367,152	-
Radio	967,000	104
<b>Campaign Total</b>	<b>27,233,774</b>	<b>24,361</b>



Through the Northern Virginia Dog Blog, the Partners hosted the Wag Your Words! Essay Contest in Summer 2011 to promote responsible dog ownership. Six animal shelters and charities submitted essays and compete through online voting for \$5000 in grants to use toward veterinary care, spaying and neutering, dog food, and pet owner education.

Congratulations to:  
1<sup>st</sup> Place: Caring Hearts Rescue, Inc.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Pet Assistance League of Virginia  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Friends of Homeless Animals

# Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners Regional Stormwater Education Campaign 2011 Survey Highlights

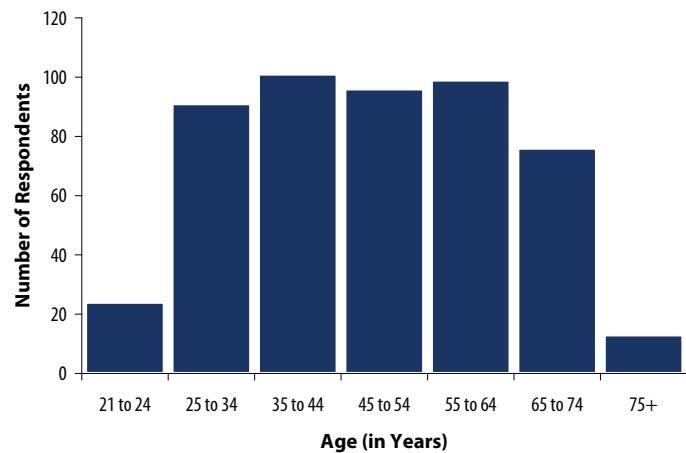
## Overview of Survey Process

Occurred: July 2011  
 Total number of Northern Virginia residents surveyed: 500  
 Survey method: Online Poll, performed by Amplitude Research  
 Confidence interval: 95 percent

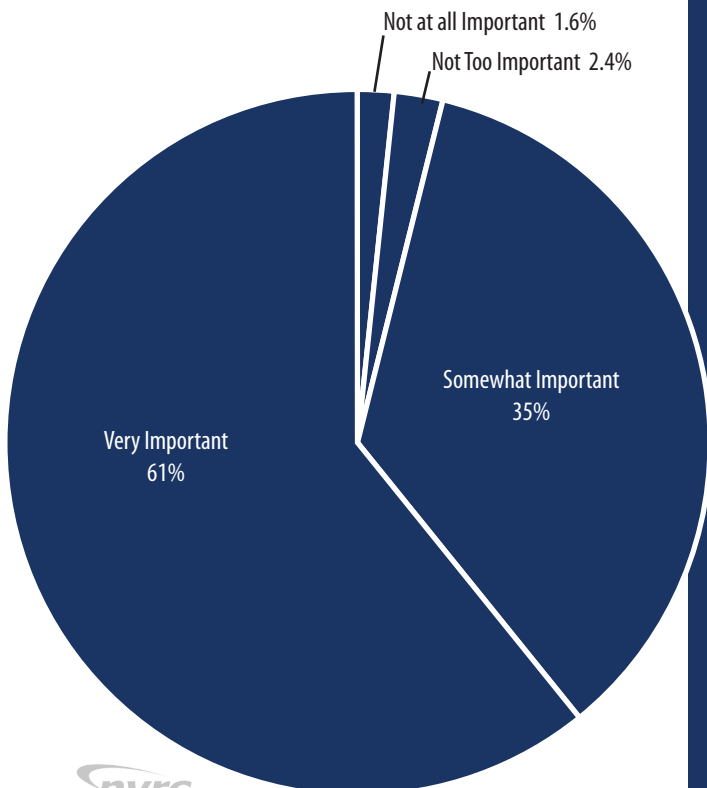
## Respondent Characteristics

- Gender is split fairly evenly between males (48%) and females (52%)
- More than 8-in-10 respondents own their home (84%)
- One-fifth of the respondents have lived in their current residence for 20 or more years. However, the majority (57%) have lived in their current residence for less than 10 years.
- Nearly 4-in-10 (38%) indicate that they believe they live in the Potomac River Watershed. However, 62% do not know or do not believe they live in the Potomac River Watershed.
- Over one-third of respondents (35%) recall hearing or seeing advertisements about picking up pet waste, not dumping motor oil, fertilizing less often, and/or reducing water pollution.

Age Distribution of Respondents



How Important do you feel the actions of individuals are in protecting water quality in local streams, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay?



## Northern Virginia Resident Behaviors

### Pet Waste

Three quarters of the respondents pick up their pet's waste every time it goes on walks. At home, two-thirds of the respondents pick it up at least weekly. The majority of respondents are more motivated to pick up their pet's waste because it is the neighborly thing to do or because they don't want to step in it versus maintaining and improving water quality.

### Lawn Care

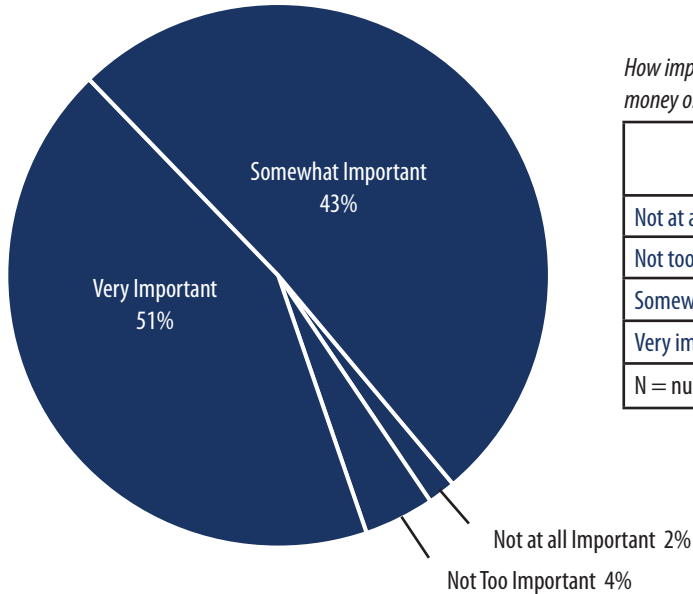
Nearly one-third reported that they never fertilize their lawn. However, an additional one-third report that they fertilize two or more times a year. Those who fertilize once a year are more likely to do so in the spring months.

### Motor Oil

The vast majority of respondents reported that they use an oil change service, when their vehicle needs an oil change. Among the minority who change their own vehicle oil, most of them reported taking the old motor oil to a place where it can be recycled. Only two respondents reported putting old motor oil in the trash, and no one reported dumping it in the gutter or down the sink.

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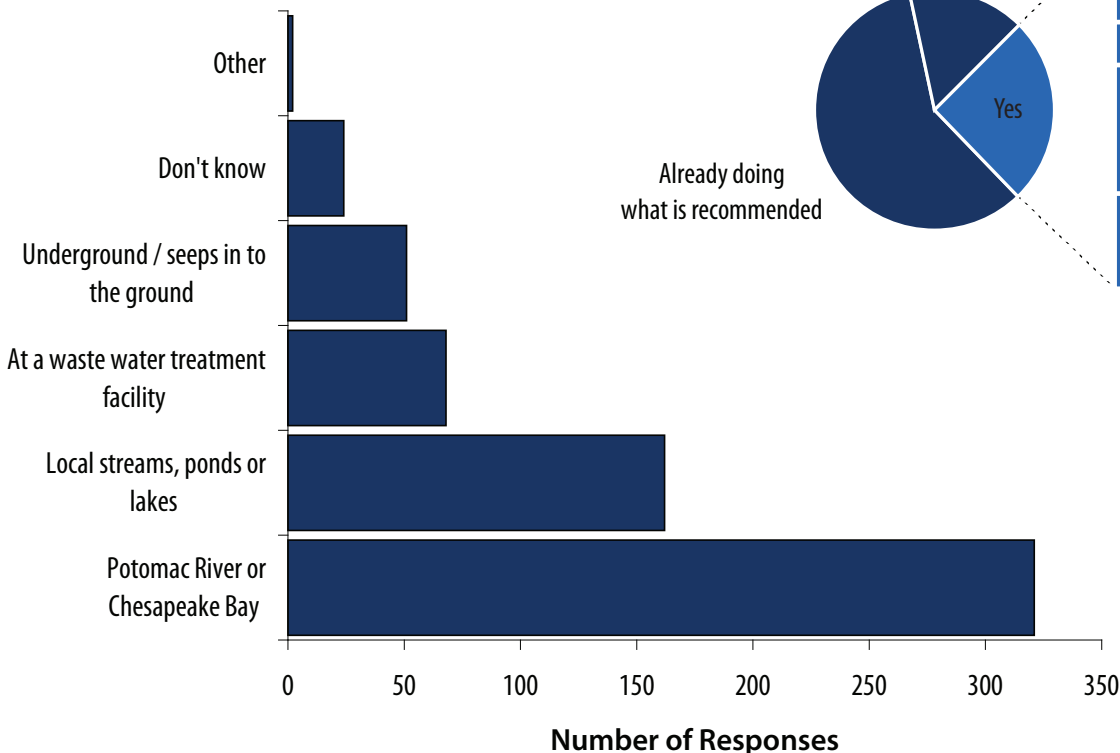
How important do you think it is for local governments to spend more money on protecting water quality?



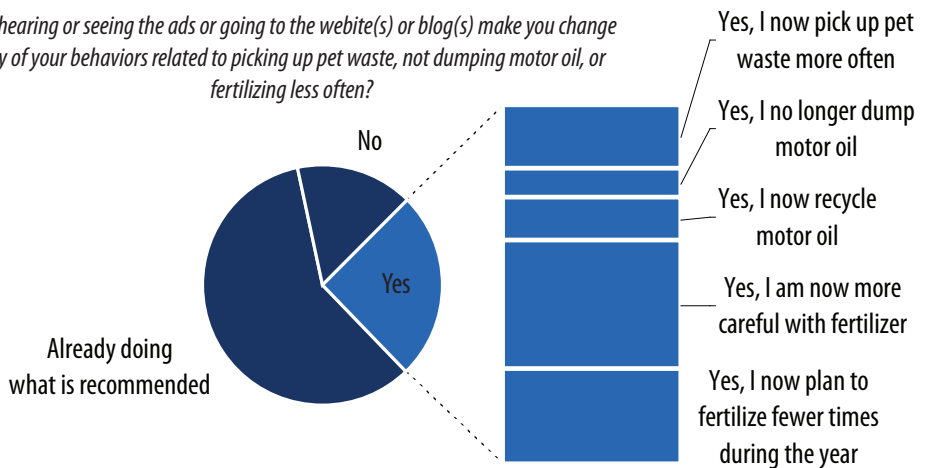
How important do you think it is for local governments to spend more money on protecting water quality? Responses per jurisdiction.

	Alexandria	Arlington	Fairfax Inclusive	Leesburg/Loudoun	Dumfries/Stafford
Not at all important	0%	2%	1%	3%	5%
Not too important	2%	9%	4%	3%	0%
Somewhat important	46%	40%	45%	43%	38%
Very important	52%	49%	50%	51%	57%
N = number of respondents	54	55	269	61	61

Where do you believe storm water eventually ends up?



Did hearing or seeing the ads or going to the website(s) or blog(s) make you change any of your behaviors related to picking up pet waste, not dumping motor oil, or fertilizing less often?





# Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners Regional Stormwater Education Campaign Trends

## Social Media & Search Engine Preferences

While approximately one-third (34%) reported that they don't usually use social media, this leaves approximately two-thirds (66%) who do, with more than half (56%) reporting that they use Facebook regularly. Additionally, when asked about search engines usage, Google was the preferred choice by more than eight-in-ten (84%).



## Motivations and Trends

Over the last five years, survey results show that the majority of Northern Virginia residents are supportive of local governments' spending money on protecting water quality. They believe that the role of individuals is equally as important. Most residents indicate that they take their vehicles to a service station to change their oil or they recycle their used motor oil. However, visitors to the [onlyrain.org](http://onlyrain.org) website are using keywords that suggest many Northern Virginians are still searching for locations to recycle their used motor oil. Similarly, most Northern Virginia residents pick up after their pets because they see it as the right thing to do. For both of these issues, water quality concerns do not raise to the forefront. The reasons for doing them revolve around convenience and being good neighbors.

**Top five** perceived causes of pollution in local streams, the Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay:

1. Fertilizers & pesticides from lawns and gardens
2. Garbage/Trash/Litter
3. Polluted runoff from streets & parking lots
4. Factories/Industrial wastes
5. Gas, oil, & exhaust from automobiles

The 2011 survey was the first time that respondents made it clear that they perceive fertilizers and pesticides from lawns and gardens as the number one cause of pollution in the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. This is revealing since over a third of the survey respondents state that they fertilize their property two or more times per year. So it appears that there is still a disconnect between what people perceive as the cause of pollution and the actions they are willing to take when it comes to lawn care. Perhaps efforts to make good lawn care practices more convenient coupled with the idea that Potomac River/Chesapeake Bay-friendly lawns are what good neighbors do will help to narrow this gap. Then again, the survey reveals that only 4 in 10 respondents knew that they lived in the Potomac River Watershed.

The Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners is a multi-disciplined group of local governments and drinking water and sanitation authorities working together to address the common issues surrounding pollution prevention, stormwater management, and source water protection.

The primary goal of the partnership is to reduce stormwater-related pollution from entering local waterways.

## Working together we can have healthy streams and rivers.

Only Rain Down the Drain  
[www.onlyrain.org](http://www.onlyrain.org)  
[www.northern-virginia-dog-blog.com](http://www.northern-virginia-dog-blog.com)

### 2011 Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners

- Fairfax County
- Arlington County
- Loudoun County
- Stafford County
- Fairfax Water
- City of Alexandria
- Loudoun Water
- Alexandria Sanitation Authority
- City of Fairfax
- Town of Herndon
- City of Falls Church
- Town of Leesburg
- Town of Vienna
- Town of Dumfries
- Doody Calls
- Northern Virginia Regional Commission
- Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program