



WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY STREAMS AND RIVERS

Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners

2012 Summary

About the Partnership

The Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners is a multi-disciplined group of local governments, drinking water and sanitation authorities, and individual businesses 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.

To meet this goal, the Partners work together to:

- Educate the region's residents on simple ways to reduce pollution around their homes,
- Monitor changes in behavior through surveys and other data collection techniques, and
- Pilot new cost-effective opportunities for public outreach and education.

Members include stormwater program managers, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit managers, communication directors, public information officers, water quality compliance specialists, and environmental planners.

Membership is voluntary. However, the partnership provides a cost-effective means to meet mandatory state and federal stormwater requirements. By working together the partners are able to leverage their available funds to develop and place bi-lingual products with common messages and themes, thereby extending their individual reach.

Regional Stormwater Education Campaign

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

For more information visit www.onlyrain.org



Partners

The Partnership is open to any municipal government in and around Northern Virginia. A full list of the organizations participating in the 2012 campaign year is provided on the back of this summary.



Overview of Campaign Efforts

Throughout the campaign year, the Partners made the following efforts to increase the reach of their messages:

- Expanded the partnership and the campaign reach into D.C. and Maryland by aligning with the Community Engagement Campaign, managed by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.
- Supported two Metro DC-wide blogs that target dog owners and residential gardeners.
- Transferred the blogs to a Blogger platform, managed by Google.
- Ran four online quizzes and contests to encourage new blog readers and to further promote campaign messages.
- Conducted 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.



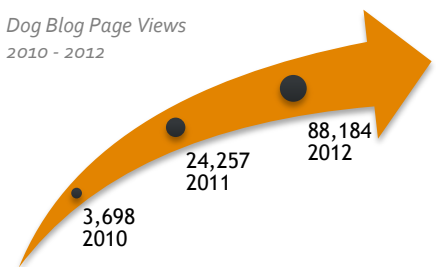
- In April 2012, two radio ads featuring messages on the importance of picking up pet waste and general household stormwater pollution reduction measures aired on three popular radio stations, including one Spanish speaking station a total of 236 times. These ads reached approximately 54,563 Northern Virginia residents and resulted in over 200 visits to the www.onlyrain.org website
- Conducted mini-campaign featuring banner ads that promote alternatives to chemical fertilizer use. ➤



Accomplishments (9/14/2011 - 8/31/2012)

- 16,107,416** Online Advertising Impressions*
- 88,184** Blog and Facebook Page Views**
- 54,563** Estimated Reach of Radio Ads
- 16,286** Online Interactions***
- 4,725** Email/RSS Subscribers, Facebook Fans, and Twitter Followers
- 500** Online Annual Survey Responses

Dog Blog Page Views 2010 - 2012



*Impressions are the number of times an ad appeared on a single computer screen.

**Page Views indicate the number of visitors to the blog and Facebook pages.

***Online Interactions include comments, poll entries, contest activity, "likes," etc.



Main cause of water pollution...

For the second year in a row, the majority of survey respondents stated fertilizers and pesticides as the main cause of pollution in the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.



Where stormwater goes...

Over 90 percent of Northern Virginia residents surveyed stated that stormwater goes to the Potomac River, the Chesapeake Bay, or to local streams and rivers.



97%

Stated the actions of individuals in protecting water quality in local streams, the Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay is important.



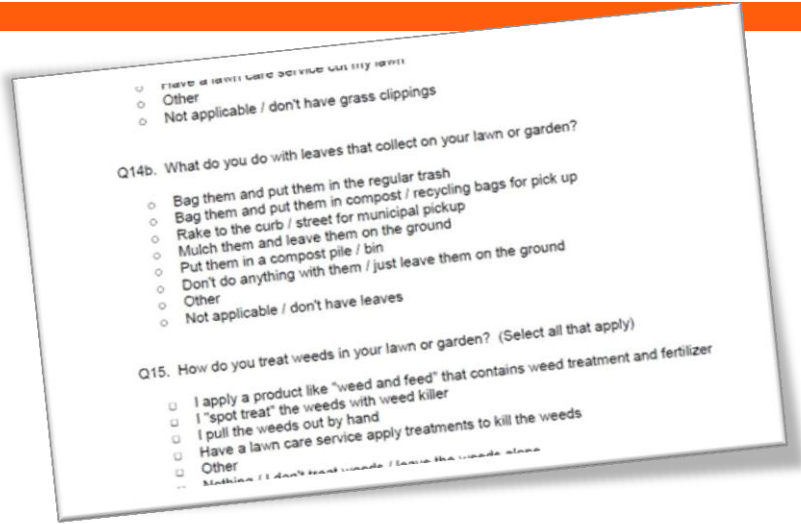
73%

Would be more likely to take actions to reduce the amounts of pollutants they personally put into storm drains, after learning that polluted water runoff is the number one cause of local water pollution.



95%

Believe it is important for local governments to spend more money on protecting water quality.



Annual Survey Highlights

To assist in determining the effectiveness of the campaign at increasing awareness and changing behaviors, after each campaign year, the Partners conduct an online annual survey of 500 Northern Virginia residents.

Findings in the 2012 survey include:

- ➔ One-fourth of the respondents recalled hearing or seeing advertisements on the internet or on the radio.
- ➔ Of those who recalled the ads, six percent state they now pick up their pet waste more often, 15 percent state that they are more careful with fertilizer, and seven percent fertilize fewer times per year
- ➔ The number of respondents choosing litter or industrial pollution as the number one source of pollution decreased as compared with previous surveys.
- ➔ Forty-two percent of respondents knew they live in Potomac River watershed, up from 39 percent in 2011.
- ➔ Interestingly, almost 77 percent of people surveyed reported that they always pick up after their pet, as compared with 30 percent in previous surveys.
- ➔ More than half of the respondents (57%) prefer to receive information from online sources. Newspaper (18%) and television (16%) were the next two information sources.

Understanding Behaviors

In addition to capturing responses to questions regarding the effectiveness of the campaign, this year's survey honed in on the current behaviors of Northern Virginia residents as they relate to pet waste management, lawn care, and motor oil disposal. Responses to these questions support the development of future messages and targeted promotion.

Dog owners are motivated to pick up their pet's waste because "It's what good neighbors do" or "They don't want to step in it." They believe that dog waste disposal stations are (or would be) useful.

A third of the lawn and garden owners fertilize their lawns two or more times per year; an equal number never fertilize their lawns. One in ten fertilize once in the fall. Sixty percent pull their weeds by hand, while others "spot treat" or have a lawn care service apply treatments.

Two new questions related to rain barrels and rain gardens were added to the survey to better understand how they are applied across the region. Among those who heard of a rain barrel, seven percent reported using one at home, while four percent of the respondents have both heard of a rain garden and have one at home.

The majority of Northern Virginia residents take their vehicle to a service station to change their oil (85%) or take used oil to a gas station or hazmat facility for recycling (12%). Only one percent of Northern Virginians store used motor oil in their garage or place it in the trash

Contest Winners

3rd Annual Dog Blog Essay Contest

Based on the success of the 2010 and 2011 "Wag Your Words" Essay Contests, the Partners repeated the effort. Eleven non-profit organizations submitted an entry into the "Bark Your Piece" contest, which resulted in 10,360 votes.

Congratulations to the following shelters and charities who received \$5,000 in grants to use toward veterinary care, spaying and neutering, dog food, and pet owner education:

1st Place: "It's All about Respect"
Oldies but Goodies Cocker Spaniel Rescue

2nd Place: "A Howl for Change"
Homeward Trails

3rd Place: "Got Responsibility?"
Pet Assistance League of Virginia

Green Gardeners Photo Contest

In partnership with the members of the Community Engagement Campaign, the partners co-hosted a photo contest. Participants were asked to submit photos reflecting eco-friendly landscaping practices.

Qualifying photos were then moved into a voting round, where site visitors could vote for their favorite photo. Approximately 930 votes were cast.

Congratulations to the following individuals who received a tremendous prize package, featuring gardening supplies.

1st Place: Nancy Striniste of Arlington, VA

2nd Place: Gemma Evans of College Park, MD



Nancy Striniste's home in Arlington County, VA features a living rooftop, rain garden, rain chain, rain barrel, native vegetation, and other playful elements that stir the imagination.

Only Rain
Down the
Drain

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2012 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 | MWCOC | Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program

Thank you to our campaign management team:

Water Words That Work, LLC
Right On Time Media, Inc
Amplitude Research, Inc

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Northern Virginia Regional Commission