



Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners

2015 Summary

WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY STREAMS AND RIVERS

Polluted stormwater runoff is the number one cause of poor water quality in streams and rivers in Northern Virginia. When it rains and water runs off city streets, suburban yards and parking lots, it picks up pesticides, grass clippings, and fertilizer from lawns, bacteria from pet waste, as well as petroleum and oil from driveways and parking lots. Don't forget about the sediment from construction sites or the litter and cigarette butts from the sidewalk. All of this pollution enters the storm drains on the street and is discharged directly to a stream. It is not filtered or sent to a sanitary sewage facility.

To reduce the impacts of stormwater pollution, the Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners aims to change human behaviors in our cities and neighborhoods through a public awareness and education campaign.

The Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners is comprised of 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.

"Only Rain Down the Storm Drain" is the motto of the partnership.

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 and each member pays annual dues to fund the program. 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 bilingual educational products with common

messages and themes, thereby extending their individual reach.

Regional Stormwater Education Campaign

The Annual 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 high priority water quality issues.

The 2015 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



About the Partnership

The Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners is open to any water and sewer district, government agency, or school system in and around Northern Virginia.



2015 Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners

Fairfax County | Arlington County | Loudoun County | Stafford County | Fairfax Water | City of Alexandria | Loudoun Water | 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 | George Mason University | Fairfax County Public Schools | Arlington County Public Schools | Northern Virginia Community College | Prince William County Public Schools



2015 Campaign Overview

In 2015, the Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners used television, print, internet advertising and the Only Rain Down the Storm Drain website to distribute messages linked to specific stormwater problems, such as proper pet waste disposal, over fertilization of lawns and gardens and proper disposal of motor oil. In addition to the multi-channel media campaign, educational events hosted throughout the Northern Virginia region also raised awareness and encouraged positive behavior change in residents. The television and internet ads featured the well known national symbol of non-point source pollution; the rubber ducky.



Throughout the campaign year, the Partners made the following efforts to educate the public and promote awareness of stormwater pollution:

- From July 2014 through August 2015, four Public Service Announcements featuring messages on the importance of picking up pet waste and general household stormwater pollution reduction measures aired on 19 English language cable TV channels, and three Spanish speaking channels a total of 6,818 times.



2015 Accomplishments

- The campaign also featured banner ads on Xfinity.com and Cox.com websites that promote the same messages as the cable TV ads.
- The internet banner ads resulted in over 300 click thrus to the www.onlyrain.org website.



- Conducted an online poll survey of 500 Northern Virginia residents to determine the effectiveness of the ads, to reveal any changes in behavior, and to aid in directing the future efforts of the campaign.



- Attended various community events to promote awareness of proper disposal of pet waste and water friendly lawn care tips.
- Continued to update and maintain the Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners website. ➤

4,808,970	Total household television impressions*
895,897	Total digital impressions including internet banner ads and in-stream video ads
6,818	Number of times the ads aired on television from July 2014 – June 2015
14,699	Visits to the www.onlyrain.org website
500	Online Annual Survey Responses

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



Annual Survey Highlights



Main cause of water pollution...

For the fifth year in a row, the majority of survey respondents stated fertilizers and pesticides as the number one cause of pollution in local streams, the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.



Where stormwater goes...

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



90%

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



70%

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.



96%

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

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 2015 survey include:

- 🦆 9 percent of the respondents recalled hearing or seeing advertisements that featured rubber duckies on the internet or on TV about reducing water pollution.
- 🦆 Of those who recalled the ads, nine percent state they now pick up their pet waste more often, four percent state that they now properly dispose of motor oil, and 11 percent state they plan to fertilize fewer times per year.
- 🦆 The number of respondents choosing "Polluted runoff from streets and parking lots" as the number one cause of pollutions has increased significantly over the past four years from 17 percent in 2011 to 24 percent in 2015.
- 🦆 41 percent of respondents knew they live in the Potomac River watershed, up from 38 percent in 2011.
- 🦆 Interestingly, 82 percent of people surveyed reported that they always pick up after their pet, as compared with 30 percent in previous surveys.
- 🦆 When shown the Only Rain Down the Storm Drain logo, 60 percent of the respondents recognized the compared to 54 percent in 2013 suggesting that awareness of the logo has increased over time.
- 🦆 85 percent of respondents were familiar with rain barrels, and 67 percent stated they already have a rain barrel or are interested in getting one
- 🦆 38 percent of respondents were familiar with rain gardens, with 56 percent already having a rain garden or interested in installing one.
- 🦆 More than half of the respondents (51%) prefer to receive information from online sources. Newspaper (21%) and television (13%) were the next two preferred 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.

The most important reason dog owners are motivated to pick up their pet's waste is because "It's what good neighbors do". The number of respondents choosing "It causes water pollution" as the most important reason to pick it up has fluctuated but remains the third most common reason.

A third of the lawn and garden owners fertilize their lawns two or more times per year; an equal number never fertilize their lawns. Among those who fertilize once a year, 15 percent fertilize in the spring and only eight percent fertilize in the fall. This suggests that there is room to educate more residents of Northern Virginia that fertilizing in the fall is better for local waterways than fertilizing in the spring.

About half of the respondents reported using an herbicide to treat weeds in their lawn or garden.

To better understand behavior related to the application of fertilizer, three new questions about fertilizer were added to the 2013 survey. Among those who fertilize their lawn, 71 percent have never had or were not sure if their soil had been tested for fertility or pH and four-in-ten reported using a slow release N fertilizer. When asked where they get information to decide when and how much fertilizer to apply the top three most commonly selected responses were "Follow directions on the bag" (52%), followed by "Lawn service conducts the applications" (31%), and then "Eyeball it based on size of lawn" (7%).

The majority of respondents 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 (11%). Less than two percent of Northern Virginians reported storing used motor oil in their garage, placing it in the trash or dumping it down the storm drain.

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Drain
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Town of Herndon | City of Falls Church | Town of Leesburg | Town of Vienna |
Town of Dumfries | Doody Calls | Northern Virginia Regional Commission | George Mason
University | Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program | Northern Virginia Community College |
Fairfax County Public Schools | Arlington County Public Schools | Prince William County Public
Schools



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