

Section 8: EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

INTRODUCTION

Education and public awareness is essential to effective water resources management. The 2003 Watershed Management Plan developed an education and public awareness program that has made significant progress in reaching the Metro Water District population with its messages on stormwater, non-point source pollution and watershed protection over the last five years.

The Metro Water District education and public awareness program is specifically designed to:

- Raise public awareness of water issues and needs to foster support for solutions;
- Educate the public and other identified target groups in order to increase awareness and encourage behavioral changes; and
- Coordinate with other public as well as private entities to maximize the visibility of the Metro Water District and its messages.

The Metro Water District education and public awareness program is comprised of two elements: a regional program managed by the Metro Water District staff; and education activities undertaken by local governments. The Metro Water District provides a regional education and public awareness program through the Clean Water Campaign. The Clean Water Campaign works through the Education TCC to expand upon the key watershed management themes identified in this plan and develop mass media content and educational tools. The local government's role in the education and public awareness program is to reach out to specific groups in their community, provide education materials and share knowledge of subject matters with the public through specific education and outreach activities. Without local implementation of the education program the full potential of this plan cannot be realized.

The following pages outline the key messages, the identified targeted audiences and the various delivery techniques. This is followed by an overview of the Metro Water District's regional education and public awareness program and activities. The final part of this section includes the local education and public awareness requirements.

EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS APPROACH

WATERSHED MESSAGES

The Metro Water District along with the Watershed TCC has created central messages, identified below, for both the regional and local watershed management education and public awareness program:

- Everything we do, where we work, live or play can impact our water resources
- We are all part of the solution to stormwater pollution
- Clean water for drinking, recreation and economic benefits need to be protected for future generations

Section 8: EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

- Watershed stewardship: It is the responsibility of everyone to protect our water resources
- We all live downstream

TARGET AUDIENCES

Identifying stakeholders helps in tailoring messages and education materials. While regional watershed messages will be consistent, specific information may be more applicable to certain audiences. The Metro Water District has identified the appropriate target audiences for the Watershed Management Plan in Table 8-1.

TABLE 8-1

Education Focus for Target Audience

Target Audience	Education Focus
General Public	Basic concepts of stormwater runoff and non-point source pollution including how their actions on the local level can impact water quality.
Students / Schools	General knowledge about water pollution and prevention. Work with school systems to incorporate water pollution prevention lesson plans into current curriculum. Getting these messages to students through educators is important in protecting our future water quality.
Homeowners / Urban Agriculture / Golf Courses	Proper fertilizer and pesticide use on gardens and landscapes and proper disposal of grass clippings and leaves in order to protect nearby water sources. Use of low impact practices, such as rain gardens, to mitigate runoff.
Auto / Body Shop Owners	Proper disposal, cleanup and recycle methods of auto fluids and parts to prevent water pollution.
Builders / Developers / Design Professionals	Best management practices on proper disposal of construction materials, erosion and sedimentation control, low impact development and buffer protection.
Restaurant / Food Service / Hospitality	Proper disposal of cleaning supplies, trash, fats, oils and greases.
Heavy / Light Industrial	Best management practices for water pollution prevention.
Water Professionals	Metro Water District Watershed Management Plan goals and requirements.
Local Government Staff	Educate local government staff such as D.O.T, parks and recreation, code enforcement, planning and zoning, etc. on best management practices that affect water quality.
Local Elected Officials / Governing Boards	Importance of promoting and sufficiently funding the implementation of best management practices in order to protect local watersheds.

DELIVERY TECHNIQUES

There are a number of ways to reach target audiences in a public education effort both at a local and regional level. Some examples of these delivery methods are outlined below.

Internet

- **Website** – An internet site or page can provide an inexpensive way to foster awareness and education of stormwater management and watershed protection issues at the community or regional level. A website can also serve as an information clearinghouse for other educational materials, and provide resources and additional links for target groups such as the general public, the development communities, and various industries.
- **Email** – Email newsletters can provide information on upcoming outreach events as well as tips on nonpoint source pollution control for targeted audiences and the general public. Email is often the least expensive way to reach a larger number of individuals and entities.
- **Streaming media** – Tools such as streaming audio and video, webcasts, online training workshops, and other interactive electronic media tools can provide additional opportunities for reaching target audiences.

Printed Materials

- **Brochures & Fact Sheets** – Brochures, fact sheets and other literature can be for general information or provide messages and tips specific to a particular topic or target group. Printed materials often complement other education and public awareness activities such as public outreach events, workshops, and on-site inspections of businesses.
- **Bill Inserts** – Printed materials can be designed to accompany utility bills or other correspondence to local citizens and businesses. Inserts can include brochures, newsletters, tips on best management practices and events notices. Bill inserts are an excellent way to distribute educational materials without additional postage expenses.
- **CD / DVDs and DVD-ROMs** are mediums for providing interactive educational material and are especially well-suited for youth and classroom education. In addition, video DVD's can be used to distribute content such as public service announcements (PSAs), video programs, and instructional/training videos.
- **Posters** – Wall posters provide a great deal of information quickly to the target audience at a stationary location and can be displayed at locations such as libraries, schools, and other public locations.

Mass Media

- **Press Relations** – Both local communities and the Metro Water District can work with the media to ensure coverage of stormwater and watershed protection issues and activities. This can include both articles and events listings in general circulation newspapers, specialty papers, and regional magazines; radio and television interviews; features on radio and television news and public affairs programming; and coverage of events such as watershed fairs and stream cleanups.
- **Television Public Service Announcements** – Television advertising using PSAs provide an immediate impact with a visual message. Broadcast channels reach a wide audience but are high-priced. Cable television offers local communities the ability to target their citizens and even tailor advertising to specific channels and audiences.

Section 8: EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

- **Radio Public Service Announcements** – Radio PSAs are an alternative to television and provide a less expensive way to reach a large number of individuals with messages and nonpoint source pollution tips.
- **Outdoor Advertising** – Billboards and other outdoor advertising such as bus shelter ads can be a way to reach audiences through a different medium. These outdoors ads are well suited to short theme messages and specific tips on stormwater pollution prevention.
- **Other Advertising** – Other advertising methods that may be considered include movie theater PSAs, paid ads in newspapers and print magazines, and sponsorship of traffic and/or weather spots on radio.

Outreach and Involvement

- **Workshops** – Workshops and seminars are opportunities to provide more detailed information and training to citizens, businesses and industry groups.
- **Speakers Bureau** – A speakers bureau provides an opportunity for government staff and other professionals to address community organizations, business groups, homeowners' associations, church groups and educational institutions on issues related to stormwater and watershed management.
- **Events** – Hosting or participation in community events provides an opportunity for the distribution of information and resources directly to target communities. In addition, topic-specific events such as watershed fairs, river/stream cleanups and storm drain stenciling are an important way to involve citizens directly in watershed management efforts.
- **Kiosks / Exhibits** – A kiosk or exhibit provides a way to present information and educational messages at workshops and other events. Exhibits may be permanent or portable and can have static displays, videos, or interactive features. Portable display boards are often effective for use at events or workshops.
- **Promotional Items** – Promotional giveaways such as magnets, pencils and bumper stickers can be imprinted with pollution prevention messages and tips and distributed at community events, schools and workshops.

REGIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The previous sections of this chapter outlined the messages, the target audiences and the educational tools needed to deliver the watershed messages. Over the years, the Metro Water District has developed a comprehensive education and public awareness plan that includes all the elements outlined in this section. A regional public awareness and education plan has many benefits including reducing duplication of effort, improving cost effectiveness by sharing costs, and expanding the size and scale of education efforts to include mass media such as television and radio advertising.

These benefits were recognized in 2000 by 19 metro area local governments that formed the Clean Water Campaign, a regional stormwater education program. In order to maximize local governments' education funds, the Clean Water Campaign became the Metro Water District's comprehensive stormwater education campaign which provides a variety of educational resources such as brochures, posters, teacher lesson plans, television PSAs, videos and promotional items as outlined in Table 8-2.

Section 8: EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

TABLE 8-2

Education Materials Available through the Clean Water Campaign

Educational Tools	Description
Brochures	The Metro Water District provides camera ready brochures for local governments to personalize with their own logo and contact information. These files are available for all Clean Water Campaign educational materials.
CD/DVD	The Metro Water District provides a number of educational materials such as PowerPoint presentations, videos and public service announcements.
Presentations	The Metro Water District provides pre-packaged presentations with speaker's notes on a variety of topics such as Lawn Care, Rain Gardens, Composting and Auto Care.
Posters	The Metro Water District provides a number of stormwater posters appropriate for all ages. The posters focus on simple ways to prevent water pollution, such as picking up after pets and properly disposing of yard waste. Posters are also available for lawn care and auto care professionals.
Clean Water Campaign Website	The Metro Water District provides a comprehensive stormwater education campaign, the Clean Water Campaign. The Clean Water Campaign has a website at cleanwatercampaign.com . This website provides general information on stormwater pollution prevention, an events calendar, and multimedia resources. This website also allows citizens to report polluters anonymously.
Storm Drain Stencils	The Metro Water District provides stencils to local governments in order to encourage local youth, civic and neighborhood groups to mark storm drains in order to educate others about the importance of not littering and keeping our waterways clean.
Exhibits	The Metro Water District has an exhibit display and "water drop" costume available to loan to local governments for community events. The exhibit display has stormwater pollution prevention facts and tips. Local governments can also customize the exhibit board with local information.
Press Materials	The Metro Water District provides templates for press releases, fact sheets, news articles, flyers, mailers and newsletter inserts to be used by local governments.

A large part of the regional education program is the media campaign. The regional media campaign is made up of paid advertising through a variety of outlets such as television, radio, outdoor and theatre advertising. In the past, the Metro Water District has partnered with local television stations to air the stormwater PSAs and create additional water pollution prevention PSAs with local weather personalities.

Clean Water Campaign messages are also developed into radio PSAs or embedded into traffic reports on nearly 30 radio stations within the Atlanta region. The media campaign has proven successful in educating the public on water pollution prevention. An annual survey is conducted on behalf of the Clean Water Campaign to gauge the effectiveness of the regional education campaign. The survey reveals overwhelmingly that the public are aware of the Clean Water Campaign and its messages.

Section 8: EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Another component of the regional education campaign is the annual essay contest. The Metro Water District essay contest encourages middle school students within the District to write an essay on water quality and water conservation. The Metro Water District recognizes one winner from each county and one overall District winner.

Moving forward into the next five years, the Metro Water District regional education and public awareness program will continue to focus on water pollution prevention messages as it relates to identified target groups such as homeowners, restaurants and business owners. The Metro Water District will continue to support the messages of all three plans by building upon the current educational resources. The Metro Water District will continue to work through the Education TCC and Metro Water District staff to develop materials and provide resources that will assist local governments.

LOCAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The goal of local education programs is to achieve awareness of water resource protection issues with the goal of building public support for local actions and activities as well as changing behaviors that lead to the long-term protection of our water resources. Involving the public in local watershed protection efforts is crucial because it promotes broader public support, helps create an ethic of stewardship and community service and enables the public to make informed choices about water resources management. Changes in basic behavior and practices are necessary to achieve maximum long-term improvements in water quality.

On a local level, Metro Water District communities are responsible for developing their own local education and public awareness programs that help both individual citizens as well as businesses and organizations to become aware of their role in watershed protection. This includes general information on stormwater management and issues as well as ways to prevent common sources of nonpoint source pollution.

LOCAL EDUCATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

When developing a local education and public awareness program, communities are required to include both public education and outreach, as well as public participation and involvement activities:

- **Education and outreach activities** are designed to distribute education materials and message, and perform outreach to inform citizens and target audiences.
- **Public participation and involvement activities** provide opportunities for citizens to participate in programs and active implementation of watershed protection programs, such as Adopt-A-Stream training, watershed fairs, and storm drain stenciling.

Communities in the Metro Water District are required to implement a minimum number of education and outreach, and public participation and involvement activities annually as part of their local education program as shown in Table 8-3. Table 8-4 provides some examples of activities that could be considered as public education/outreach versus public participation and involvement. These minimum education and outreach programs may be undertaken in coordination with other Metro Water District communities, local water/wastewater providers, or other public or private entities such as Keep Georgia Beautiful affiliates.

Section 8: EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

TABLE 8-3
Minimum Local Education Activity Requirements

Population	Education and Outreach Activities	Public Participation and Involvement Activities
< 50,000	2	2
> 50,000	3	3

TABLE 8-4
Example Activities

Education / Outreach Programs	Public Involvement / Participation Programs
Bill inserts or newsletters Brochures at local government facilities Website with stormwater education information Local cable access programming Speakers bureau presentations Kiosks and displays Press releases Community workshops School classroom education Other innovative education and outreach program	Stream cleanup event Stream monitoring program Watershed festival Roadside litter cleanup Storm drain stenciling Stormwater citizen advisory group Community cleanup event Other innovative public involvement and participation program

Section 8: EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

TABLE 8-5
Watershed Public Education Resources

Materials	Materials Description / Resource Location
Metro Water District Materials	
Clean Water Campaign Resources	Various water resource and pollution prevention printed media, audio and video and teachers resources. http://www.cleanwatercampaign.com
Georgia EPD Materials	
Pollution Prevention Assistance Division	Pollution prevention guidance for businesses and industry http://www.p2ad.org
Georgia Project Wet	Water Education Resources for Teachers http://gaprojectwet.org
Adopt-a-Stream	Volunteer Water Sampling and Monitoring Program http://www.georgiaadoptastream.org
River of Words	Poetry, Writing and Art program for K-12 http://gaprojectwet.org/gawet_row.html
Rivers Alive	Annual Volunteer Waterway Cleanup http://www.riversalive.com
Georgia Outdoors	Public Broadcasting Television Show to inform about preserving Georgia's Natural Resources http://www.gpb.org
Other Education Materials	
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Stormwater Outreach Materials and Reference Documents http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwatermonth.cfm
Center for Watershed Protection	http://www.cwp.org
Georgia Association of Water Professionals	Student and Teacher Resources link to materials websites all water resources http://www.gawponline.org
University of Georgia (UGA) Urban Agriculture	http://ugaonsite.com/