

Chapter 9



Educating and Informing the Public About Stormwater Quality

Often the job of maintenance personnel is more difficult because of public actions that result in wastes and other pollutants being spilled or dumped into storm sewers and streams. For several years, agencies have been identifying ways to make residents aware of how their actions are harming the environment. One of the most effective means of increasing public awareness from a maintenance aspect is first educating the agency staff themselves. Once this is accomplished, crews can be supplied with informational flyers to pass out to the public, or with doorhangers that can be distributed in neighborhoods or industrial areas where problems are being observed. The flyers or doorhangers should include a description of the actions creating the problems, suggestions for what should be done differently, and a list of names to call for more information or to report dumping problems. The doorhanger approach has been used with great success in both Multnomah County and the City of Gresham. Other easy tools that work well for getting the word out include articles in local newspapers, city or neighborhood association newsletters, utility inserts, and direct mailers.

Case Study -



City of Eugene's "Stormwater Connections" Newsletter

Since 1994, the City of Eugene has been publishing and widely distributing its Stormwater Connections newsletters twice a year. The newsletters contain a wide range of information related to the stormwater management program and related natural resources projects that improve water quality. For example, one of the early issues contained the following articles:

- Changes to Stormwater Rates
- How Stormwater Fees Are Used
- Safe Use of Fertilizers Reduces Toxic Runoff
- TV Tidbits - information about the City's new public service announcements
- Volunteers Help Maintain Natural Area
- First West Eugene Wetland Mitigation Site Dedicated
- Study Looks at Restoring Amazon Creek
- Help Your Neighborhood's Water Quality - Organize a Work Party
- Water Quality Awareness Shows in City Maintenance Practices
- "Environmental Responsibility" Award Given to Local Industry

The Eugene public works staff and staff in all other city departments are regularly asked to contribute information and articles to Stormwater Connections.

Contact: City of Eugene,
Public Works Department.
(541) 682-2739.

Case Study - Public Service Announcements: Do They Work?



In the Portland Metropolitan area, several agencies have combined resources to form the Regional Coalition for Clean Rivers and Streams. To date, the group has participated in many successful programs, including sponsoring a local contest for pollution prevention artwork, where the grade school winners had their colorful entries prominently displayed on bus boards, newspapers, and in movie houses around the region. But perhaps the greatest benefit to the collaborative effort has been the ability to pool resources and create public service announcements (PSAs) for local radio and TV. These messages reach more of the mainstream, but can be an expensive endeavor for one agency alone. One of the most successful PSAs (the “bathtub PSA”) developed by the City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services was made available to the Regional Coalition and is also available in a more generic form for use by any other interested agencies.

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(503) 823-5021.

The City of Eugene has also produced four short PSAs: *The Water Cycle*, *What is Stormwater?*, *Impervious Surfaces*, and *What You Can Do*. Each gives small bits of information that show how individual actions can affect water quality. They were aired on local Eugene TV channels a few years ago.

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