

## Stormwater Education – Steal from the Best!

### 2003 ACWA Stormwater Summit

#### General Tips for Education and Outreach

- Steal from the best! Find great ideas and use them...
- Keep it simple and graphic
  - Avoid jargon like “first flush” or “conduit”
  - Limit the text – people are more inclined to read shorter pieces
  - Use pictures, charts, and graphs
- Repeat, Repeat, Repeat
- Harness the power of community groups and local media.

#### General Brochures

General information-type brochures can be very useful. Carefully evaluate the brochure distribution system prior to investing in writing and layout. Getting the brochure in the audience’s hands at the right point is difficult. Simple brochures that can be accessed from the Internet can be useful and save printing costs.

Work with your graphic designer and printer to ensure the overall quality meets your budget.

#### Storm Drain Stenciling/Marking

Storm drain stenciling or marking is a good, constant reminder of stormwater pollution issues. Many municipalities are using small plastic ovals affixed to the top of the curb in place of stenciling. The markers last longer and do not erode paint into the storm drain.

Municipalities have found that storm drain stenciling and marking works best when conducted by neighborhood groups, scouts, environmental clubs, or other volunteers. Partner the stenciling program with a door-hanger (see examples on the CD-ROM).

#### Displays And “Take-Aways”

Displays and “take-aways” work great at community meeting places such as the library, city hall, or county fair. When designing the display, remember the logistics of getting it from place to place - - it needs to come apart, fit into a standard-sized car or van, and be loaded and unloaded by one person. Loaning displays to community groups such as watershed councils or scouting groups can be helpful. Some agencies have used college-level marketing and communication interns to design and staff their displays.

A small “take away” can increase traffic at your display – try to find something useful or fun. Some ideas include refrigerator magnets, temporary tattoos, bookmarkers, coloring books, and pens or pencils. See 4Imprint ([www.4imprint.com](http://www.4imprint.com)) or Crestline ([www.crestline.com](http://www.crestline.com)) for more ideas on customized “take aways”.

Gifts for volunteers like T-shirts are appreciated and become advertising and promotion for your events and programs.

Think about using recyclable, made from recycled materials, non-toxic materials for take-aways. Some utilities have stopped using refrigerator magnets due to the toxic inks that must be used to manufacture them.

#### Newsletters

Newsletters are used by many communities to get more detailed information about stormwater and pollution prevention into the hands of residents. A variety of examples are available from Oregon ACWA members. Consider the size and frequency of distribution of the newsletter. Learn how it will be distributed and the price. Producing a quarterly newsletter is a huge writing and graphics challenge - - the first few issues may

go smoothly, but it can be difficult to find the staff time for writing, layout, production management over time. Consider e-mail distribution of the newsletter – paperless and no printing costs.

### **Billing Inserts**

Municipalities have an existing vehicle for information distribution to their customers - - utility bills. Many municipalities include stormwater information as billing inserts. Surveys conducted by some ACWA members have shown billing inserts to be both effective and low cost in reaching residents. Examples are included in the CD-ROM.

Work with your utility, graphic designer and printer to carefully consider weight and size limitations. Cost out the entire project, including the stuffing costs before starting.

### **School-Based Education**

Schools offer a great way to reach an audience receptive to clean water messages. Consider the Clean Water Services River Rangers program ([www.cleanwaterservices.org](http://www.cleanwaterservices.org)) or the detailed suggestions from the City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services included on the CD-ROM

Use "take-aways" as rewards and incentives that teachers can use with students.

### **Stewardship Programs**

Offering small grants to neighborhood and homeowner associations, watershed councils, "friends of our creek", citizen groups, service groups, not-for-profits, student groups, and business associations builds strong partners for enhancing and protecting the watershed. Included on the CD-ROM are two sample programs from the City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services and Clackamas County Water Environmental Services.

### **Other Ideas**

Here are some ideas that other Oregon water quality educators have used successfully:

- *Movie Theatre Ads* – Low cost to produce and can reach a different audience
- *Radio ads* – Regional water quality service providers in the Portland area produced a 30 second water quality spot that might be easily modified for other parts of the state. Repeat buys important in media placement
- *Video ads* – Expensive to produce, but reaches a large audience. Repeat buys important in media placement
- *Print ads* – Some agencies have used print advertising as a way to acknowledge important partners or recognize outstanding efforts. May be very cost-effective in smaller communities. Community and weekly papers can be interested in ready-made general message ads (messages like *Recycle your Motor Oil*, or *Clean Rivers Start With You...*) that they can use to fill space in the paper, where needed. Make friends with your local community and weekly papers and see if they might be interested in such an ad
- *Local Cable Channel* – Local cable channel "community calendar" advertising is often free of charge on a "first-come, first-served" basis