

Minimum Control Measure #1:
Public Education & Outreach
REGIONAL STORMWATER EDUCATION PROGRAM
RETHINK RUNOFF

JANUARY–DECEMBER 2020
ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by:

Pluck

Introduction

Since 2003, Chittenden County's twelve MS4s have worked to pool resources to professionally engage the public in a one message, one outreach effort known as the Regional Stormwater Education Program. Through regular spring and summer advertisements to drive people to the program's website, www.smartwaterways.org, this cooperative approach to fulfilling its NPDES Permit Minimum Control Measure #1 (Public Education & Outreach) requirements has built a regional awareness among the public of the need for individual action to assist in fighting stormwater problems.

In the summer of 2016, the MS4s contracted with Tally Ho through their Lead Agency, the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, to rebrand the Smart Waterways campaign into a combined effort with the MS4's Minimum Measure #2 regional effort known as the Chittenden County Stream Team. The goal was to create one cohesive organization and outreach effort to both educate the public about stormwater and boost public participation in implementation of projects to combat the negative impacts of stormwater. In spring of 2017, Rethink Runoff was publicly launched, including a new website and revised creative.

Pluck has been responsible for the creative, administration, and management of Rethink Runoff since late 2017.

This 2020 calendar year report recaps the work done primarily related to Minimum Control Measure #1.

2020 Initiatives

In January, we continued our year-round approach to advertising by introducing a small winter-based campaign on reducing salt use, to run alongside our winter pet waste ads.

We re-organized the Rethink Runoff site, updating the theme and adjusting messaging throughout.

In Spring 2020, we introduced an additional advertising push focusing on conservation and environmental impacts of stormwater runoff by featuring animals within the Lake Champlain ecosystem: one bird, one amphibian and one fish.

A new campaign, Ms. Drop's Tip of the Month was initiated. We create a :30 second animation that could be updated each month with a tip for reducing stormwater runoff. Animations were posted to social media channels (FB and Instagram) and promoted each month to a target audience within MS-4 locations.

In addition, we used the same creative for an additional set of ads, to work as a general awareness ad set for Rethink Runoff. As part of that, we introduced a test HTML5 ad (one size) to gauge effectiveness. Overall the change in metrics was minimal when looking at engagement.

We updated the rack cards for Stream Team outreach from a creative and messaging standpoint to tie it with the messaging on the website.

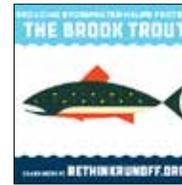
When COVID prevented in-person workshops for Stream Team, we created a digital template for Google Sheets for Kristen Balschunat to use for digital/virtual events.

We introduced tracking onto the websites for conversions (or actions our visitors take while visiting the website). Our first conversion to be tracked is for a downloadable pdf with instructions on How to Build a Rain Barrel. These events often book to capacity and are also restricted by city or town, so including a downloadable pdf on the site allows us to determine to measure interest in visitors doing DIY stormwater-related projects.

2020 Creative

UPDATED WEBSITE

ECO-BASED CAMPAIGN - SAMPLE ADS



REVISED RACK CARDS

HOW CAN YOU HELP KEEP LAKE CHAMPLAIN CLEAN?

By reducing stormwater runoff around your house, you can minimize the amount of pollutants and sediment it carries into storm drains, streams rivers and lakes.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- INSTALL A RAIN BARREL / REDIRECT YOUR GUTTERS**
Installing a rain barrel or redirecting your rain gutters to your lawn or garden reduces the amount of water that gets carried into the storm drains.
- REDUCE / AVOID LAWN FERTILIZERS**
Stormwater runoff can wash fertilizers into the storm drains, bringing the nutrients that feed algae blooms into the rivers, lakes, and streams.
- SCOP YOUR DOG'S POOP ALL YEAR LONG**
Dog poop can contribute phosphorus and E. coli to the streams, rivers and Lake Champlain, causing algae blooms and bacteria outbreaks.
- PRACTICE ECO-FRIENDLY CAR CARE**
Washing your car on pavement will send detergents directly into storm drains. Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on your lawn.

HOW STORMWATER RUNOFF AFFECTS LAKE CHAMPLAIN?
Rain or snowmelt flows down driveways, sidewalks or lawns, carrying pollutants, nutrients, and sediment into storm drains, which then flow into streams, rivers, and Lake Champlain. This runoff can pollute the water, which in turn affects the health of the lake and the animals that live in it.

RETHINK RUNOFF
Rethink Runoff is a campaign that raises awareness and educates citizens across a nine-municipality area in Chittenden County, Vermont about stormwater runoff and its effects on streams, rivers and Lake Champlain.
RETHINKRUNOFF.ORG

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP REDUCE STORMWATER RUNOFF? SIGN UP TODAY AND JOIN...

THE STREAM TEAM

The Stream Team is a group of clean water-minded volunteers working to improve water quality in the Lake Champlain Basin. We offer volunteer opportunities, engaging events, and educational workshops.

HERE'S ARE A FEW THINGS WE DO:

- WATER QUALITY MONITORING JOIN OUR TEAM!**
Join our team of citizen-science volunteers who collect water samples from streams on a bi-weekly basis throughout the summer. These samples are vital in helping to monitor trends in levels of phosphorus, and chloride (road salt) in our waterways.
- ADOPT-A-RAIN GARDEN SLOW THE FLOW!**
Do you have a green thumb? Help us keep our rain gardens clean and healthy. Rain gardens help to "Slow the Flow" by absorbing and filtering rainwater. Volunteers sign up for 1-2 years of stewardship and help with spring mulching and periodic weeding. The gardens capture their own water, so they don't require much maintenance!

Learn more about The Stream Team at
RETHINKRUNOFF.ORG/THESTREAMTEAM

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WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP REDUCE STORMWATER RUNOFF?

INSTALL A RAIN GARDEN

A rain garden is a specially designed landscaped area that provides natural places for rainwater to collect and soak into the ground.

Rain from roof downspouts or paved areas is directed to a rain garden to allow it to pool for a short period of time. The water then soaks into the ground where it is cleaned by the plants and microbes in the soil.

This water recharges the ground water supply which maintains the ecological balance in nearby streams. Most importantly, a rain garden prevents rapid and excessive discharge of stormwater which causes erosion.

All it takes is a little planning, a shovel, some plants, and some mulch. It is easy and can be dug and planted in an afternoon.

Learn more about rain gardens at
RETHINKRUNOFF.ORG/RAINGARDEN

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2020 Creative

TIP OF THE MONTH ANIMATION



Sample animation:

<https://www.facebook.com/131159566895612/videos/955827985225631>

GOOGLE SHEETS WEBINAR TEMPLATE



RAIN BARREL PDF

HOW TO BUILD A RAIN BARREL

WHAT IS A RAIN BARREL?
A rain barrel is a container that collects rain water from rooftops (this is called stormwater runoff). Rain barrels come in several different shapes and sizes, but they all do the same thing: they save water and decrease stormwater runoff. Placed at the base of a downspout, a typical rain barrel can hold 55.75 gallons of water at one time.

- Make sure the rain barrel remains securely screened to prevent mosquito entry.
- You can attach a hose to the spigot to fill a watering can.

MATERIALS

- 1 55 gallon plastic barrel
- 1 Rubber Drain Spigot—Heavy Duty, Brass male threaded, 1/2"
- 2 Rubber Garden Hose Washers
- 1 Locking Nut, Rigid Conduit Locknut Steel 1/2"
- 1 Hose Barb for a sump pump 1 1/4" (Adapter Insert Poly, 125 MPT)
- 1 Sump Pump Hose: 1 1/4" x 8' Discharge hose
- 1 Soffit Vent: Maurice Franklin RLW-100 4" round aluminum screen lower
- Plumber's Tape
- Caulk (clear acrylic)
- Tools
- Drill
- Hack saw
- Flashlight
- Drill Bits: 1/2" wing bit
- 1 1/4" hole saw
- 4" hole saw

HOW CAN I USE THE WATER COLLECTED IN MY RAIN BARREL?
Water collected in a rain barrel should NOT be used for drinking or cooking. We also do not recommend using this water to irrigate vegetable garden beds. So what can you use it for?

- Water house plants
- Water flower gardens
- Clean your tools
- Wash your car
- Water lawns and trees

CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE YOU BUILD:

- Your rain barrel must have an overflow to a safe discharge point away from your home and foundation. Details about installing an overflow are included in the instructions.
- If you use a moss control product on your roof, be sure to use a product that is garden-safe.
- The rain barrel must be located at the base of one of the downspouts draining your roof. You may want to install your rain barrel nearest to where you will use the water in your yard.
- Keep the lid secure so children or animals cannot fall in.
- Elevate your rain barrel slightly on a secure raised foundation (a full rain barrel may weigh over 400lbs!) to make access to the spigot easier. A few stacked cinder blocks work well, or you can build a stand from lumber.
- Empty your rain barrel often so that it has room to catch water from the next rainfall!

RETHINK RUNOFF

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT REDUCING STORMWATER RUNOFF, VISIT RETHINKRUNOFF.ORG

2. INSTALL THE OVERFLOW

Drill a hole about 6" from the top of the barrel. The hole should be at a 30° angle from the spigot location.

Use the 1 1/2" hole saw to drill a hole about 6" from the top of the barrel. The hole should be at a 30° angle from the spigot location.

Screw the sump pump hose barb into the hole; it should be a snug fit.

Attach an 8' section of the sump pump hose over the hose barb.

3. INSTALL SCREEN

Use the 4" hole saw to drill a hole in the lid of the barrel. Drill slowly and with caution, as a 4" hole saw creates lots of torque—drilling too quickly could cause damage to the barrel or to you.

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Media Buy Breakdown

Below is a cost breakdown of media buys, compared with previous years. We continued our Winter Campaign with a focus on both pet waste and reducing salt use. Similar to our past efforts to shift outreach year-round, our Winter Campaign ran in January and February, traditionally a quieter time from an advertising standpoint.

In addition, our Facebook animated posts were boosted each month (starting in May), providing a secondary touchpoint for year-round advertising.

For 2017 and 2018, Summer was initially planned as part of the spring 2018 budget. However, since 2019, the spring media buy includes all purchases made through 6/30. The Summer media buy will include any media buys made from 7/1 to 9/1, and Fall media will span from 9/1–11/1. We typically do not run in December, except for our monthly Facebook ad boost.

2016 – MEDIA BUY			
SOURCE	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL
RADIO	\$4,500	-	\$3,258
DIGITAL	\$7,500	-	\$4,985
TV	\$5,500	-	\$2,379
PRINT	\$2,500	-	
TOTAL	\$20,000	-	\$10,622

2017 – MEDIA BUY			
SOURCE	SPRING	SUMMER* 05/28–08/02	FALL
RADIO	\$3,088	-	\$1,080
DIGITAL	\$3,600	\$3,826	\$4,582
TV	\$2,015	-	\$1,833
PRINT	\$1,755	\$585	\$1,170
TOTAL	\$13,191	\$4,235	\$8,666

2018 – MEDIA BUY			
SOURCE	SPRING	SUMMER* 6/16–08/27	FALL
RADIO	\$2,675	-	\$1,044
DIGITAL	\$3,394	\$7,534	\$2,987
TV	\$3,710	-	\$2,472
PRINT	\$1,755	-	\$1,006
TOTAL	\$11,534	\$7,534	\$7,509

Advertising Click-through Rates, 2020

SOURCE	IMPRESSIONS	ENGAGEMENT	COST	COST PER ENGAGEMENT
DISPLAY ADS	4,550,215	3,079	4329.18	\$1.40
VIDEO (YOUTUBE)	326,839	181,417	2663.48	\$0.01
WCAX DIGITAL	99,120	37	\$800	\$21.62
FACEBOOK/SOCIAL MEDIA	137,219	195 CLICKS 39,240 ENGAGEMENT	\$1,345.08	\$6.89

2019 – MEDIA BUY				
SOURCE	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER* 5/27–09/2	FALL
RADIO	\$360	\$1,008		\$1,025
DIGITAL	\$1,800	\$2,320	\$5,830	\$3,000
TV		\$5,830		\$3,306
PRINT	\$503	\$2,012		\$1,006
TOTAL	\$2,663	\$11,170	\$5,830	\$7,509

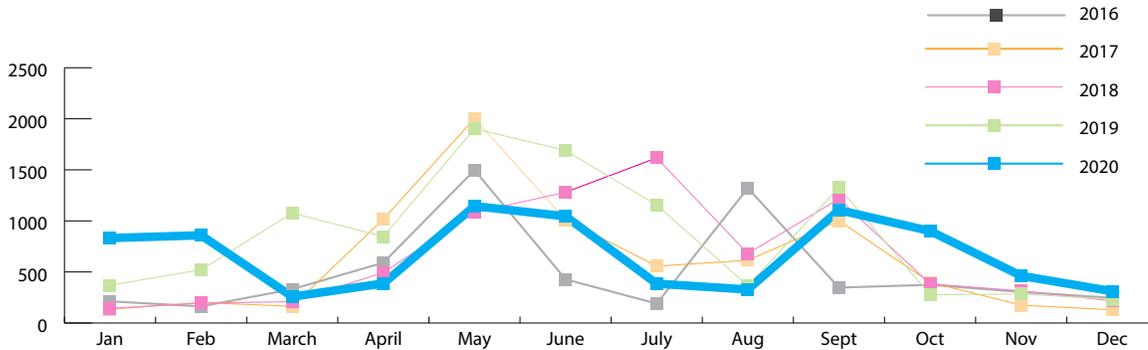
2020 – MEDIA BUY				
SOURCE	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER 7/1–9/1	FALL
RADIO		\$375		\$375
DIGITAL	\$1,800	\$4,557.51	\$400	\$3,430.33
TV		\$5,788.75		\$2,063.83
PRINT		\$1,579.50		\$1,053
TOTAL	\$1,800	\$12,301	\$400	\$6,922

Digital media buys include Google Ads, Facebook Ads and WCAX.

TV includes WCAX and Xfinity media buys.

Website Metrics for 2016–2020

Web visits as a whole were down compared to 2019. We attribute this to COVID-19. Our digital ad spend was also down, reflecting a general downturn across the board. Fall visits and ad spends began to rise in September and October, still down from the previous year, but much less drastic than the downturn in Spring and Summer. We did also notice an uptick in desktop visits, again due to COVID-19 and more people being at home.



2020 vs. 2019 Users

-8%
7,861 vs. 8,534

New Users

-8%
7,860 vs 8,529

Pageviews

-17%
13,112 vs 15,769

Total Sessions/Visits (1/1–12/31)

TOTAL	TIME PERIOD
8,908	2020
10,111	2019
7,832	2018
7,407	2017
6,004	2016
4,659	2015
7,728	2014
3,541	2013
2,787	2012

Website Visits by Device

DEVICE	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
DESKTOP	51.25%	40.2%	50.1%	52.8%	65.7%
MOBILE	41.28%	44%	40.6%	36.4%	24.5%
TABLET	7.47%	15.8%	9.3%	10.8%	9.8%

Most Visited Pages

PAGE	TOTAL
HOME PAGE	3,162
/EDUCATIONAL-RESOURCES/FOR-KIDS/CREATE-YOUR-OWN-WATER-CYCLE/	960
/EDUCATIONAL-RESOURCES/REDUCE-ROAD-SALT/INDEX.HTML	767
/EDUCATIONAL-RESOURCES/	745
/VERMONT-ENDANGERED-ANIMALS/	568
/EDUCATIONAL-RESOURCES/PICK-UP-DOG-POOP/INDEX.HTML	540
/EDUCATIONAL-RESOURCES/FOR-KIDS/WHAT-IS-A-WATERSHED/	436
/EDUCATIONAL-RESOURCES/INSTALL-A-RAIN-BARREL/	406
/THE-STREAM-TEAM/	401

Top Vermont Cities and Towns

TOTAL	SESSIONS
BURLINGTON*	962
SOUTH BURLINGTON*	582
COLCHESTER*	525
ESSEX*	465
SHELBURNE*	187
STOWE*	118
MIDDLEBURY*	50
JERICHO	39
WILLISTON	37
MONTPELIER	35

MILTON: 20
WINOOSKI 13

* SAME POSITION AS LAST YEAR

Website Event Tracking

DEVICE	2020
MAILCHIMP FORM	61
RAIN BARREL PDF	8
SOIL TEST CTA	5