



Clean Water. Healthy Life.

Regional Water Quality Public Education Program

2006-2007

ANNUAL REPORT



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Annual Report
March 2006 - February 2007



Background

For the past four years MARC has convened a committee of representatives from local governments and environmental organizations to develop a regional watershed public education program. The committee was formed in response to numerous requests from local governments to develop a cooperative approach to water quality public education and to meet federal NPDES Phase I/II regulatory requirements. The committee's past efforts have provided a firm foundation to continue its goal of educating the general public about actions they can take to reduce non-point source (NPS) pollution.

Program Details

The Regional Water Quality Public Education Program is a comprehensive approach to raising public awareness about watershed issues and water quality in the Kansas City region. The new long-term water quality public education strategy capitalizes on the momentum created by past water quality awareness topics and community initiatives such as the 10,000 Rain Gardens campaign. The new campaign structure is more flexible than in previous years, with varying levels of support and methods of outreach, as explained below.

Media Campaigns

Media campaigns are planned in accordance with past quarterly campaigns. MARC staff helps develop the messaging, design and strategy for public service announcements, paid advertising, printed material and miscellaneous collateral material. Each year MARC staff, with committee support, develops a primary NPS pollution-focused message and determines the most effective means for disseminating the message.

Sub-Campaigns

During the past three years the water quality public education program has addressed several top NPS pollution issues facing our region. In order to build upon the momentum of past campaigns, the subcommittee elected to revisit past topics; however, it did so through new approaches. While some messages are disseminated in a similar fashion to past campaigns (i.e. brochures), other approaches include targeting specific audiences with workshops, Web-based resources, publications, advertising or public signage.

Local Government Action Suggestions

The Water Quality Public Education Program recognizes that many municipalities cannot budget significant staff time to NPS pollution education; as such, the 2006-2007 program includes local government action suggestions in its work plan. Action suggestions consist of a list of potential voluntary outreach projects for current or upcoming NPS pollution topics. Actions support regional campaign messaging with a local emphasis, and are designed for municipalities of all sizes. Local government partners that utilize the action suggestions have opportunities to share or highlight projects in quarterly e-mail reports.



Grant Programs

The committee provides funding to organizations in the Kansas City region for educational and outreach events related to reducing NPS pollution. Each proposal goes through a competitive bid process and is evaluated by a selection committee comprised of representatives from contributing local governments.

Public Attitude Survey

The committee administers a water quality-related public attitude survey every other year (the baseline survey was conducted in 2003). The survey is part of an ongoing effort to measure the impact that water quality public education efforts have on the public's overall awareness and behavior. The water quality survey provides a benchmark for objectively evaluating water quality public education initiatives over time and provides guidance for future public policy, planning and education efforts.

Additional Support

Committee funding is frequently leveraged towards grants awarded by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, U.S. EPA, and Kansas Department of Health and Environment for projects and other activities supportive of NPS pollution reduction. Supportive resources for these campaigns are posted at <http://www.marc.org/Environment/Water/>.

Program Accomplishments

Soil Testing

- Distributed over 470 soil test kits
- Received over 470 responses to online survey inquiring about regional fertilization habits
- Developed "How to take a soil test" brochure
- Printed 10,000 soil testing brochures for distribution
- 100 public radio sponsorships on KCUR 89.3 FM, AM 610 Sports, KMBZ 980 AM (20 second ads)
- 8 printed ads in the Kansas City Star reaching 685,200 daily readers
- 2 kansascity.com Web ads reaching 1,043,000 registered monthly readers, with 22 million page views per month

Native Plants

- Provided two rain garden train-the-trainer events
- The first event was designed for Parks and Recreation staff (45 attended)
- The second event was geared toward Master Gardener's groups (25 attended)
- 75 rain garden packets were distributed, including electronic versions of the Rain Garden Brochure, "10 Natives for Kansas City" poster and "How to Build a Rain Garden" Power Point presentation
- Printed 10,000 "10 Natives for Kansas City" poster for distribution
- Distributed over 200 native plant plugs to participants of "Party for the Planet" Earth day celebration



Pet Waste

- Purchased 147 pet waste bag dispensers for local municipalities
- Developed and purchased over 150 NPS based signage for pet waste bag dispensers

Storm Drain Stewardship

- Developed a “No dumping leaves in the stormdrain” print ad for the *Kansas City Star*. Estimated impressions: 4 ads reaching over 500,000 readers.

Brochure Translations

- Translated 15 past brochures into Spanish and printed 30,000 brochures. Brochures include:
 - o How to Build a Rain Garden
 - o Know your Roots
 - o Conserve Water with Rain Barrel
 - o How to Disconnect your Downspout
 - o Know your Soil
 - o Know your Watershed
 - o Keep Sediment out of our Water
 - o 10 Natives for Kansas City
 - o Making and Using Compost
 - o Oil and Water Don't Mix
 - o Pick Up After Your Pet
 - o Protect our Streams
 - o Stormdrain Stewardship
 - o Use Lawn Chemicals Wisely
 - o Wash your Car the Right Way

Additional Work

- In order to update the look and style of the regional communications material, the committee contracted with a creative consultant to assist with developing a new tagline and logo for the program. The following was chosen:



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- Developed a “Do You Know What Watershed You Live In” backlit sign for Kansas City International Airport. The sign is positioned in 3 terminals for a period of 6 months. Estimated impressions: 2.5 million people per month (15 million people total).

MARC supports participating local governments and partners by providing graphics, support materials and water quality message text as needed. The following are examples of how selected local governments have used these materials:

- Blue Springs, Mo., broadcast educational programs with water quality messages for local youth on its cable-access channel.
- Liberty, Mo., regularly includes water quality messages in its “Good Morning Liberty” e-newsletter. The city has also partnered with local area hardware stores, including K-Mart and Sutherlands, to distribute water quality public education materials.
- Brochures are distributed at Missouri Department of Conservation Discovery Center and Lakeside Nature Center.
- Lenexa, Kan., distributes pet waste brochures to citizens during the pet licensing process. Animal control officers and local veterinarians receive pet waste brochures to distribute as necessary.
- Overland Park, Kan., has developed an environmental newsletter which regularly includes water quality messaging and campaign information in its content.
- The Blue River Watershed Association distributed public education materials to students as part of its T.R.U.E. Blue program.
- Various local governments included information in city newsletters and on Web sites, and distributed materials at community events, city hall, and in other public buildings.

Public Attitude Survey

A third public attitude survey will be administered in August 2007.

Grant Program

The committee accepted proposals for regional outreach events related to NPS pollution through a competitive bid process. Funds were used for activities related to event planning such as supplies, media, staff, transportation and other related needs. The committee budgeted \$15,000 for grant awards, with no proposal eligible to receive funding for more than \$5,000.



A brief summary of projects that received funding as part of the 2006-2007 water quality public education grant program follows:

- *KC Clean Streams 2007: \$5,000 fully funded*
KC Clean Streams, sponsored by the Blue River Watershed Association, is the only annual metropolitan-wide trash cleanup event for students with a focus on the rivers and streams that cross the KC metropolitan area. The 2007 KC Clean Streams event is tentatively scheduled for April 13, 2007. For more information contact Ginny Moore at gmoore@brwa.net.
- *WheatRidge Elementary: \$2,400 fully funded*
In order to promote community awareness of nonpoint source pollution and its effect on the environment, USD 231 and the city of Gardner propose a three-dimensional project to be funded by this grant. This project includes assessment for placement and construction of a public rain garden, public education at the Johnson County Fair, and student and volunteer storm drain stenciling days. For more information contact Greg Smith at smithg@usd231.com.
- *Missouri River Watershed Festival: \$5,000 fully funded*
The 2006 Missouri River Watershed Festival was held October 6, 2006, from 9 am to 2 pm for students (grades 6-8). School groups and teachers toured learning stations with an emphasis on water issues in the KC metropolitan area. The festival was centered on the banks of the Missouri River at the city of Sugar Creek's La Benite Park in Jackson County. For more information, contact Larry O'Donnel at Turtle5@aol.com.
- *KC Wildlands: \$2,100 partial funding*
The Kansas City WildLands (KCWL) project is an on-the-ground volunteer restoration event and installation of riparian restoration/conservation interpretation signage as part of KCWL's long-term ecological restoration of the Blue River Parkway riparian corridor (the KCWL Blue River Parkway Project). For more information contact Linda Lehrbaum at Linda@bridgingthegap.org.

Funding

In February 2005, MARC submitted a request to local governments to fund the program budgeted at \$122,500. During the course of the year, 18 local governments contributed a total of \$145,000. The Program Plan was expanded to accommodate the additional funding and was approved on November 14, 2006 by committee vote. This funding was also leveraged towards grants awarded by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and Kansas Department of Health and Environment for projects related to non-point source pollution.





Participating Governments

Belton, Mo.	Liberty, Mo.
Blue Springs, Mo.	Lenexa, Kan.**
Cass County, Mo.	Lee's Summit, Mo.
Clay County, Mo.	Overland Park, Kan.**
Independence, Mo.	North Kansas City, Mo.
Jackson County, Mo.	Pleasant Valley, Mo.
Johnson County, Kan.*	Raymore, Mo.
Kansas City, Mo.	Raytown, Mo.
Platte County, Mo.	Riverside, Mo.
Lake Waukomis, Mo.	Sugar Creek, Mo.

*(Contributes for all Johnson County cities and unincorporated areas)

** (Contributes additional funding above standard \$.10 per capita rate)

Contact

If you have any questions regarding the Water Quality Education Committee please contact Christopher Vukas at cvukas@marc.org or call 816/701-8252.

