



A Strategy for Stormwater Education Through Storm Drain Marking

Fall 2008

What Do We Want Residents To Do?

- Mark storm drains
- Increase awareness of where stormwater goes

What Are The Messages?

- Storm drains carry water to local water bodies without any treatment.
- Don't dump anything down a storm drain.
- Keep contaminants from entering storm drains.
- Check to make sure you don't have a direct connection to a storm drain.

No Filters! No Treatment!

Many people are not aware that storm drain systems do not treat the water that flows through them.

Consequently, many towns have made storm drain marking programs a requirement, as part of their responsibilities toward meeting federal regulations regarding stormwater.

Storm drain marking has a few potential benefits:

1. The storm drain marking event provides an excellent opportunity for publicity about keeping storm drains free of yard waste, pet waste, and household chemicals.
2. Those who are involved in the marking process learn about the storm drain system and pollution prevention behaviors.
3. If people see the marker, they might become more aware that whatever enters a storm drain goes directly to local waters. And they might be less likely to dump illegally down the drain.
4. Hopefully, if people are more careful about what enters storm drains, then water quality will be improved!

Storm drains lead directly to local waters. No filters. No treatment. Pollutants that enter storm drains wind up in the water we drink, fish, and swim.



Where does a storm drain lead?

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What Help Is Out There?

If you want to become involved with storm drain marking in your town, then we have a strategy for you!

This newsletter highlights four steps to achieving that goal. To help you along, we can offer you:

- Contact information for the storm drain marking program at Save the Bay,
- pricing information for marking supplies,
- storm drain marking instructions,
- prepared press release,
- newspaper article, and
- a fact sheet that introduces stormwater-friendly tips for residents.

Step 1. Contact Save The Bay (401-315-2709)



The following **materials** will be available to help with this step:

- a general price guide to give you an idea of the cost of storm drain marking (The average cost of marking 100 drains is \$350.)
- Town should provide safety equipment such as vests.

Steps to take:

- Town can provide a list of 10-15 stormdrains to mark, along with maps or descriptions of their location.
- Contact Save The Bay to coordinate the amount of help they can provide your stormdrain marking effort. If you are interested in working with kids, they will want a list of local elementary schools with one contact person for each.

Note: Save The Bay has generously offered to help towns with their stormdrain marking efforts, provided that the town (or any other group) is able to pay for the cost of materials.

STB also offers a program for local schools. The cost is \$120 for the first class (up to 30 students) and \$60 for each subsequent class on the same day.

The Surfrider Foundation also may be available to assist a marking event or may have markers available. Contact 322-9747.

Step 2. Advertise The Storm Drain Marking Event



The following **materials** will be available to help with this step:

- a press release on the storm drain marking event
- a short article about storm drains and their connection to stormwater problems

Steps to take:

- Distribute press releases.
- Contact local reporters to invite them to attend the event.
- Distribute prepared article to local papers.

- If reporters were unable to attend the event, contact them afterward with information on the results of the marking.

Step 3. Conduct The Storm Drain Marking



The following **materials** will be available to help with this step:

- detailed storm drain marking instructions
- a fact sheet that introduces stormwater-friendly tips for residents

Steps to take:

- Purchase the marking materials. Das Manufacturing seems to be a popular and

reasonably-priced supplier. (<http://www.dasmanufacturing.com/index.html>) Surfrider and the University of Rhode Island (874-2448) also might have markers for sale.

- Continue to work with Save The Bay, who will be the primary coordinators.

Volunteers could be recruited to:

- seek contributions from businesses for funds to purchase marking supplies

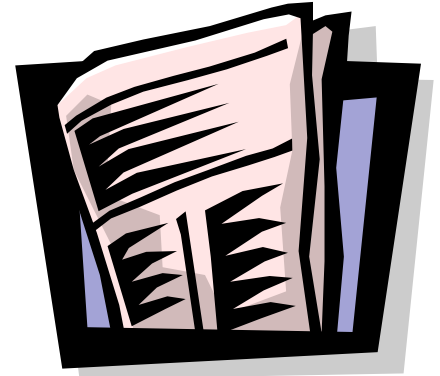
Step 4. Publicize Your Event And Its Importance

The following materials will be available to help with this step:

- storm drain data card that allows those doing the marking to make notes about the condition of the drains
- a short article for local papers reminding people about the event and the concept of storm drains and stormwater pollution and everyday tips for residents

Steps to take:

- Use the data cards to enhance the article, customizing it with information about the condition of local stormdrains.
- Distribute the article to local papers.



Keep Track of Your Success

Measuring the success of storm drain marking poses its own challenges. It would be time-consuming and expensive to incorporate water quality sampling before and after the marking event, in order to try to link the marking to the desired behavior changes. And it would be equally time-consuming and expensive to survey residents before and after the marking event, in order to determine if

their awareness of storm drains increased.

However, it's still possible to document that storm drain marking is successful. Here are a few methods you could use :

1. Keep records of the number of individuals who were involved in the marking event.
2. Keep records of the num-

ber of drains marked.

3. Keep records of the amount of publicity generated by the event.

In A Nutshell

We hope this newsletter has provided a guide for how you can help increase residents' awareness of storm drains. In a nutshell, that strategy involves:

1. Contact Save The Bay
2. Advertise the storm drain marking event
3. Conduct the storm drain marking
4. Publicize your event and its importance
5. Keep track of your success



Other Topics In The Series

This *Know Where It Goes!* Series offers **strategies** for addressing other stormwater problems such as:

1. Picking up pet waste
2. Helping business implement stormwater-friendly practices
3. Helping residents engage in stormwater-friendly yard care.

The Series also includes fact sheets that address stormwater-friendly tips, including:

- The introductory top ten
- Lawn care
- Managing rooftop runoff
- Disposing of household hazardous waste
- Septic system care
- Auto care

www.ristormwatersolutions.org



About This Publication

For more information about the Stormwater Phase II Education and Outreach Program, including resources such as the supporting materials mentioned in this newsletter, please visit our website. It is undergoing construction, but is continuously updated.

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