



Stormwater and You

An Outreach Toolkit for Watershed Groups

Reach new members, build capacity



Stormwater Outreach Toolkit

This document recommends strategies and contains templates for watershed groups to incorporate stormwater management strategies into outreach programs. It was prepared by West Virginia Rivers Coalition and Platinum PR to help watershed groups build capacity in sharing their programs with interested homeowners, businesses, and potential volunteers.

To keep it simple, it's referred to here as the **Stormwater and You** campaign. We call it a campaign because in communications, a campaign is merely a communications package around a set of actions.

The toolkit includes:

- Description of the campaign
- Elevator pitch
- Press release template
- [Brochure copy](#)
- [Slideshow copy](#)
- [Social Media How-To and support](#)

In addition, here are other stormwater resources available from partner websites:

WV Department of Environmental Protection

<https://go.wv.gov/WIB>

<https://dep.wv.gov/WWE/Programs/stormwater/MS4/guidance/Pages/default.aspx>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

<https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure>

Region 9 Planning and Development Council Stormwater 101 Information & Worksheets

<http://www.region9wv.com/chesapeake-bay.html>

Choose Clean Water Coalition Stormwater Tools

<https://www.choosecleanwater.org/stormwater>

1. Description of the Stormwater and You Campaign

This text is meant to briefly explain the program, and can be used in brochures, flyers and on partner websites.

Are you or your neighborhood struggling with the flooding issues like washed-out driveways, flooded parking lots, and standing water on streets and roads? We want to help, and in the process help our local streams stay healthy, because what drains off the land —lawn fertilizers, automotive fluids, sediment, even pet waste — ends up in our streams, including [name of stream].

The [your watershed group] wants to help you at home or at your business by giving you information about ways to reduce flooding, protect your property, and help your neighborhood. Excess stormwater is something that impacts all of us. And over time it can impact local drinking water supplies. The good news is that stormwater can be managed, often with low-cost solutions.

[Your watershed group] can work with your Home Owners Association and you to take care of our homes and our watershed. Contact us today to discuss how we can help you, and you can help keep our streams clean!

2. Elevator Pitch Script

An elevator pitch is used to easily describe your cause to someone who may know little to nothing about stormwater and how it effects them. By using this pitch, it will hopefully better explain to your audience why Stormwater and You is important and how it's relevant. Please review the copy below:

Picture this: it's a typical day. You're just leaving work and want to get home to see your family when all of a sudden it starts to downpour on your drive home. The roads you take home are covered in debris and a steady stream of water. You know not to drive through it, so you turn around and take a safer way home, but at the cost of it adding extra time to your commute.

When you finally arrive home after your unexpected detour, you notice your driveway is starting to wash away from all the consistent heavy rain and you think to yourself, "great, just another added cost I'll have to deal with."

What if I could tell you that these issues can be controlled? Sure, we can't control the weather, but we can control where the stormwater flows. By using proper

stormwater management techniques like rain barrels and rain gardens, you can help to fight these issues for the improvement of not only your property, but your community as well, and we're here to help.

I'm from [watershed group] and I want to help you with your stormwater issues.

3. Press Release

Here is a template release for use with local media and as new post on your website.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [date]

Media Contact: [Name, Watershed Group]
[phone]; [email]

[Watershed Group] Offer Homeowners Help to Reduce Flooding

It's hard not to notice the impacts of all the rain that's fallen on the region; there is standing water everywhere and streams flowing that we never knew existed.

Homeowners have seen the effects, too. The rain caused washed-out driveways, flooded parking lots, and standing water in our downtowns. [Name Watershed Association] — whose volunteers monitor streams, clean up streams, and work to restore them to health — have ways to help.

"We can't stop the rain," said [Name], of the nonprofit [Watershed Group]. "But we can manage it to prevent from doing so much damage our land, roads, and our local streams."

[Watershed Group] helps homeowners and businesses with tried-and-true solutions like rain gardens, which channel runoff from roofs and paved surfaces into planted areas that can absorb it; rain barrels, which capture roof water for future use; and pervious pavers that allow rainwater to soak into the ground rather than race down a driveway. They also coordinate neighborhood tree plantings; trees are one of the most effective ways to manage rainwater. "Working with partners, [Watershed Group] can help homeowners get access to free or low-cost tree stock — and help plant them."

[Name] says that although [Watershed Group] is happy help individual homeowners, they prefer to speak with a group of interested people at homeowner association gatherings or to a few neighbors.

Managing stormwater runoff is also good for local rivers and streams, added [Name], because what flows from the land and roads ends up in local streams. "Taking care of

these issues is something we can all feel good about. Managing water on our own properties helps protect the quality of drinking water for people who live downstream.”

To learn more, visit [Website] or contact [Name] at [Email address].

#

4. Brochure Copy

This template was created for use in an all-purpose stormwater brochure listing each watershed group as resource. The text can be changed to highlight the different watershed groups in your region. The text can also be used by individual groups who want to print their own brochure.

Front Cover

Stormwater and You

How the impacts of stormwater affect you and your community, and what you can do to change it.

Inside Flap

Watershed Groups in Your Area

Blue Ridge Watershed Coalition. BRWC is primarily focused on water quality monitoring in Jefferson County, including streams which impact the drinking water supply of Charles Town. www.blueridgewatershed.org.

Cacapon Institute. The Cacapon Institute monitors water quality along the full length of the Cacapon Rivers at 12 sites for major parameters, including temperature, turbidity (muddiness), nutrients (nitrate and phosphorus) and fecal coliform bacteria. www.cacaponinstitute.org.

Elks Run Watershed Group. Volunteers monitor at sites on Elks Run and Elks Branch for bacteria, nitrogen and phosphorous pollution. Elks Run is the drinking water supply for Harpers Ferry and Bolivar. Elksrunwatershed.org.

Friends of Cacapon River. FCR uses a bio-survey approach to stream study, which includes the collection and evaluation of aquatic invertebrates and an assessment of the river’s physiochemical conditions. www.cacaponriver.org.

Sleepy Creek Watershed Association. SCWA volunteers sample water quality at locations within the Sleepy Creek watershed, which drains into the Potomac River above the Shepherdstown drinking water supply. <https://sleepycreekwatershed.org>

Warm Springs Watershed Association. WSWA monitors locations along Warm Springs Run, one of the few “urban” watersheds in the Eastern Panhandle. <https://warmspringswatershed.webs.com>.

Inside Spread

What is stormwater?

In a simplistic sense, stormwater is rain or melted snow that flows onto the ground. In more urban or developed areas this water flows through streets and parking lots, collecting pollutants like oil, trash and debris before depositing it into the local streams and rivers. In areas like forests, fields, and wetlands, stormwater is absorbed into the ground more easily, then it is stored and filtered.

Impervious surfaces, like roofs, roads and parking lots, are associated with more developed areas. These surfaces significantly impact the natural water flow of rivers and underground water supplies.

Due to the material of these surfaces, stormwater cannot soak into impervious surfaces, leading to a lack of groundwater supply. Water also moves faster on these surfaces which alters the rivers and other bodies of water the water is flowing into. As a result, there is a greater amount of flooding, destruction and displacement.

How does stormwater impact me?

When large amounts of stormwater are dumped into our communities, flooding can occur, causing a multitude of issues. Washed-out driveways, flooded parking lots and roads, and standing water in our downtowns are issues that we all deal with when heavy rain comes – and we’re motivated to fix these problems with your help.

How do we manage stormwater?

With traditional infrastructure, like culverts and drains, stormwater is treated as something that needs to be disposed of rather than something that needs to be protected. This lack of recharged groundwater is what leads to flooding and lower water quality. By transitioning to natural stormwater management practices, we can solve the issue of flooding and increase the level of natural groundwater. Here are a few ways to manage stormwater naturally:

- Mimic the natural hydrologic processes through rain gardens or green roofs.
- Minimize the use of impervious surfaces and try to disconnect them. This can be done by using rain barrels, narrowing streets and using permeable pavement.
- Reroute rooftop drainage pipes from draining rainwater into the storm sewer to draining it into rain barrels, cisterns, or permeable areas.
- Use natural vegetation buffers along streams and rivers so it can filter, store and slow down stormwater.
- Protect open spaces and sensitive natural areas with conservation easements.

* Information gathered from American Rivers and Environmental Protection Agency

[Click here](#) or see below for the sample brochure.

5. Social Media How-To and Support

Social media is a vital asset for reaching all types of people. Different platforms have different ways to market to specific audiences and reach the right people. Facebook and Instagram reach a lot of people, and Twitter is good for tagging public officials and reporters.

Like many of the leaders of our watersheds, retirees are at a time in their lives in which they are looking for community involvement across their own interests. They are already part of your social networks. They likely know other people whom you are not reaching and can help open doors for presentations about your good work.

Another audience for social media is high school and college students. This audience is very active on all social media platforms, and students and student organizations are a great resource for finding volunteers. This age group opens a line to their parents and grandparents. Each watershed group should recruit one young person to share social media about volunteer activities.

For Facebook, use a photo to get attention, then insightful text to relay information. Example: a photo of a road underwater. Caption: You can help prevent this.

When making a post, be sure to tag appropriate partners, then have them share the post. Also share a post to your personal page, so your friends can see your organization's page and like it as well.

An effective way to expand your sharing is to copy the URL of a Facebook post into an email, then send it board members and a group of committed followers. They can open and share the link with their followers.

Create an event on Facebook any time you're looking for volunteers or hosting an event. It's easy to do on your organization's page. By creating an event, you can advertise to your followers when volunteers will be meeting to conduct projects and gain more interest through sharing specifically what you're doing.

Interaction with followers is key to gaining more followers and getting people interested in changing their community. Respond to comments and messages, like posts you've been tagged in, and share other organizations posts. These details will aid you in gaining followers and volunteers.

If you have partners that are not on Facebook, but you would still like to share your news, upcoming events, etc. with them, you can copy and paste the URL into an email and share it with them that way.

The key is this: someone in your group has to be responsible for social media, and checking back after you post to interact with anyone who comments or asks questions.

[Click here](#) or see below for sample posts.

6. Slideshow Presentations

Slideshows are a good support tool for public presentations. Please review and recommend changes to the template. This toolkit includes a Power Point presentation to customize for use — all you'll have to do is add your own photos and contact info to the template.

[Click here](#) or see below for the sample power point slides.



Photo: Choose Clean Water Coalition

Green Streetscape

How do you get started?

- You can use this brochure to learn about and share with your community information about stormwater management.
- Volunteer with your local homeowners association, or watershed association to implement some of these management strategies.
- Encourage your municipal government to pass stormwater management ordinances for new development projects.
- Work with churches, rotary clubs, boy scouts or other volunteer groups to create rain gardens in parks and open spaces.

Local Watershed Organizations

Blue Ridge Watershed Coalition. BRWC is primarily focused on water quality monitoring in Jefferson County. blueridgewatershed.org.

Cacapon Institute. CI monitors water quality along the full length of the Cacapon. cacaponinstitute.org.

Elks Run Watershed Group. Volunteers monitor at sites on Elks Run and Elks Branch. Elks Run is the drinking water supply for Harpers Ferry and Bolivar. elksrunwatershed.org.

Friends of Cacapon River. FCR uses a bio-survey approach to stream study, which includes the collection and evaluation of aquatic invertebrates. cacaponriver.org.

Sleepy Creek Watershed Association. SCWA volunteers sample water quality within the Sleepy Creek watershed. sleepycreekwatershed.org

Warm Springs Watershed Association. WSWA monitors locations along Warm Springs Run, one of the few “urban” watersheds in the Eastern Panhandle. warmspringswatershed.webs.com.



Photo: Bay Journal

Stormwater draining in the street

Stormwater and You

How stormwater affects you, your community, and what you can do to help.



A Program of WV Rivers

WVRivers.org; (304) 637-7201
3501 MacCorkle Ave SE #129
Charleston, WV 25304



Stormwater entering the street

What is stormwater?

Stormwater is rain or melted snow that flows onto the ground. In more urban or developed areas this water flows through streets and parking lots, collecting pollutants like oil, trash and debris before depositing it into streams and rivers. In areas like forests, fields, and wetlands, stormwater is absorbed into the ground more easily, then it is stored and filtered.

Impervious surfaces, like roofs, roads and parking lots, associated with more developed areas, significantly impact the natural flow of rivers and underground water supplies.

Due to the material of these surfaces, stormwater cannot soak into them, leading to low groundwater supply. Water also moves faster on these surfaces, altering the rivers and other bodies of water the water is flowing into. As a result, there is a greater amount of flooding, destruction and displacement.

How does stormwater impact me?

Large amounts of stormwater can cause flooding, leading to a multitude of issues. Washed-out driveways, flooded parking lots and roads, and standing water in our downtowns are issues that we all deal with when heavy rain comes – and we're motivated to fix these problems with your help.

"Previously there was no stormwater control on this 29-acre hill. Now 90% of the stormwater is slowed, captured, filtered, and stored." ~ Warm Springs Watershed Association

How do we manage stormwater?

With traditional infrastructure, like culverts and drains, stormwater is treated as something that needs to be disposed of rather than something that needs to be protected. This lack of recharged groundwater is what leads to flooding and lower water quality. By transitioning to natural stormwater management practices, we can solve the issue of flooding and increase the level of natural groundwater.



Rain garden by Warm Springs Watershed

Natural Stormwater Management

There are a few ways to naturally manage stormwater:

- Mimic the natural hydrologic processes through rain gardens or green roofs.
- Minimize the use of impervious surfaces and try to disconnect them. This can be done by using rain barrels, narrowing streets and using permeable pavement.
- Reroute rooftop drainage pipes from draining rainwater into the storm sewer to draining it into rain barrels, cisterns, or permeable areas.
- Use natural vegetation buffers along streams and rivers so it can filter, store and slow down stormwater.
- Protect open spaces and sensitive natural areas with conservation easements.

Stormwater and You Social Media Assets

Theme	Facebook post	URL, picture or graphic?	Notes
Announcing stormwater and you	Stormwater impacts us all whether we notice it or not. We're now partnered with other local watershed groups in the Panhandle to help combat stormwater and solve the issues of flooding in our community. Want to learn more about how stormwater can affect you? Contact us. #StormwaterandYou	Include logo or image in post	Use #StormwaterandYou
Article sharing recognition	Check out the awesome work (tagged organization) is doing to help prevent flooding in the region! #StormwaterandYou	Post with URL to page, use URL preview as the picture	Use #StormwaterandYou
Article sharing recognition	A special thank you to (tagged organization) for all the time and effort they put into helping combating stormwater. Check out the fantastic work they're doing by reading the article below!	Tag organization, post with URL to page, use URL preview as the picture, or use their logo	Use #StormwaterandYou
Post sharing someone's event	A big thanks to (tagged organization) for all the work they put into helping our local watershed. Come see the amazing work (tagged organization) is doing by volunteering at their event on (date). We'll be there, and we hope to see you there too! #StormwaterandYou	Share with link to event	Use #StormwaterandYou
Article sharing personal recognition	Check out this article on a project we worked on completing through #StormwaterandYou.	share with URL	Use #StormwaterandYou
Sharing event	We wanted to share some photos from an event we had recently! (Explain a sentence or two about what you did at the event). Also, thanks to (tag organizations that helped) for helping us with this project! #StormwaterandYou	share with photos from event, tag organizations who helped	Use #StormwaterandYou
volunteer info	No one enjoys dealing with flooding, so why not help combat it? We help to recognize and stop potential flooding before it happens in our community, but we need your help! We're always looking for volunteers to help at events and raise awareness. If you're interested in helping better your community and your watershed, contact us today! #StormwaterandYou	Post photo of volunteers at an event	Use #StormwaterandYou

Theme	Facebook post	URL, picture or graphic?	Notes
Watershed Groups	Do you want to know more about other local watershed groups in the Eastern Panhandle? Check out this list of different watershed groups on the West Virginia Rivers Coalition website!	http://wvrivers.org/our-programs/water-monitoring/monitoring-directory/eastern-panhandle/	Use #StormwaterandYou
Stormwater	You're impacted by stormwater and probably don't even recognize it. But what if we told you that the flooding we experience in our region was largely preventable? It's true! Contact us to learn more. #StormwaterandYou	Use photo of flooding	Use #StormwaterandYou
Stormwater	Tired of flooding? We understand and we feel the same way. Find out ways to naturally fight stormwater by contacting us today!	Use flooding photo	Use #StormwaterandYou
Stormwater	Did you know there are natural ways to combat excess stormwater? Through using things like rain barrels and rain gardens, you can fight flooding in your community! Contact us to learn more. #StormwaterandYou	Use photo for rain garden or rain barrel	Use #StormwaterandYou



Stormwater and You

HOW THE IMPACTS OF STORMWATER AFFECT YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY, AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO CHANGE IT.

What is stormwater?

Rain and melted snow flowing over the land

In rural areas, the water is absorbed in the ground, then filtered and stored.

When water flows through developed areas, it collects pollution.



Photo: Charleston Stormwater Program



Photo: Kenny Kemp, Charleston Gazette Mail

Impervious Surfaces

Impervious surfaces prohibit stormwater flow

- roads, roofs, parking lots

Stormwater cannot soak into these surfaces

Negatively Impacts natural water flow and groundwater supply

Water moves faster on these surfaces

- greater amount of flooding, destruction and displacement



Photo: West Virginia Rivers Coalition

How does stormwater impact me?

Washed-out driveways

Flooded parking lots and roads

Standing water in our downtowns

All are issues that can be fixed with the right assistance

Watershed and community groups can work with municipalities to help manage stormwater.



Photo: Warm Springs Watershed Association

How do we manage stormwater?

Natural stormwater management:

- mimic the natural hydrologic processes
- rain gardens or green roofs
- minimize the use of impervious surfaces and try to disconnect them
- rain barrels, narrowing streets and using permeable pavement
- use natural vegetation buffers along streams and rivers so it can filter, store and slow down stormwater



Photo: Friends of Deckers Creek



Photo: WV Rivers Coalition

How do we manage stormwater?

We work together to implement stormwater management projects!



Rain Garden Development by Piney Creek Watershed Association

Contact your Local Watershed Group

Blue Ridge Watershed Coalition – Harpers Ferry, WV.

Cacapon Institute – Great Cacapon, WV.

Elks Run Watershed Group – Harpers Ferry, WV.

Friends of Cacapon River – Great Cacapon, WV.

Sleepy Creek Watershed Association – Berkeley Springs, WV.

Warm Springs Watershed Association – Berkeley Springs, WV.

Experienced Learning Appalachian Watershed and Stream Monitors
– Circleville, WV.



Photo: Choose Clean Water Coalition