

Chittenden County Regional Stormwater Educational Program Annual Review: 2011- 2012 Program Year Summary

The 2011-2012 program year (March 1, 2011 through February 29, 2012) of the Regional Stormwater Educational Program (RSEP) maintained a consistent stream of public education and outreach. This year's program focused on using paid media and a drive to website to educate the public about the effects of stormwater runoff on water bodies and the simple steps that the public can take to reduce these effects. Given the record flooding of Lake Champlain in the spring and the widespread effects of Tropical Storm Irene in many parts of the state in late summer and fall, stormwater runoff and its impact on Vermont's water bodies has never been more apparent.

As in previous years, key messages of the campaign have remained the same, and include stormwater runoff and stormwater systems education, and tips on prevention methods related to fertilizer/chemicals. The focus of this program year was to reduce fertilizer use and runoff through the use of soil testing to determine if fertilizer was needed.

Marketing Partners, Inc. continues to work on a contract basis with RSEP to implement the public outreach campaign. RSEP Communications Plan goals achieved in 2011-2012 have included:

- Updated television media from analog to digital and closed-captioning, update print ads for new year of campaign.
- Extension of the "Soil Test" campaign in partnership with the University of Vermont (UVM) Agricultural Testing Lab to provide residents within the MS4 a free soil test. The ad campaigns drove people to the RSEP website where 163 eligible residents downloaded a printable coupon during this program year. UVM continues to track the number of coupons redeemed during paid media campaigns running in the spring and fall. Thirty-six tests were submitted (an increase of 11 from 2010).
- The 2011 spring media campaign included four weeks of radio spots on VPR, WCPV, and WEZF; four weeks of cable TV spots in the Chittenden County area; four weeks of spots during local news on broadcast TV; print ads in member community newspapers; and three weeks of advertising on Front Porch Forum (an opt-in community e-newsletter). The spring 2011 media budget totaled \$19,353, an increase from 2010.
- Another paid media campaign was completed throughout Chittenden County in fall of 2011 that consisted of two weeks of print ads in member community newspapers; two weeks of radio spots on VPR, WCPV, and WEZF; two weeks of cable TV spots in the Chittenden County area; two weeks of spots during local news on broadcast TV; and two weeks of placement on Front Porch Forum. The fall 2011 ad campaign budget totaled \$10,000. This also represents an increase in media budget compared to fall 2010.
- Continued to compile website visibility tracking data and coupon download and redemptions in order to monitor outreach effectiveness.
- Continued to collaborate with partners in furthering stormwater education outreach.

Gross Impressions/Audience Reach, 2011-2012 Program Year Summary Chittenden County Regional Stormwater Educational Program

1. Unpaid Media (Public Relations)

At the request of RSEP, program year 2011-2012 did not include any public relations efforts. However, two news reports about using rain barrels to reduce run-off featured RSEP in June 2011. The Champlain Water District *Water Quality Report 2011* also included RSEP.

2. Total Paid Media Impressions, 2011 (Spring and Fall campaigns)

The 2011-2012 paid media budget was increased to \$31,000 from the prior year budget of \$12,250. The same media strategies of increased online sponsorship in addition to commercial advertising were used with increased frequency and additional weeks during the spring flights. This year's paid media schedule resulted in an increase of 149.5% in gross impressions, as delineated below:

Print: 1,149,876*
 Broadcast TV: 136,260 (Nielsen households using television, Chittenden County, program ratings)
 Cable TV: 77,220 (Nielsen program ratings by cable market penetration)
 Radio: 383,912 (based on Arbitron ratings of adult listeners in Chittenden County, M-F 6a – 7p)
 Online: 56,500 (based on circulation reported by media outlet)

Total gross impressions: 1,803,768

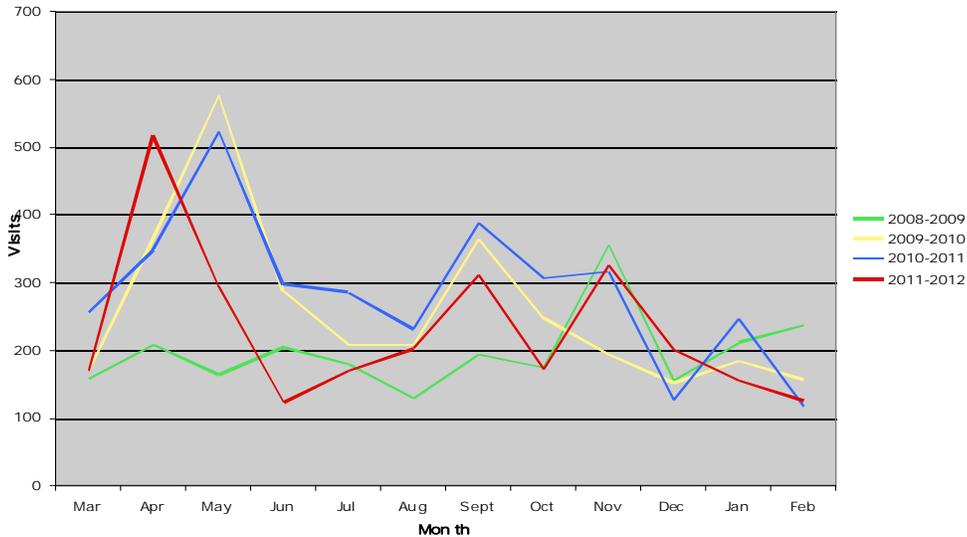
**Impressions are based on circulation as reported by outlet and an average readership of 2.34 per issue for community newspapers.*

3. Website

Below is the website visitor information for 2011, as compared to the three most recent preceding years. The program year had 2,774 visits, a decrease of nearly 20%; however, page views per visit and time on site increased. Website traffic increases/spikes are marked in conjunction with paid media campaigns.

Smartwaterways.org Website Visits

4-Year Comparison



NOTE: Data from Google Analytics for www.smartwaterways.org.