



Storm Drain Stenciling

“Paint the Town with WAVes”

DESCRIPTION:

Educate your community about stormwater pollution by stenciling the message: “Dump no Waste – Drains to Stream” (or River or Lake) next to storm drains. You may choose to distribute or create fliers that educate the community about stormwater pollution.



YOU WILL NEED:

Items for 4 to 6 people:

- ◆ 1 or 2 stencils
- ◆ Door hanger cards/fliers
- ◆ A map of the stenciling area
- ◆ Parent/guardian permission slips
- ◆ A letter of authorization from the Department of Public Works for stenciling
- ◆ 2 cans of spray paint – preferably inverted-tip white traffic zone latex paint. (Note: 1 can paints approximately 10 drains.)
- ◆ A wire brush to clean the gutter before painting
- ◆ Whisk broom and dust pan
- ◆ 1 or 2 pairs of work gloves
- ◆ 1 or 2 bright orange safety vests, or wear brightly colored clothing
- ◆ 2 garbage bags – 1 for wet stencils and 1 for garbage such as tape used on the stencils and debris cleaned out of the gutter
- ◆ Paper towels or rags*
- ◆ Traffic cones or flags for use on busy streets*
- ◆ Duct tape and scissors*
- ◆ Cardboard box the size of stencil*

OBJECTIVES

By participating in this activity, your group will:

1. Learn about the sources of stormwater pollution.
2. Understand why stormwater pollution is a threat to the environment.
3. Stencil messages next to storm drains to encourage others to be more aware of stormwater pollution.

TIME

It will take approximately one hour for a team of four to six people to stencil 15 storm drains.

AGE

This is a good activity for volunteers ten years and older.

COST

You will need to purchase or borrow all of the required supplies, except for the stencils and door hanger cards. These are available free-of-charge from the Department of Natural Resources Madison office or University of Wisconsin Extension. Call 608-264-8948 to order.

* = optional



Everyone can contribute to a storm drain stenciling campaign. This student is from Ladysmith Elementary School in Ladysmith, WI.

BACKGROUND

Why should people be concerned about what enters a storm drain? Because anything that is flushed down a storm drain is not “treated” before it reaches a stream or river. This means that oil, antifreeze, paint, grass clippings, household waste, pet wastes, or any other waste on streets and sidewalks goes directly into a nearby stream, river, or lake.

The next time you wash your car on your driveway, consider where the water goes. The soapy, dirty water runs down the street into the storm sewer. This sewer carries the wash water to a waterbody. In the water, the soap acts like a fertilizer for aquatic plants and causes too much plant growth, which creates problems for fish.

You can help increase awareness of the storm drain connection. Educate your community about stormwater pollution by stenciling the street next to storm drains and distributing door hanger cards.

BEFORE YOU STENCIL

1. Obtain permission.

Get permission to stencil storm drains from the Department of Public Works in your city, village or town. Be sure to ask for a letter of authorization to provide you with proof if you are questioned by a road crew or police officer.

To stencil on private property, contact the landowner, whether the property is a home, business, or apartment complex.

2. Keep weather in mind.

Weather conditions are important for the success of this project. You should choose a day when

the pavement is dry and warm. Windy days are not good because the spray paint can drift onto nearby automobiles and debris can be blown onto the painted surface.

3. Divide up the area.

Using a neighborhood map, carefully consider the area your group will stencil. Divide the area into routes and assign a team to each route.

4. Notify the neighborhood.

A day or two before you plan to paint, distribute door hanger cards or fliers explaining the stenciling program. If you can't distribute the information ahead of time, have one or two team members distribute the cards and fliers while others paint.

Examples of a door hanger card and a flier are included with this unit (the flier can be photocopied). If your group is participating in a large storm drain stenciling project, you may want to make your own door hangers, fliers, or posters, using the opportunity to conduct an all-out education campaign.



HOW TO STENCIL

1. Scrub around the drain.

Scrub the street area surrounding the storm drain with the wire brush, and use the whisk broom to sweep dirt into the dust pan. Use your garbage bags to take debris away. Do not sweep dirt and debris into the drain.

2. Put the stencil in place.

Position the stencil in the gutter next to the storm drain inlet where the message will be most visible. Tape or hold the stencil in place. You might place a cardboard box with its bottom removed over the stencil to create a "wall" that contains drifting paint.

3. Paint away.

Spray paint the message, making sure paint doesn't get into the storm drain. Two light coats of paint will work better than one heavy coat. Allow the first coat of paint to dry before applying the second coat. The stenciled messages last for approximately two years on a paved surface.

4. Check for missed drains.

When you're done with the project, have one team member check that all storm drains in your area have been stenciled. It's easy to miss one.

5. Clean up.

Place the used stencils in a plastic bag for transportation. When

storing used stencils, allow the paint to dry *before* stacking the stencils. A stencil's lifespan is determined by use. Discard the stencil when the message is blurred by excess paint build-up (typically about ten separate events).

RESOURCES

**Down The Drain* (#645003)
Sunburst
101 Castleton St.
Pleasantville, NY 10570
1-800-321-7511
www.sunburst.com

This 30-minute 3-2-1 CONTACT video takes a close look at something that's easy to take for granted – water. It examines the effects of modern lifestyles on the water cycle, a key to understanding why and how we must preserve this precious resource.

Door hanger cards and stencils

Contact: Kris Stepenuck, Water Action Volunteers Coordinator, at 608-264-8948, or: Carol Holden, DNR Runoff Management Section, Bureau of Watershed Management, at 608-266-0140.



The Water Action Volunteers program is a cooperative effort between the University of Wisconsin -Extension and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. For more information about the WAV program, please contact Kris Stepenuck, Water Action Volunteers Coordinator

AT: DNR, WT/2,
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707
(608) 264-8948

OR: Environmental Resources Center
216 Agriculture Hall, 1450 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706-1562
(608) 265-3887
kris.stepenuck@ces.uwex.edu

Paint the Town with WAVES!

Storm Drain Stenciling Order Form

Please check on the WAV website to see if there is a local stencil distributor in your county or city before completing this form. These local contacts have stencils and oftentimes other supplies on hand to help your group have a successful project.

PLEASE PRINT!

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

County _____

STENCILS

Circle One

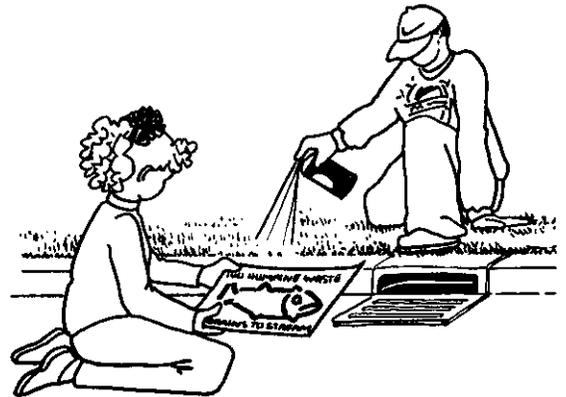
How many

Circle one

River 1 2 3 4 5

Lake 1 2 3 4 5

Stream 1 2 3 4 5



HAND OUTS

How many

Door Hanger Cards _____
(1 packet = 250 cards)

Return this form to:

Kris Stepenuck
Water Action Volunteers
DNR, WT/2
101 S. Webster St., PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707

Paint the Town with WAVES!

Storm Drain Stenciling Report

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ County _____

Email _____

How many people participated in the activity?*

Youth: _____

Adult: _____

Male: _____

Female: _____

Asian: _____

African American: _____

Caucasian: _____

Hispanic: _____

American Indian: _____



* This information will be used to help to fine tune a nondiscriminatory educational outreach program.

Date of stenciling project: _____

Where did you stencil? _____

How many drains did you stencil? _____

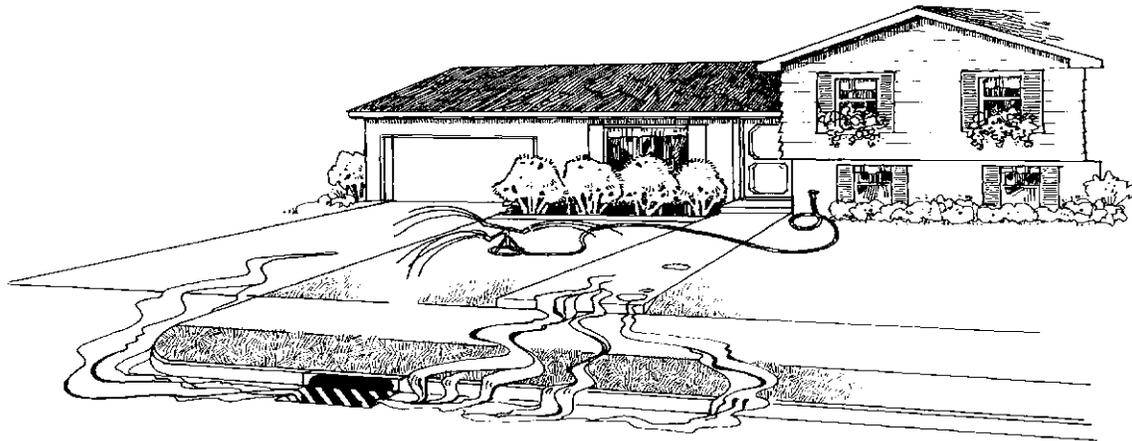
Please send this form to: Kris Stepenuck, DNR, WT/2, 101 S. Webster, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or email the completed form to kris.stepenuck@ces.uwex.edu

Please send copies of photos, newspaper clippings or any other information about your stenciling project!

Working with Your City Government

Sometimes it is necessary to speak directly to your City Board to get permission to stencil storm drains. This is a great opportunity for you and your group to learn more about city government and decision making. Other groups have given presentations to their City Boards to gain permission to stencil. Below are a few suggestions for a presentation:

- Spray the stencil onto a piece of tag board so the City Board can see what the stencils will look like on the streets.
- Ask your students or younger members of your group to participate in the presentation.
- Explain what causes stormwater pollution (runoff from yards, parking lots etc.), and then explain that stenciling is a way to educate the community and will build awareness of stormwater pollution. Educational materials for you to hand out are available for free (see <http://www1.uwex.edu/ces/pubs/>).
- Storm Drain Stenciling is a great community-building activity.



WATER ACTION VOLUNTEERS is a cooperative program between the Department of Natural Resources and the University of Wisconsin - Cooperative Extension. For more information call 608-264-8948 or 608-265-3887.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Paint the Town with WAVes

Keep an eye out for groups of kids and adults roaming the streets with cans of spray paint. They are part of an education campaign to remind all of us that storm water pollution begins at the drain on our streets. The Water Action Volunteers program, a cooperative program between the WI Department of Natural Resources and the University of Wisconsin-Extension, provides free stencils to individuals and groups who want to volunteer an afternoon to paint the message: Dump No Waste: Drains to River (or Stream or Lake).

In most communities around Wisconsin, rain or snowmelt washes down streets, parking lots, driveways, sidewalks, yards, and roofs into the drain at the curb. The water enters a series of pipes which collect water from other neighborhoods, finally dumping directly into a nearby lake, stream, river, or wetland.

Stormwater is not cleaned before it empties into our waterways. This means that lawn care bi-products (including grass clippings), automobile products such as antifreeze or oil, and other chemicals can enter the water through the storm sewers. Soil from yards and construction sites or farm fields can turn water cloudy or turbid. Cloudy water makes it difficult for fish to see and feed, and soil particles can act like sandpaper against fish gills, causing them harm. Closed swimming beaches are often the result of large rainstorms because the water washes pet waste and other waste down storm drains. These wastes may contain bacteria that are harmful to humans.

We can help protect our water by using lawn care chemicals sparingly, recycling automobile bi-products, and tossing pet waste in the garbage. A message next to the storm drain is a simple reminder of what we can do to prevent storm water pollution. Join the stenciling campaign by contacting: **(enter a contact name, phone number, date and time of stenciling project)**.

DON'T FORGET!



- Get permission from your city to stencil storm drains.
- Purchase spray paint from your local hardware store or paint store. Look for *latex traffic marker paint* or *inverted tip marker paint*.
- Fact sheets and door hanger cards are available through WAV.
- Keep track of how many people participate and how many drains are stenciled.
- Have fun!

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EXAMPLE LIABILITY WAIVER



I, the undersigned, being the volunteer involved in the storm drain stenciling project (hereinafter referred to as the “Project”) or being the parent or legal guardian of such a volunteer in the Project, in consideration of my or another’s participation in the Project, I hereby, for myself and any volunteer for who I am a parent or legal guardian release, discharge, hold harmless, and forever acquit the *State of Wisconsin, the County, the City, the University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Water Action Volunteers program, or other local sponsors*, and their officers, agents, representatives and employees from any and all actions, causes of action, claims or any liabilities whatsoever, known or unknown now existing or which may arise in the future, on account of or in any way related to or arising out of participation in the Project.

Further, I assume all liability of any non-participants who accompany me.

Participant’s name (please print)_____

Participant’s
signature_____

Participant’s age_____

Signature of participant’s parent or legal guardian_____

Date_____

You must sign the liability waiver to participate!