



Strategic Communications Plan

ABOUT THIS PLAN

This communications plan has been created to guide the Puget Sound Starts Here campaign through June 2011. The campaign is co-owned and directed by STORM (Stormwater Outreach for Regional Municipalities) and the Puget Sound Partnership (PSP). The plan is intended to provide direction and help STORM and PSP stay on course, coordinate efforts, and monitor progress along the way. It formalizes the organizations' goals and the methods by which these will be achieved. The communications plan has been jointly developed by STORM and PSP with the financial and technical support of Washington State's Department of Ecology.

The Puget Sound Starts Here campaign takes a two-pronged approach to regional communications:

- A regional multi-media campaign featuring television, Web, and social networking across the 12-county Puget Sound region.
- Message dissemination and diversification via partnerships with municipalities, educators, non-governmental organizations, and community groups at local levels, coordinated through the Puget Sound Partnership's ECO-Net (Education, Communication and Outreach Network) and STORM.

The communications plan is a living document, designed to be adaptable and expected to change over time to accommodate shifts in economic, social and environmental conditions.

HISTORY AND FUNDING

STORM (Stormwater Outreach for Regional Municipalities) is a regional consortium that emerged in early 2007 when a group of stormwater professionals began discussing the value of collaborating to meet updated National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) permit requirements (subject to the federal Clean Water Act). The consortium quickly grew to include five counties and many local municipalities surrounding Puget Sound. In 2008 this group submitted a grant application to the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) focused on developing and implementing a regional public awareness campaign. The application was approved by Ecology, and a \$970,000 grant was awarded to STORM.

The grant performance period grant began in August 2008 and ends in September 2011. The majority of funding was allocated to the development and implementation of a regional media campaign targeting behavior change around a group of best management practices related to yard care, pet care, car care and home care. Resources were also designated to create a tool kit of education/public outreach resources for local use by jurisdictions, to measure and evaluate the campaign's success, and to develop a communications plan. Provisions were later added to create a comprehensive Web site.

As STORM planned its regional stormwater pollution awareness campaign, the Puget Sound Partnership was developing its Action Agenda for the recovery of Puget Sound, including its own public awareness campaign. In 2008 the organizations began to discuss merging the two campaigns. A collaboration was finalized in early 2009.

The collaboration takes advantage of the overlapping geography (Puget Sound) of the two efforts, ensures consistent region-wide messages, and minimizes the possibility of redundancy. The STORM/Ecology team brings program momentum, applied stormwater and communications expertise, and an organized network of 57 local governments to the alliance. The Puget Sound Partnership brings the diverse ECO Net network, regional planning and communications expertise, additional fiscal resources, and a long-term home for the many of the campaign's components.

This collaboration enhances the long term effectiveness and viability of the Puget Sound Starts Here campaign.

MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Both STORM and PSP share the goal of raising awareness about the pollution impacts of residential and lifestyle behaviors on the larger Puget Sound basin ecosystem. Both seek to achieve measurable public behavior change – as related to stormwater and other pollution – through a cohesive campaign that includes advertising, Web presence, social media interaction and earned media programs. These goals will be achieved by completing the following objectives.

1. Develop strong partnerships among participants that yield a coordinated approach to the regional environmental effort.
2. Support messaging consistency and “speaking with one voice” for media and public outreach efforts.
3. Provide a messaging foundation on which participating municipalities, schools and NGO’s can build local outreach and education programs.
4. Reach those targeted residents within the region that practice behaviors harmful to Puget Sound’s water quality by providing ready information, inspiration and alternative behaviors with which to reduce their pollution.

TARGET AUDIENCES

The target audience for the campaign's behavior change efforts is described as follows:

- Residents in STORM's 55 member jurisdictions
 - urban, suburban and rural
 - homeowners and renters
 - with and without children
 - with and without pets
 - vehicle owners
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- Primary age group: 16 and older
- Secondary age group: 6 to 16 (influencers of adults)
- Individuals described in our measurement tool, Environmental Behavior Index, as bright greens, light greens and yellows
 - bright greens consistently engage in the desired behavior but are probably not practicing *all* key behaviors (also referred to as "early adopters")
 - light greens sometimes do the desired behaviors, but sometimes do not
 - yellows do not do the desired behaviors, but are considering them
- All genders, ethnicities and income levels

The Puget Sound Starts Here's target audience does not include businesses, government agencies, non-profits or other generators of point-source pollution. The organization's target audience is not its own members.

KEY BEHAVIORS

Selection Process

There are many personal behaviors that contribute to stormwater pollution. Budget constraints prevent the development of a campaign that addresses each of these behaviors. Experience (and research) also indicates that people need time to change their behaviors – and advocating many such changes simultaneously would likely impede the process.

Consequently, STORM's best management practices (BMP) committee was charged with selecting BMPs on which to focus. These BMPs are considered “gateway” practices. A brainstorming session was held, resulting in the identification of 43 behaviors across the three practice areas. Over 20 water quality specialists were consulted for their input (see Appendix A). STORM members then took part in a session facilitated by social marketing expert Nancy Lee to select the top 20 BMPs. Selection was based on the following criteria.

1. **Willingness:** how willing the target audience will be to adopt the behavior
2. **Supply:** the extent to which the behavior is already being promoted by other agencies or organizations
3. **Support:** how much support for the behavior exists with management, elected officials and other key constituent groups
4. **Organizational Fit:** how well the behavior aligns with the campaign's mission and priorities
5. **Social Marketing Fit:** how effective social marketing can be in influencing adoption of the behavior
6. **Mass Media Fit:** how effective a media campaign will be in influencing adoption of the behavior

Winning BMPs were segmented by practice area:

YARD CARE	CAR CARE	PET CARE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • Fertilize sparingly • Spot treatment vs. broad application of herbicides and pesticides • Compost and mulch on lawn and garden • Create a rain garden • Maintain tree cover • Improve soil • Reduce size of lawn • Hand-pull weeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use commercial car wash • Get regular auto maintenance • Wash car on a pervious surface • Properly dispose of used auto fluids • Sell charity car wash tickets • Choose alternative forms of transportation • Place cardboard under care to monitor fluid leaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick up pet waste

With the inclusion of non-stormwater related impacts, another category was added: Home Care. This includes household chemicals and septic systems.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Strategy #1

Develop broad public awareness by creating a unifying brand (Puget Sound Starts Here) that jurisdictions in all counties bordering Puget Sound can get behind and adopt. The message that it all starts right in our own backyards, the Puget Sound Starts Here brand helps communicate the over-arching problem and specific behaviors that contribute to the pollution of Puget Sound area waters (lakes, rivers, streams and the Sound itself) through stormwater runoff. This strategy is a critical first step in persuading target audiences to adopt key behaviors (car care/washing, use of fertilizers and pesticides, picking up pet waste, household chemicals).

Tactic A: Brand Development

Develop Puget Sound Starts Here brand, direction, graphic symbol and usage standards that will allow all participating organizations to use the campaign as needed to support their own stormwater information and education programs.

Tactic B: Media Campaign

Develop and implement an effective Puget Sound Starts Here media campaign that (1) increases awareness of stormwater pollution issues and actions people can take to mitigate the problem, and (2) drives people to the Puget Sound Starts Here Web site. The primary delivery mechanism will be cable and broadcast television, as it enables cost efficiency and audience segmentation.

Tactic C: Launch Events (Local Road Shows)

Ensure maximum grassroots support and adoption of the Puget Sound Starts Here campaign by ECO Net members, local jurisdictions and partner agencies/organizations (NGOs).

1. Build excitement about and enthusiasm for the campaign among target audience members.
2. Establish full awareness of all campaign elements: television advertising, Web site, branding materials, messaging guidelines, BMP fact sheets, tool kit items, etc.
3. Motivate participants to support and adopt the campaign with efforts in their local jurisdictions.
4. Ensure consistency of messaging in terms of the campaign's problem statement and desired behavior changes.

Tactic D: Media Relations

Secure earned media covering the launch of the media campaign and including compelling facts about how specific behaviors pollute Puget Sound, local lakes, rivers and streams. Prepare press releases for distribution by consultant for individual jurisdictions.

Tactic E: Social Media

Leverage social media to extend the reach of campaign messaging, especially to younger audiences. Vehicles may include YouTube, My Space, Facebook, Twitter and others.

Tactic F: Online Publicity

Secure placement of the Puget Sound Starts Here Web link on highly visible, consumer-focused green/environmental sites (examples include Grist, the Sustainable Industries Journal, others).

Tactic G: Public Speaking

Establish a Puget Sound Starts Here speakers bureau. Create a compelling presentation to highlight how many people making small changes can have a huge impact on surface water quality.

Tactic H: Create and Air "Yard Talk" Episode

Create 15-minute episode of Yard Talk focused on stormwater pollution impacts and mitigations. Air on King County KCTV once a week for one year (2010). Provide to partner jurisdictions, agencies and groups and post on Puget Sound Starts Here Web site.

Tactic I: Ads on Local Public Networks

Provide campaign ads (30 second and 15 second versions) to local jurisdictions and partner groups for airing on local public networks as often as possible.

Strategy #2

Achieve desired behavior changes within target audiences by promoting specific, easy-to-implement actions through integrated campaign tactics.

Tactic A: Media Campaign

Develop and implement an effective media campaign that (1) increases awareness of stormwater pollution issues and actions people can take to mitigate the problem, and (2) drives people to the Puget Sound Starts Here Web site. The campaign will include 15-second ads focusing on specific behaviors. All commercials will feature the Puget Sound Starts Here Web URL (www.pugetsoundstartshere.org) to drive viewers to the site for BMP-related calls to action.

Tactic B: Web Site

Develop and launch a Puget Sound Starts Here Web site that (1) offers fast and easy information about the top three behaviors (car care/washing, use of fertilizer, picking up pet waste) as well as incentives for adopting these behaviors; and (2) serves as a portal directing visitors to the Web sites of individual jurisdictions where information about local programs and resources is available.

Tactic C: Create "Yard Talk" Episode

Create 15-minute episode of Yard Talk focused on stormwater pollution impacts and mitigations.

Strategy #3

Expand the reach of Puget Sound Starts Here messaging by developing and fostering strategic partnerships with a diverse group of organizations and providing them with tools to better share key messages. The diversity of these partnerships will provide a way to reinforce media campaign messages with target audiences in a cost effective manner.

Tactic A: Involve Regional PIOs

Involve regional PI's from STORM and PSP in seeking earned media and providing coordinated messaging. Provide PIOs with electronic products, press kits, FAQs, talking points and campaign justifications.

Tactic B: Public and Private Corporations

Initiate meetings with companies and organizations that are committed to environmental stewardship. Explore potential partnership opportunities, including distribution of campaign messages to company clients/customers and stakeholders, sponsorship of BMP-related events in local jurisdictions, posting of Puget Sound Starts Here links and television ads on company Web site, etc. Prospects include sustainability-friendly companies like REI, Starbucks, Weyerhaeuser, Amazon, etc.

Tactic C: Other Non-Governmental Organizations

Seek dissemination of campaign messages by like-minded non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Provide Puget Sound Starts Here links to post on NGO Web sites. Write short articles for inclusion in NGO newsletters. Extend invitations to follow Puget Sound Starts Here on social media like Twitter and Facebook.

Strategy #4

Support jurisdictional and partner programs to enhance the effectiveness of local outreach and facilitate behavior change at a grassroots level.

Tactic A: Local Government Television

Make television ads from Puget Sound Starts Here media campaign available to member jurisdictions for airing on local government television channels. Provide same ads for posting on jurisdiction Web sites.

Tactic B: Social Marketing Tool Box

Develop a menu of proven social marketing tactics from which jurisdictions can select the type and level of program appropriate for their needs. Prepare comprehensive fact sheets to describe each tactic and provide "how-to" instructions for implementation. Create a FAQ document that supports the selection of priority BMPs, with a science-based section and a talking points section. Include information about existing resources jurisdictions can access.

Tactic C: Puget Sound Starts Here Branding

Provide electronic files of branding elements and style guide developed for the Puget Sound Starts Here media campaign. This will ensure messaging consistency across jurisdictions and will simplify the process of creating collateral materials.

Strategy #5

Use the results of effectiveness measurement to establish campaign efficacy, build momentum and enhance the interest of target audiences.

Tactic A: Environmental Behavior Index

Review findings from the 2010 Environmental Behavior Index, a tracking study conducted in King County every other year, to measure appreciable increases in target BMPs (car washing, fertilizer use, pet waste pick-up) that may be attributable to the Puget Sound Starts Here media campaign.

Tactic B: Independent Quantitative Study

Custom design and conduct research to measure behavior change affected by the Puget Sound Starts Here media campaign and public outreach initiatives. Use social media as a distribution mechanism.

Tactic C: Web Measurement

Build measurable metrics into the Puget Sound Starts Here Web site to enable assessment of the site's effectiveness. Metrics will include – but are not limited to – visitor analytics (how many visitors, length of time on the site per visit, number of page views per visit, specific page views, etc.), and tracking of BMP incentive coupons (car wash, pet waste bags, etc.). Web measurement will also provide insights about the effectiveness of the media campaign.

BOILERPLATE STATEMENT

The Puget Sound Starts Here (PSSH) campaign seeks to increase awareness of the magnitude of Puget Sound's pollution problem, and to motivate residents to adopt new behaviors that will decrease the amount of pollution entering the Sound through stormwater runoff and other sources of pollution. The tools developed to achieve these goals include a recognizable brand, television advertisements, a Web site designed to foster behavior change, and public outreach tools for use by PSSH partners at a local, grassroots level. Key campaign messages are as follows:

- Although Puget Sound appears pristine, on an average day more than 143,000 pounds of toxic chemicals enter its waters.
- The Sound's pollution problem starts with each of us. The actions we take in our yards, with our cars and pets, and in our homes yield approximately 75 percent of this chemical pollution through stormwater runoff.
- Together we have the ability to fix the problem. A few small changes will make a big difference: wash your car in a commercial car wash, pick up pet poop in your yard and put it in the trash, replace lawn fertilizer with compost, choose home cleaning products that are less hazardous.
- These actions will help prevent Puget Sound from dying, and will help ensure the lifestyle we all treasure so highly continues to exist.

More information is at www.pugetsoundstartshere.org

BUDGET

Task	2008	2009	20101	2011	Total
Communications Plan	\$9,650	\$6,000	\$12,000	\$3,165	\$30,185
Media Campaign	\$10,450	\$332,000	\$225,000	0	\$567,450
Campaign Evaluation	\$1,100	\$41,700	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$62,800
Public Outreach	\$735	\$40,700	\$20,000	\$50,000	\$111,435
Total	\$21,935	\$420,400	\$267,000	\$63,165	\$772,500

TIMELINE

Partnership development	Ongoing
Web site design/development	May 2009-July 2009
Finalize campaign branding	June 2009
Web site launch	August 2009
Road Show for Local ECO Nets and Implementers	August to October 2009
Final production of television ads	August 31, 2009
Online outreach tools available	September 2009
Campaign launch event	September 16, 2009
Fall advertising campaign flight	Third week of September through mid-November

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

STORM

STORM represents a breadth of collaboration seldom found in public agencies. The coordination of efforts across its 57 member jurisdictions empowers STORM to achieve behavior changes on a scale not possible by a single entity. STORM's focus on reducing stormwater pollution also differentiates it from other agencies dedicated to improving water quality in the Puget Sound region. Because these organizations (including STORM) share a common goal of reducing water pollution, there is a great opportunity to build mutually beneficial relationships. Growing and maintaining such relationships is an important strategy that is described in detail in the Communications Strategies section of their strategic plan. Listed below are the agencies STORM has welcomed as strategic partners.

Puget Sound Partnership

The Puget Sound Partnership was created in 2007 by the Washington State legislature. Charged with restoring and protecting Puget Sound, the Partnership was given the following three considerable tasks.

- Define a 2020 Action Agenda that identifies work needed to protect and restore Puget Sound, based on science and with clear and measurable goals for recovery.
- Determine accountability for achieving results including performance, effectiveness, and the efficient use of money spent on Puget Sound.
- Promote public awareness and communication to build support for a long-term strategy.

The Partnership's priorities are far-reaching. One of these priorities is to prevent water pollution at its source, with an action item to "use a comprehensive, integrated approach to managing urban stormwater and rural surface water runoff to reduce stormwater volumes and pollutant loadings." In this aspect of its mission, the Partnership shares a common interest with STORM.

In 2008 the Partnership formally adopted ECO Net (Education, Communication and Outreach Network), a Puget Sound-wide network devoted to building and strengthening relationships among organizations committed to enhancing public awareness, involvement and environmental education. ECO Net's membership is comprised of teachers, program coordinators, public outreach specialists, volunteers and others who are involved in delivering education and public outreach in the Puget Sound region.

Washington State Department of Ecology

The Department of Ecology's (Ecology) mission is "to protect, preserve and enhance Washington's environment, and promote the wise management of the state's air, land and water for the benefit of current and future generations." Ecology focuses on preventing and cleaning up pollution as means to fulfill its mission.

Ecology has statewide responsibilities that extend beyond the Puget Sound region. However, protecting and restoring Puget Sound and the rivers, streams, lakes and other water bodies that drain to the Sound are among the department's top

priorities. Ecology provided a grant that funds the core of STORM's efforts. STORM and Ecology share a strong partnership, with opportunities to grow and expand in ways that will help both continue to meet their goals.

APPENDIX A

Best Management Practices Selection Process

According to the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), on an average day, approximately 143,000 lbs of toxic materials are released into Puget Sound via stormwater (runoff). Further, according to Ecology stormwater pollution generated from surface-water-runoff is the largest source of this pollution to Puget Sound (Envirovision, Herrera, and Department of Ecology 2008).

The behaviors of home owners that contribute to the pollution of stormwater runoff are many and complex. Because of this complexity and due to budget constraints, time constraints, and the difficulties associated with fostering behavioral change, STORM has prioritized pollution issues and behaviors upon which to focus during its initial awareness media campaign.

The process to identify the *potential* initial stormwater pollution issues for STORM's residential stormwater pollution awareness media campaign is detailed below. The result of these efforts narrowed list of potential behaviors into four categories: 1) infiltrating stormwater, 2) car care, 3) yard care, and 4) pet care. From these four areas, the came the following more specific recommended actions used in our initial campaign media:

- Use a commercial car wash
- Identify and fix car leaks
- Use fewer, if any, lawn and garden chemicals
- Scoop up pet waste, bag it and toss it in the trash

The selection process of these pollution issues and a corresponding best management practices (BMPs) consisted three steps:

Step 1: Identifying Pollution Issues and Potential BMPs

Members of STORM steering committee created a list of 8 pollution issues and 43 actions that have the potential to positively impact stormwater quality.

Step 2: BMP evaluation and Rating Work Session

A smaller group of storm members and a scientific panel made up of 28(?) stormwater quality science staff from participating local governments evaluated the list of 43 potential BMPs. Professional social marketing consultant, Nancy Lee, lead this secession and each Potential BMP was evaluated using the following criteria:

- **Impact:** the effect the adoption a behavior will likely have on aquatic life, human health, and biological integrity
- **Willingness:** how willing the target audience would be to adopt the behavior
- **Supply:** the extent to which the behavior is already being promoted by other agencies or organizations
- **Organization fit:** how well the behavior aligns with STORM's mission and priorities

- **Social Marketing:** how effective social marketing can be in influencing adoption of the behavior
- **Mass media fit:** how effective social marketing can be in influencing adoption of the behavior

Preliminary Result: The first two steps generated the 4 generalized topic areas of concern, and list of 16 potential BMP's that address one or more topic areas

Step 3: A final filtering of BMPs

A smaller group from STORM's Best Educational Practices Committee then used the following filters to further narrow the field of selected BMP's:

- Information from existing programs that are run and running
- Scientific literature that confirms and validate the assessment made during the BMP selection workshop
- When scientific information was available, a ranking systems the 1) favored preventative actions over interventions, and 2) constructed "back of the envelop" calculations to create order of magnitude estimations on the impacts of possible behaviors.

The following tables detail the potential BMP's (Table 1) and the final BMP's selected by for this awareness campaign (Table 2). Note: the language used to promote these actions has not as yet been finalized.

Table 1: STORM selected possible BMP's for the 2009 Campaign

Stormwater Pollution Topic Area	Pollution Generating Behavior	Remedy & Proposed BMPs	Resources Used During BMP Selection
Infiltration	Maintaining Existing and Creating New Impervious Areas	Reduce impervious area: 1) Install a rain garden 2) Plant trees and maintain tree coverage* 3) Try porous paving options*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STORM BMP selection process • City of Seattle RainWise Program • Snohomish County LID focus groups
Car Care	Allowing automobile to leak fluids	Reduce automobile leaks: 1) Service automobile regularly 2) Detect and fix automobile leaks*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STORM BMP selection process
	Dumping Automobile Fluids	Stop dumping of fluids: 1) Recycle oil and other fluids	
	Charity Car Washing	Make sure fundraising activity does not pollute: 1) Sell coupons instead of holding charity car washes 2) Use car wash kits	
	Residential Car Washing on Pavement	Do not let car wash runoff enter storm drains: 1) Use a commercial car wash 2) Wash on or adjacent to pervious area that soaks up runoff	
Yard Care	Lawn & Garden Chemical Application	Reduce use of Lawn & Yard Chemical Applications: 1) Use compost and mulch to build the soil 2) Use fewer, if any, lawn and garden chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STORM BMP selection process • King County Natural Yard Care Program
Pet Care	Not Cleaning Up Pet Waste	Clean up after pet: 1) Scoop the poop, bag it, and put it in the trash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STORM BMP selection process • Snohomish County Pet Waste Program

- BMPs are listed in order of preference with the most desirable BMP listed first.
- *Not selected in top 16 in the STORM BMP process

Table 2: Final Initial BMP's for STORM's Residential General Awareness Campaign

Stormwater Pollution Topic Area	Targeted Pollution Generating Behavior	Proposed BMPs*
Car Care	Residential car washing	Take your car to a commercial car wash
	Automobile leaks	Identify and fix automobile leaks
Yard Care	Lawn & Garden Chemical Application	Use fewer, if any, lawn and garden chemicals
Pet Care	Not Cleaning Up Pet Waste in residential yards	Scoop the poop, bag it, and put it in the trash

References:

EnviroVision Corporation, Herrera Environmental Consultants, Inc., Washington State Department of Ecology. 2008. *Control of Toxic Chemicals in Puget Sound -- Phase 2: Improved Estimates of Loadings from Surface Runoff and Roadways*. Washington State Department of Ecology: Olympia WA. Publication number: 08-10-084