

78 – 2021 Public Education and Outreach General Awareness Report

Seattle Public Utilities provides the following public education and outreach programs to improve surface water quality and reduce stormwater runoff:

Adopt a Drain Program

Program Description: The Adopt a Drain program is a social science-based behavior change program that asks residents to adopt a nearby storm drain and keep it clear of debris. This program is part of a storm drain care approach that connects and promotes best practices for upstream pollution prevention behaviors like picking up pet waste, maintaining vehicles, and natural yard care practices.

Target audience: General public, including school age children

Subject areas: Preventing surface water pollution. BMPs to prevent non-point source pollution.

2021 accomplishments:

- Recruited 6 other Puget Sound cities to join the regional program
- Successful program launch in mid-October, 2021
- Recruited 132 volunteer adopters to steward 245 drains
- 1,561 pounds of debris reported

Automotive Maintenance Program

Program Description: Prior to the pandemic, this program provided workshops for Seattle residents to learn to change their cars' oil and identify leaks. Historic low attendance, covid restrictions, and staffing changes forced the cancellation of these workshops and a rethinking of how to offer stronger automotive programs moving forward.

Target audience: General public, including school age children

Subject areas: Preventing surface water pollution. BMPs to prevent non-point source pollution.

2021 accomplishments:

- 43 shares on trip reduction social media outreach
- Participation in regional STORM Puget Sound Starts Here Month; see below

Green Your Business Program

Program Description: SPU'S Green Business Program promotes SPU's Community-Centered, One Water, Zero Waste vision by engaging businesses to meet and/or exceed environmental and health requirements through education, training, and technical assistance. This program also recognizes businesses who incorporate sustainable business practices through the EnviroStars program. The program provides spill kits, training on spill prevention and stormwater best management practices, education on Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) and 'what to flush', and technical assistance with environmental compliance.

Target audience: Businesses

Subject areas: Preventing surface water pollution. BMPs to prevent non-point source pollution.

2021 accomplishments:

- Delivered 126 Spill Kits to businesses
- Provided wastewater site assessment assistance to 146 businesses, including flushables stall signage

- Provided FOG site assessment assistance to 285 businesses, including education and information on FOG Best Management Practices and connection to grease interceptor service providers

K-12 Youth Engagement

Program Description: SPU’s K-12 youth education program partners with schools to engage students in learning about stormwater issues and raising and releasing baby salmon. In 2021, this program adapted to meet the covid restrictions by providing virtual opportunities and holding events outdoors on school campuses instead of field trips to salmon bearing creeks or local parks.

Target audience: School age children

Subject areas: General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste.

2021 accomplishments:

- Engaged 1,244 students at 30 schools in stormwater curriculum
- Registered 59 schools for the 2021-2022 academic year to raise and release baby salmon
- Engaged 1,617 students from 30 schools in field-based salmon program
- 29% of participating schools qualify for free and reduced lunch

Pet Waste

Program Description: SPU’s Pet Waste program lowers barriers to proper disposal of pet waste by maintaining doggy bag dispensers in various locations across Seattle. SPU engages with volunteers to support the program by regularly refilling dispensers.

Target audience: General public

Subject areas: Preventing surface water pollution. BMPs to prevent non-point source pollution.

2021 accomplishments:

- Continued building relationships with Seattle Conservation Corps and 8 volunteer groups
- Replaced 2 damaged Mutt Mitt dispensers
- Partnered with Trees for Seattle’s Bark and Barks Tree Walk event
- Distributed over 64,000 Mutt Mitt doggy bags

RainWise

Program Description: RainWise is a joint rebate program offered by SPU and King County that helps private property owners manage stormwater by installing cisterns and/or rain gardens on their properties. These systems absorb or slow the rate of stormwater entering the sewer system, prevent flooding, provide attractive landscaping, and offer water for summer irrigation. The RainWise program also provides a business opportunity for local contractors interested in landscaping and green stormwater infrastructure.

Target audience: General public, including school age children; Businesses; Engineers; Contractors; Developers; Land use planners.

Subject areas: Stormwater flow reduction, preventing surface water pollution.

2021 accomplishments:

- Completed 90 installations capturing over 106,000 sq feet of roof area
- Reached 563 prospective customers through in-person and online events, including 3 in-language (Spanish, Vietnamese, & Chinese/Cantonese) customer webinars

- Piloted a new contractor mentoring program
- Completed Leschi Elementary School rain garden installation to manage 3,000 sq feet of roof area and 45,000 gallons of stormwater per year

Spill Kits

Program Description: SPU provides 5-gallon bucket sized spill kits to businesses with a risk of environmental spills, especially to the MS4 stormwater system. Spill kits contain a collection of spill cleanup materials and are provided along with technical assistance in developing a spill response plan.

Target audience: Businesses

Subject areas: Preventing surface water pollution.

2021 accomplishments:

- Provided 200 spill kits

STORM / Puget Sound Starts Here

Program Description: Stormwater Outreach for Regional Municipalities (STORM) is a coalition of 80 jurisdictions working to comply with NPDES and make a difference for water quality. The Puget Sound Starts Here campaign is a collaborative impact approach. Partners include STORM members, tribes, nonprofit organizations, and businesses dedicated to protecting Puget Sound. In 2021, the Puget Sound Starts Here digital campaign focus was on automotive care to prevent water pollution.

Target audience: General public

Subject areas: BMPs to prevent non-point source pollution.

2021 accomplishments:

- 13,000 clicks to the Puget Sound Starts here website for car care specific information and behavior actions
- 2,202,946 views to car care video; 15% of total audience was in-language (Spanish, Vietnamese, & Korean)
- Deployed automotive care ads on city buses reaching approximately 3 million impressions in the Puget Sound region

Storm Drain Stenciling

Program Description: SPU's storm drain stenciling program is a volunteer-based stewardship program that provides stencil supplies and hands-on instruction for individuals and community groups to stencil dumping awareness messages next to storm drains.

Target audience: General public, including school age children

Subject areas: Preventing surface water pollution including impacts from improper disposal of residential and commercial discharges into storm drains and catch basins.

2021 accomplishments:

- 89 stencil kits supplied to 120 volunteers
- 1,150 storm drains stenciled
- Expanded program's reach and service levels by coordinating stencil kit distribution with Adopt A Street program

Sustainable Landscaping

Program Description: This program engages and educates residents and professional landscapers in sustainable landscaping practices to improve soil drainage function and to reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides.

Target audience: General public, including school age children; Engineers; Contractors; Developers; Land use planners

Subject areas: Landscaping best practices, integrated pest management, infiltration, and erosion control.

2021 accomplishments:

- 4,993 residents engaged via email, calls, classes, and events
- Participated in 360 classes or events for residents, 57% targeted specifically for BIPOC communities and/or disadvantaged populations
- Trained 37 new Master Composter/Sustainability Steward volunteers
- Master Composter/Sustainability Steward conducted 964 volunteer hours, reaching 907 contacts
- Reached 1,107 landscape professionals at 28 classes

Trees for Seattle

Program Description: Trees for Seattle engages residents in stewarding Seattle's urban forest. Trees for Seattle ensures that Seattle's urban forest is healthy, vital, and growing by planting new trees with residents, supporting volunteer stewardship of the urban forest, tree-related awareness outreach, and in-person tree-appreciation events like Tree Walks.

Target audience: General public, including school age children

Subject areas: Urban forestry, green stormwater infrastructure.

2021 accomplishments:

- Planted 1,000 trees with residents at 537 addresses including focused planting outreach to over 1,000 households in high-heat neighborhoods
- Held 9 stewardship events with 150 volunteers
- Led 6 Tree Walks with 44 attendees
- Answered 679 public inquiries related to trees and tree care

Water Quality Hotline

Program Description: SPU provides a hotline for the public to report Water Quality concerns to facilitate prompt SPU response. This creates an easy channel to communicate water quality concerns to increase reporting when water quality issues are seen by the public. This program ensures more water quality issues will be reported more quickly which improves the effectiveness of the City's response program.

Target audience: General public, Businesses

Subject areas: Preventing surface water pollution.

2021 accomplishments:

- Responded to 50 calls via hotline