



WEST SOUND STORMWATER OUTREACH GROUP

2024 SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

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WHO WE ARE

The West Sound Stormwater Outreach Group (WSSOG) is a regional partnership dedicated to improving water quality through education and outreach. Since 2008, Kitsap County and the cities of Bremerton, Gig Harbor, Port Orchard, and Poulsbo have collaborated to fund, develop, and implement public outreach efforts required by the Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit. In 2012, Bainbridge Island and Port Angeles joined the group, strengthening our collective impact. The U.S. Navy also participates as an informal member.

WSSOG's mission is to collaboratively fulfill the public education and outreach requirements of the Permit while maximizing cost savings and efficiency. By aligning efforts, the organization ensures consistent messaging and meaningful community engagement, ultimately safeguarding local waterways for future generations.



2024 HIGHLIGHTS

WSSOG remains committed to advancing stormwater education and outreach while adapting to evolving permit requirements and regional priorities. Below are key highlights of WSSOG's efforts and accomplishments over the past year.

On July 1, 2024, Ecology issued the latest iteration of the Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit, which remains in effect until July 31, 2029. As part of the ongoing five-year permit cycle, this version continues to evolve to address regional water quality goals and incorporate feedback from prior implementations. While WSSOG successfully met all requirements of the 2019–2024 Permit, the new Permit introduces updates to the requirements impacting education and outreach, particularly in relation to behavior change, public involvement and participation and environmental justice.

One significant change is the updated definition of “overburdened communities” to align with the Washington HEAL Act. This change brings new obligations, including:

- Reporting on how overburdened communities were engaged in public involvement opportunities and the methods used to identify these populations.
- Designing outreach and behavior change campaigns that prioritize overburdened communities.
- Mapping overburdened communities in relation to stormwater infrastructure to ensure their needs are considered in stormwater planning and the development of the Stormwater Management Action Plan (SMAP).

WSSOG will utilize its Overburdened Communities Assessment and Kitsap County Equity Atlas to effectively implement these new Permit requirements and ensure meaningful community engagement.

In the fall of 2024, WSSOG launched an evaluation of its Natural Yard Care campaign to determine whether nutrient reduction should remain a top priority for member jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction assessed the effectiveness of the existing campaign while also identifying their own priority pollutants. Using a structured evaluation process, the group generated a list of potential pollutants and associated behaviors for targeted outreach. Each behavior was rated based on several criteria, including relevance, impact on water quality, influence on overburdened communities, and measurability.

Based on this analysis, WSSOG chose to focus its 2025 campaign on encouraging businesses to close their dumpster lids—an effort aimed at reducing stormwater contamination.

As WSSOG moves forward, its collaborative efforts will ensure that public education, outreach, and stormwater management continue to evolve in ways that protect water quality, engage communities, and align with regional and state environmental priorities.

STORMWATER OUTREACH FOR REGIONAL MUNICIPALITIES (STORM)

WSSOG actively connects to broader regional stormwater education and outreach efforts through participation in the Puget Sound Stormwater Outreach for Regional Municipalities (STORM) partnership. STORM is a collaborative of over 80 Puget Sound Area cities, counties, state agencies and nonprofits working together to understand and reach our shared audiences for clean water actions. STORM uses social marketing strategies using marketing practices for social benefit. This shared approach creates a disciplined and science-based approach to public outreach and understanding of influences on stormwater issues. Through sharing time, resources and projects, we can be more effective, consistent, cost efficient and learn together. STORM's vision is "People living and working in our communities will take actions that protect water quality within the Puget Sound basin." STORM's mission is "To work together with regional partners to address polluted runoff by advancing broad-scale behavior change."

Kitsap County represents the WSSOG on the STORM Steering Committee which meets twice a month to work on tasks that guide the regional STORM partnership. The STORM Steering Committee plans and facilitates quarterly STORM partnership meetings and the annual Symposium. WSSOG partners also participate in the STORM Pet Waste Workgroup. Significant accomplishments of the STORM partnership are summarized in Appendix A: STORM 2024 Annual Report.

PUGET SOUND STARTS HERE COMMITTEE

Puget Sound Starts Here is a Puget Sound-wide stormwater pollution prevention awareness campaign that provides recognizable branding and consistent messaging to raise awareness about the impacts of stormwater pollution. Kitsap County represents the WSSOG on the Puget Sound Starts Here (PSSH) Steering Committee. Notable projects accomplished by the PSSH Committee include coordinating a regional PSSH Month digital advertising campaign and bulk purchasing of PSSH branded promotional items.



WORK GROUPS

WSSOG partners also participate in several Washington Stormwater Center work groups. These include the Business Inspection Group (BIG) and the Environmental Justice Work Group.

PUGET SOUND STARTS HERE

Puget Sound Starts Here is a regional effort to raise awareness about actions residents can take to reduce their impact and keep Puget Sound. Local implementation of PSSH included a variety of outreach approaches, including the promotion of Puget Sound Starts Here Month in September. Bainbridge Island issued a proclamation recognizing Puget Sound Starts Here Month.



Many jurisdictions distribute branded promotional items with the Puget Sound Starts Here logo through outreach events, at front desk counters and other mechanisms.

Collectively, these efforts placed over 10,379 Puget Sound Starts Here branded items in the hands of West Sound residents and visitors.

Jurisdiction	Coasters	Pens/ Pencils	Leash Bag Holders	Leash Bag Holder Refills	Bike Safety Lights	Other (Tote Bags, Stickers, etc.)	Total Impressions
Bainbridge Island	1,000	0	200	0	0	100	1,300
Bremerton	1,250	25	20	20	0	0	1,315
Gig Harbor	0	0	100	0	0	0	100
Kitsap County	3,500	0	0	0	0	1,750	5,250
Port Angeles	15	0	32	375	5	398	825
Port Orchard	0	0	0	189	0	1,300	1,489
Poulsbo	0	0	100	0	0	0	100
						Total	10,379

PUGET SOUND STARTS HERE MONTH DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

The regional Puget Sound Starts Here Committee coordinated PSSH Month in September. The committee coordinated a digital marketing campaign and jurisdictions were invited to financially participate in the campaign. Bainbridge Island, Bremerton, Kitsap County, Port Angeles, Port Orchard, and Poulsbo invested in the campaign.

This year's campaign focused on vehicle maintenance behaviors, "Don't Wait to Inflate," for Puget Sound Starts Here Month. The digital campaign's goals were to drive people to the [PSSH website](#) and encourage them to learn more about how to check their tire pressure and the importance of maintaining proper tire pressure.

The campaign combined a digital video and digital display ads and were shared on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.



The campaign's audience were adults aged 18-64 in the Puget Sound region. The ads were run in English, Spanish, Korean and Vietnamese. A portion of the ad budget was allocated towards targeting overburdened communities using factors such as income, education, people of color and/or those who speak limited English.

PUGET SOUND STARTS HERE TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING

The WSSOG actively participated in the Puget Sound Starts Here campaign through diverse outreach efforts. Member jurisdictions displayed the PSSH banner on their websites, engaged with the public at community events, and promoted key stormwater messages, including proper tire inflation to reduce pollution.

BEHAVIOR CHANGE - SECTION S5.C.2.a.ii

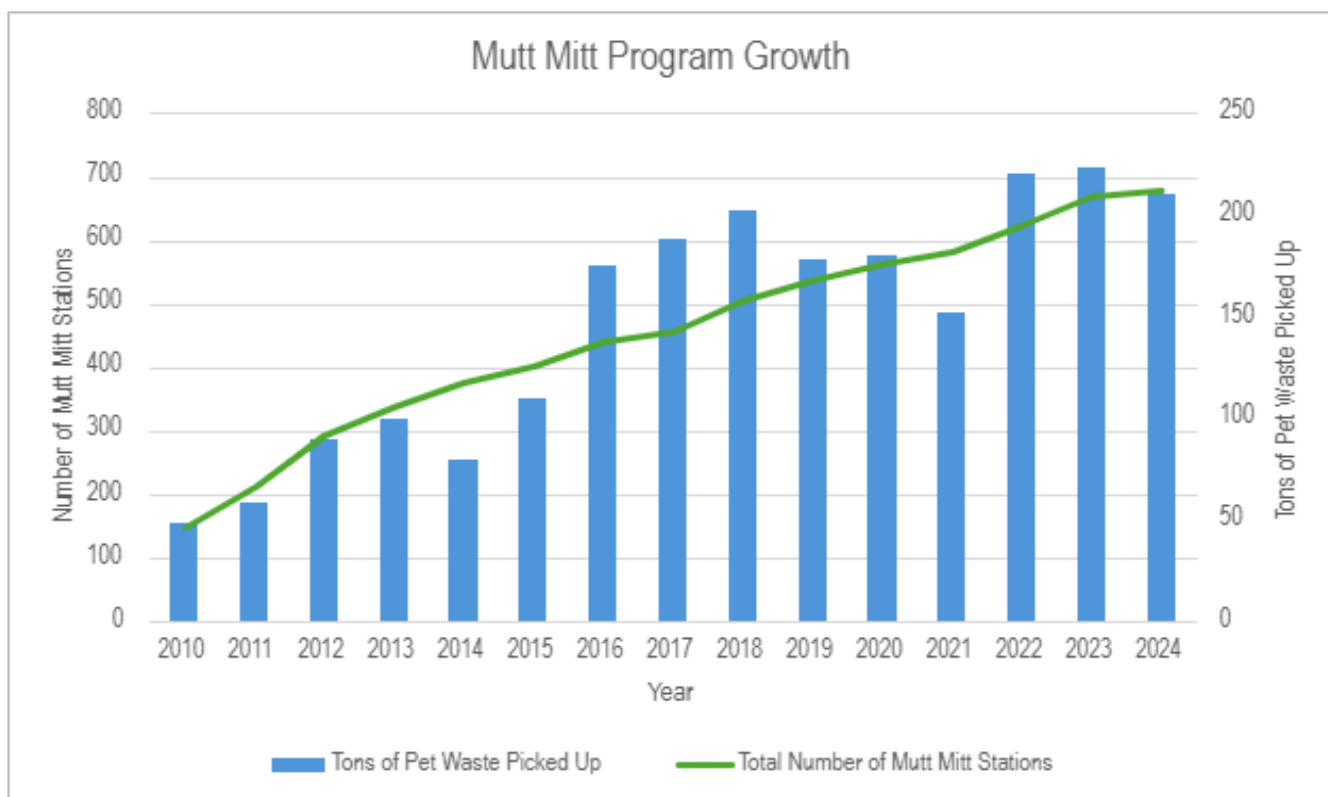
WSSOG coordinates two behavior change campaigns: the long-standing Mutt Mitt Program and the Natural Yard Care Campaign.

PET WASTE IN PUBLIC AREAS – MUTT MITT PROGRAM

In 2009, the WSSOG identified pet waste pick-up and proper disposal as a key behavior for reducing bacteria pollution in stormwater and surface water and adopted a successful and collaborative regional Mutt Mitt Program. Efforts related to this key behavior have continued annually and the program continues to be a primary behavior change campaign for the WSSOG. In 2014, the WSSOG conducted a survey that focused on two target audiences: Mutt Mitt station sponsors and Mutt Mitt station users. The report identified strategies to improve the Mutt Mitt Program, which were implemented in 2016. The Mutt Mitt Program continues to grow steadily and currently comprises 680 stations that have been distributed throughout the county and WSSOG partner cities. On average between 20-40 stations are added annually.

In 2024, the cities, County and residents that participate in the program distributed a total of 1,269,999 pet waste disposal bags. This effort represents 210 tons of dog waste diverted from the natural surface waters of Kitsap County.

Dog walkers depend upon stations that are reliably stocked with bags to help them adopt this behavior. It is essential that Mutt Mitt branded stations are continuously stocked and in good working order. Kitsap County typically conducts inspections of all Mutt Mitt stations located within Bainbridge Island, Bremerton, Port Orchard and Poulsbo on an annual basis and all other stations located within the County on a biennial basis



TALKING (AND TOSSING) POOP FOR WATER QUALITY

In 2024, the popular Poop Toss game continued to draw crowds at public events, using humor to spark conversations about responsible pet waste disposal, an often-avoided topic.

Featured at community events like PetsWalk (Poulsbo and Kitsap County), the Bainbridge Island Boaters' Fair, and the Clallam County Fair, the game engaged participants of all ages while reinforcing key environmental messages. At the Clallam County Fair alone, Port Angeles connected with approximately 885 attendees, while Kitsap County and Poulsbo reached 432 people at PetsWalk.

Participants not only learned proper pet waste disposal practices through play but also received a Puget Sound Starts Here branded clip-on bag dispenser, a practical tool that serves as a lasting reminder of their commitment to keeping waterways clean. In total, the game helped jurisdictions engage over 1,300 residents, making pet waste education both fun and impactful.

NATURAL YARD CARE CAMPAIGN

Per the requirements of the 2019-2024 Permit, the WSSOG looked at their current behavior change campaign and based on trends and the Backyard Pet Waste campaign evaluation, elected to develop a behavior change campaign focused on a new target audience and BMP. The group selected nutrient reduction as the goal, and improper/ combination fertilizer use as the new BMP, targeting homeowners who perform DIY-yard care. The group hired a consultant in 2019 and developed a new social marketing campaign to target this BMP.

The new Natural Yard Care campaign was set to pilot in 2020, however due to COVID-19 the pilot was postponed. As a pivot, the group elected to conduct additional research on the priority audience, barriers and potential ways to address these barriers. The consultant recruited respondents to participate in a paid research study to learn what barriers are discouraging people from choosing natural yard care over conventional methods. The barriers identified were cost and lack of information (about how natural lawn care products work and where to purchase the products). The study also found that Kitsap residents are interested and receptive to online Master Gardener events. Lastly, the study found that the target audience is concerned about the safety of chemical fertilizers on their kids and pets. The campaign and marketing strategy was designed based on the study's findings.

The Natural Yard Care behavior change campaign was piloted in Poulsbo in 2021 and expanded to the rest of the County in 2022. In 2023, the campaign ran during peak fertilizer season (spring/summer) and included three natural lawn care webinars hosted by WSU Kitsap Extension Master Gardeners; a tabling event at Bremerton City Nursery; an organic fertilizer discount offered through a partnership with six retailers; and campaign communications including a Facebook ad campaign, a postcard, e-

newsletters, social media, and utility bill messaging. In accordance with the Permit, Kitsap worked with a consultant to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign and identify successes or develop recommended changes to the program to be more effective. The evaluation report summarizing the changes in understanding and adoption of targeted behaviors resulting from the implementation of the strategy and any planned or recommended changes to the campaign was completed in February 2024. Based on the results of the evaluation report, Kitsap decided that 2024 would be the last year it would implement the NYC Campaign, and elected to select a new pollutant, behavior and target audience. In spring/summer 2024, the campaign ran with modifications per the evaluation. It included three webinars, one in person event. The full results are available in Appendix B: Natural Yard Care Summary 2024.

At the end of the 2024 NYC Campaign, the WSSOG began the process of selecting a new social marketing behavior change campaign. They selected bacterial pollution reduction as the goal, and encouraging businesses to keep dumpster lids closed as the best management practice (BMP). The group plans to hire a consultant in 2025 to help develop and implement the strategy and schedule for the new social marketing campaign to target this BMP.



Each partner jurisdiction offers stewardship opportunities that empower residents to take part in activities and events aimed at protecting and restoring surface waters, streams, and riparian corridors while fostering a strong sense of community connection.

CREATIVE WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Port Angeles participated in community events, including the Clallam County Fair and Dry Creek Elementary's *STEM Like Me* event.
- Poulsbo hosted over 300 attendees at the inaugural Earth Day celebration and 450 visitors at Poulsbo Fish Park for Salmon Tours.
- Port Orchard assisted with the Sinclair Clean-up event in both spring and fall.
- Bremerton engaged with 30 fourth and fifth graders in the *Highly Capable* program at Kitsap Lake Elementary.
- Bainbridge took part in the annual Beach Clean-up event in September.
- Gig Harbor partnered with Harbor WildWatch for stewardship opportunities and supported the salmon counting logbook at Donkey Creek Park.
- Kitsap County sponsors Stream Stewards and Salmon Docent Training programs which provide residents with opportunities to participate in activities and events that protect and restore surface waters, stream and riparian corridors and cultivate community connection. The training culminates with the opportunity to become a docent at the annual Kitsap Salmon Tours event, giving trainees the chance to share what they've learned with the public. Kitsap Salmon Tours is an annual event, held in November at seven stream sites across the county where the public can explore all things salmon with biologists, local organizations and trained docents. Salmon Tours provides the public with an opportunity to experience salmon in their habitat while learning about the sources and impacts of stormwater pollution.



ILLICIT DISCHARGE DETECTION AND ELIMINATION – SECTION S5.C.5.d.ii

All Permittees are required to implement an ongoing program designed to detect and identify non-stormwater discharges and illicit connections to the Permittee's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, or MS4, including a publicly listed and publicized hotline for reporting spills and other illicit discharges.

SPILLS HAPPEN

All WSSOG jurisdictions have a publicly listed hotline, telephone number and/or app for reporting spills and other illicit discharges. Kitsap County, Bainbridge Island, Bremerton, Poulsbo, and Port Orchard share the Kitsap1 phone number and SeeClickFix app. Gig Harbor also utilizes SeeClickFix.

WSSOG shares common branding and publicity through a tagline and graphics called *Spills Happen*. This catchy phrase and graphics are intended to bring awareness and encourage residents to report spills. The partners post their spill reporting phone numbers and apps on their websites as well on print materials.



WSSOG utilizes outreach methods, including:

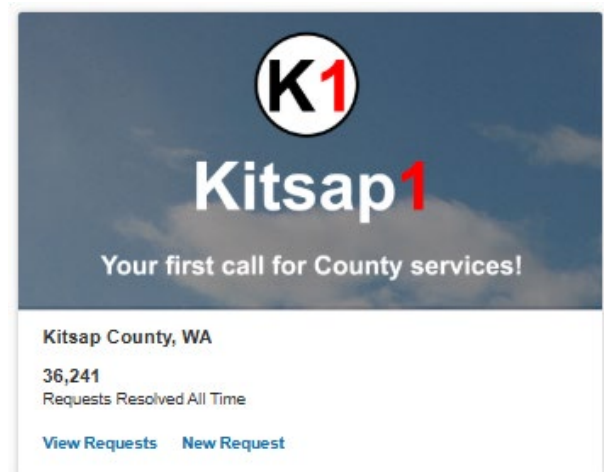
- Bainbridge Island publicizes their spills hotline and promotes the *Spills Happen* messaging on their City webpage, in their Stormwater Management Program Plan, and at their City Hall lobby display and front counter. They also shared spill reporting information at the Bainbridge Island Boater's Fair.
- Bremerton features the *Spills Happen* branding on one sweeper truck and two signs downtown near the large parking garages. They also distributed Spills Happen branded paint sticks to remind community members to properly dispose of paint waste.
- Gig Harbor publicizes their spills hotline and promotes the *Spills Happen* messaging on their City webpage and provide branded magnets at the Civic Center and to businesses Source Control inspections.
- Kitsap County displays the *Spills Happen* graphics on three spill response trailers. The spill reporting hotline phone number is also on their spill response truck.
- Port Angeles promoted the program in their Stormwater Rains Utility Mailer which is sent to 11,278 utilities customers.
- Port Orchard publicized Spills Happen branding and promoted SeeClickFix and Kitsap 1 on their website, a public facing message board (in City Hall), on Facebook, handed out educational flyers, including spill, pressure washing, painting and IDDE pamphlets and 100 fridge magnets to interested parties.
- Poulsbo distributes *Spills Happen* magnets at City Hall and stocks field staff's vehicles with BMP pamphlets to hand out to residents as needed.

SPILLS REPORTING CALLS

A total of 92 spill complaints were received in 2024. Of those, 45 came in via Kitsap1 phone number, 15 via Kitsap1 email, and 32 spill complaints were reported through the SeeClickFix app or web-based reporting form. (Kitsap County – 64, Bremerton – 14, Bainbridge Island – 2, Port Orchard – 8, Poulsbo – 4).



TRAINING PROGRAM



Jurisdictions coordinate an ongoing training program and follow up trainings to their field staff on how to recognize, respond to and report spills (S5.C.5.d.iii). WSSOG reported the following trainings held in 2024:

- Bainbridge Island – Provided on the job spills training for operations and maintenance staff.
- Bremerton – As part of the City's staff training program, 15 employees completed Municipal StormWatch training in 2024. Two City team members completed IDDE: A Grate Concern.
- Gig Harbor – Conducted spills training for 20 Public Works employees.
- Kitsap County – A total of 261 staff were trained in 2024, both online and in-person, which includes 30 Kitsap County Sheriff's officers who took the online training.
- Port Angeles – The city held a CESCL recertification training for 42 field staff.
- Poulsbo – Held a refresher training for 18 Public Works employees.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR 2025

WSSOG has implemented all required actions under the Education and Outreach sections of the Permit. In 2025, the WSSOG will continue to collaborate and work on improving water quality through education and outreach. The WSSOG 2024 Work Plan is included in Appendix C.

Activities planned for the upcoming year will include maintaining and improving the programs outlined in the WSSOG 2025 Work Plan adapting it as necessary to meet Permit and program objectives. WSSOG plans to conduct the following new activities in 2025:

- Design and implement a new dumpster behavior change campaign.
- Implement a new Mutt Mitt station mini trash can pilot and design new MM station signs that promote proper pet waste disposal.



STORMWATER OUTREACH FOR REGIONAL MUNICIPALITIES

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

About STORM

STORM is a coalition of city and county governments working together to improve the health of our communities and protect our lakes, rivers, streams, and Puget Sound. The coalition supports efforts to meet the Education and Outreach requirements in the Washington Municipal Stormwater Permits.

STORM's Vision: People living and working in our communities take actions that protect water quality within the Puget Sound Basin.

STORM's Mission: Work together with regional partners to address polluted runoff and stormwater impacts by advancing broad-scale education & outreach and behavior change initiatives.

If your municipality would like to join STORM, or receive our updates, send your request to Anne Melrose, Statewide Municipal Stormwater E&O Coordinator, anne.melrose@wsu.edu.

Check out the STORM Resource Reservoir at pugetsoundstormgroup.org.

2024 | STORM by the Numbers



78 participating jurisdictions

210 members



300+ attendees at STORM events

3,700

downloads from the Resource Reservoir



2024 STORM Symposium

2024 STORM Symposium Highlights

It was wonderful to see so many new faces and long-time STORMers at the 2024 Annual Symposium! Over **68** colleagues met to share ideas, learn and inspire each other. The bomb cyclone put a new spin on the title “STORM” Symposium. Despite the weather bomb messing with our lunch order, we had a successful event with an amazing line up of guest speakers and topics. Thanks to Mary Rabourn with King County and Becca Bolettieri with Kitsap County for the generous array of delicious snacks that carried us through the day!

We kicked off the Symposium presentations with **Ann Grodnik-Nagle**, Senior Policy Advisor in Climate Adaptation and Built Environment at Seattle Public Utilities. Anne explained climate change as an impact amplifier. Meaning we will experience more flooding, extreme storms (like bomb cyclones), sea levels rise, stress on water supplies, wildfire risks and urban heat island effects. While recognizing these impacts will hit the most vulnerable communities the hardest. Seattle’s climate action strategy is a community centered, one water approach focused on climate justice, climate adaptation and climate mitigation. The approach includes collaborating with frontline communities bearing the brunt of climate impacts to develop equitable climate strategies. Also adapting systems and operations to climate impacts and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in their citywide operations. Seattle is using scenario planning and climate modeling to project a range of future outcomes with a goal of making better climate informed decisions while working within the uncertainty of climate change. Current work includes nature-based strategies such as floodplain restoration, creating resilience districts to address systemic vulnerabilities and inequities, and developing GSI RainCity partnerships and projects.

Next, **Simone Des Roches** and **Jessica Sandoval** researchers with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) discussed findings from



the first year of a multi-year project. The project is studying the potential for stormwater ponds to provide suitable habitat for Washington’s native wildlife. In collaboration with city and county partners from the Cities of Olympia and Tumwater to the City of Bellingham, the hope is to learn how stormwater ponds can be created and managed to help address biodiversity loss, especially in urban centers.

The research team surveyed amphibians, birds, and beavers in over 200 stormwater ponds in the Salish sea watershed. Birds, from waterfowl to warblers, were identified visually or by their calls and songs. Frogs, salamanders, and fish were captured using dip-nets or small minnow traps, identified, counted, and released. Native amphibian species like the northwestern salamanders and the northern red-legged frogs were encountered frequently; however, so were invasive species including the American bullfrog and green frogs. Preliminary results of the study are encouraging, showing that conditions in many of our local stormwater ponds promote biodiversity. The research team will continue to collect data next year to help understand how essential urban infrastructure can promote pond biodiversity and access to wildlife for Puget Sound residents.

Late morning, we introduced our behavior change panelists **Laurie Deveraux** - City of Bellevue, **Cammy Mills** - Kitsap County, **Peggy Campbell** - Snohomish County and **Jess Huybregts** - City



2024 STORM Symposium Highlights *(continued)*

of Seattle. Each panelist shared their lessons learned and unique experiences with four different behavior change campaigns implemented during the prior Permit cycle.

Cammy started us off with a social marketing primer and followed up with reflections on Kitsap's Natural Lawn Care Program. Cammy walked us through the important exercise of choosing a campaign focus. Sharing a strategic methodology adopted from social marketing experts Nancy Lee and Doug McKenzie-Morh.

Peggy shared a comprehensive overview of Snohomish county's RainScaping Program focused on Low impact development principals and best management practices. She walked us through "Development" including strategy, timeline, GIS Analysis and audience research which revealed key insights. "Launch" including guide & materials, website, expo & workshops. "Evaluate" including expo & workshops, site visits, evaluation. "Report" including lessons learned.

Laurie shared highlights from the Dumpster Lid Campaign focusing on why dumpster lids were selected, audience research and interventions and the evaluation process. Lessons learned included the benefits of regional collaboration, using survey monkey for data collection and you don't always know who the "make me's" are. Campaign materials can be found on the Washington Stormwater Center's website.

Jess wrapped up the panel with Seattle's Adopt a Drain behavior change campaign, focusing on how the program was designed to meet each evaluation objective and question in the Permit. She covered participant recruitment, survey design, partnerships, metrics and lessons learned. Explaining how the program was modified to fit Seattle's program priorities and engage historically underserved communities.

In the afternoon, **Parker Lynas**, King County's NextGen Climate intern gave a [presentation on his "Clean Water Connects Us All"](#) campaign about community and health. In 2024, Parker explored communications and how using clean water as the foundation for actions might connect communities to health, the environment and climate resilience. He tested messaging at events using a splash pad for cooling off in White Center, touring of Renton's stormwater infrastructure with members of ethnic media, learning social marketing basics and through partners' artwork. Parker investigated how to connect to an audience's feelings about health, sense of place and water, and how actions might create community. People act when they feel connected to the message, and he tested how the presence of people and art in messaging made a difference. He will be continuing his work in climate resilience and communications in his final work at the Evans School.

Our final presentation featured **Nancy Hardwick** of Hardwick Research. She shared her insights on how to develop program evaluations from start to finish. She covered topics including survey design, focus group moderation and qualitative and quantitative research as well as innovative data collection techniques.

Want to learn more? You can find our panelists presentations on the [STORM Resource Reservoir](#).



Puget Sound Starts Here & Ethnic Media Tour Update

Thank you to all the campaign contributors! The 2024 clean water awareness campaign took a new approach this year. The start date was delayed (contracting and payment challenges) but continues into 2025. The approach included:

- digital marketing using the audience details called out in the NPDES Municipal Permit for Phase 1 and 2 Permittees,
- advertising to those contributor zip codes,
- hosting an ethnic media event Nov 18 touring Renton stormwater infrastructure and examples of community benefits,
- introducing media to the 6PPD issue gathering survey feedback,
- combining budgets with King County to test outreach tactics.



Media folks were very interested when Jenee Colton, speaking for King County's Science Section at the Cedar River stop, talked about tires, 6PPD and its impacts on salmon. There was an audible reaction when we highlighted the active storm drain flushing runoff from the highway into the river. The survey responses echoed feedback from previous media surveys about who communities trust and underscores the value of working with trusted partners.

From the survey: They trust those who speak their language, understand their culture, and provide useful information that meets their needs

There will be a project summary early February for our partners.

2024 Trainings and Professional Development

Quarterly meetings through the year focused on providing networking opportunities, skill shares, and trainings covering a variety of topics.

Thank you 2024 Quarterly Presenters!

- The Radish Project - Daniel Feinberg
- Evaluation for Reporting - Nancy Hardwick
- Don't Wait to Inflate Campaign Report - Karen Rich
- Social Connections: Learning & Adapting as Social Media Evolves - Warren Kagerise
- Intro to Social Marketing - Brooke Tully

We hosted a **Drips and Drops** (informal virtual learning session) on Oct. 8, 2024 with Abbey Stockwell, the Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit Writer from Ecology. She provided an hour webinar to about 35 STORM members to discuss changes that were made in the recently released Municipal Stormwater Permit. It was a wonderful opportunity to ask questions about behavior change requirements and gather clarity on other education and outreach pieces of the new permit.

Finally, we offered the following trainings:

Nancy Lee led two 2-day workshops that walked about 30 participants through the steps of creating a Social Marketing Campaign, with homework in between!

Culture2Culture Training & Consulting held two Government to Government workshops with Pam and Gordon James. They shared history and considerations on how to work together with Tribes, teaching about traditional and cultural perspectives, legal impacts, Tribal Sovereignty and Tribal Governments to over 80 participants.



2024 STORM Work Groups

STORM work groups are created on an ad hoc basis and facilitated by STORM members. They are member-driven and self-directed. The formation and focus of work groups often aligns with new permit requirements, initiatives of the STORM Steering Committee or from requests by STORM members.

Work group participation is voluntary and based on the interest of individual members. These groups tend to be task-oriented and may have end dates. Work group members determine their structure and function, meeting frequency, work plans and decision-making.

Pet Waste

In 2024, 25 members from 19 jurisdictions participated in the Pet Waste Work Group. The group met three times to share various approaches to Pet Waste Management and Outreach, discuss development of a 'toolkit', and gauge interest in shared grant applications for updating audience research in our region. The group will continue to meet in 2025 - contact Cammy Mills at cmills@kitsap.gov or Carston Curd at carston.curd@snoco.org to join.

Concrete

The Washington Stormwater Center has run a Concrete Workgroup in 2024 to work on developing outreach materials to address issues around truck washout into storm drains. Several STORM members have joined the effort and if anyone else finds concrete an issue in their jurisdiction and would like to join the group contact Anne Melrose at anne.melrose@wsu.edu.



Adopt-a-Drain (AAD)

Washington's Adopt-a-Drain (AAD) coalition continued to grow in 2024. We are now 21-members strong, with several new partners in Central Washington (Yakima County) and SW Washington (Clark County and several cities) joining the Puget Sound pioneers. Since we launched in 2021, almost 1,900 individuals, families, and businesses in Washington have "adopted" more than 3,100 catch basins. Volunteers have reported that they prevented almost 35,000 pounds of sediment, leaves, twigs, garbage, pet waste, recyclables, and other materials from clogging or falling into the MS4 since 2021. In 2024, alone, volunteers removed more than 14,500 pounds of debris from around adopted drains.

In 2024, we boosted our Spanish language outreach, through community events, radio, TV, social media and printed materials. The social media toolkit and videos in both English and Spanish is on the Washington Stormwater Center website. Seattle and Duvall also successfully reported to Ecology how Adopt-a-Drain performed as a behavior change campaign.

It's not too late to join the AAD coalition! Help us reach 5,000 adoptions! For more information, please contact Halley Kimball at Halley.kimball@maplevalleywa.gov or Ann Zawistoski, Director of Adopt-a-Drain & Community Outreach, azawistoski01@hamline.edu.

STORM Steering Committee



Marisa Allison
City of Kirkland

Marisa (she/her) is a new STORM Steering Committee member this year, joining the government stormwater sector after years of working for nonprofits. She's motivated by the opportunity to collaborate with the team and cultivate meaningful change in our communities.



Susan McCleary
City of Olympia

Susan (she/her) is hitting her ten-year mark with the City of Olympia. She is continuously astounded by the passion, excellence, drive and collaborative nature of the stormwater professional community. It has been the most inspirational, productive and beneficial part of her public career.



Rebecca Bolettieri
Kitsap County

Rebecca (Becca, she/her) is the Stormwater Education and Outreach Coordinator for Kitsap County's Stormwater Division. A recent transplant from Georgia, she enjoys contributing her skills in creative writing and community involvement to STORM.



Mary Rabourn
King County

Mary (she/her) has spent over 30 years in public service, specializing in E&O around hazardous waste small quantity generator info, pesticides, stormwater, multicultural projects, PIO, and more.



Laurie Devereaux
City of Bellevue

Laurie (she/her) has worked for Bellevue Utilities for 22 years. Her favorite thing about STORM is that it is a constant source of knowledge and inspiration.



Ry Yahn
City of Seattle

Ry (they/them) is a new STORM Steering Committee member. They are passionate about working with communities to prevent stormwater pollution and promote stewardship of local waters.



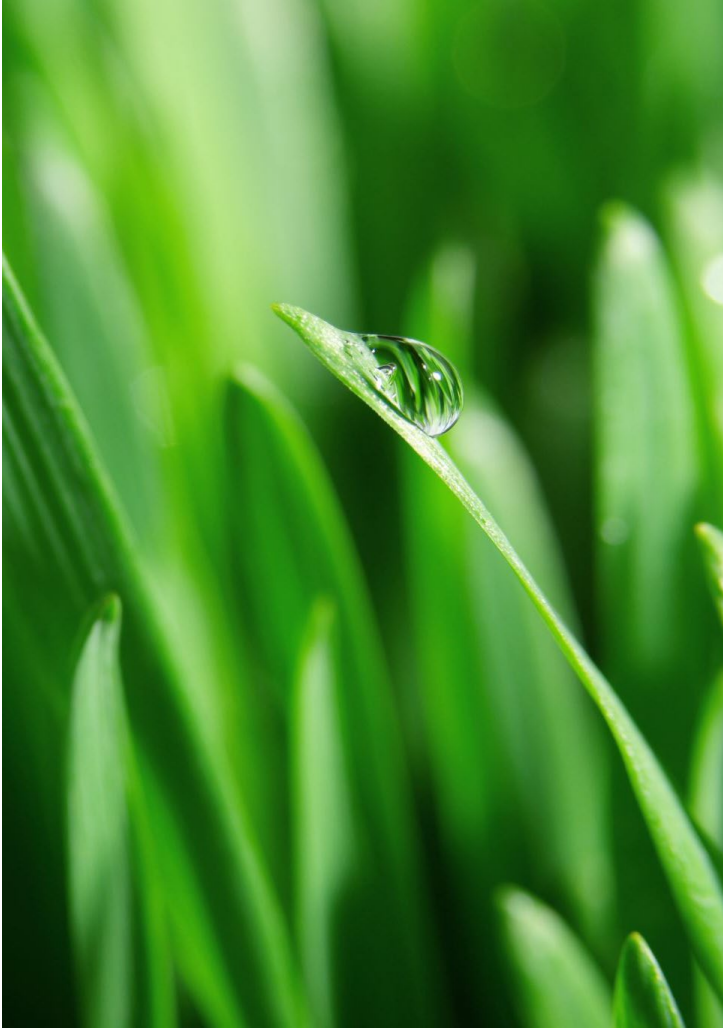
Bryan Hatchell
City of Bellingham

Bryan (he/him) has run environmental outreach campaigns for the past 8 years. As a new STORM Committee member, he is excited to form new connections and break down barriers to information as we promote behaviors that make our stormwater cleaner.



Anne Melrose
Washington Stormwater Center

Anne (she/her) spent a decade doing E&O in California. Now she has moved north into the rain of the NW to work on stormwater issues. She is inspired by the STORM Steering Committee and all that they do.



NATURAL YARD CARE SUMMARY 2024

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Executive Summary

The **Natural Yard Care campaign**, implemented by the West Sound Stormwater Outreach Group (WSSOG), successfully engaged residents across its jurisdictions through webinars, advertising, and partnerships with local retailers. Key highlights include:

- **High webinar satisfaction:** 84% of respondents rated the webinars a 7 or higher in meeting their expectations.
- **Behavior change progress:** 33% of post-webinar respondents reported planning to use natural/organic lawn care products, compared to 22% of attendees.
- **Advertising success:** The campaign reached over 367,000 people through social media, with a 63% increase in link clicks compared to 2023.

Despite these successes, challenges remain:

- **Low survey response rates** (36%) limited the ability to generalize findings.
- **Geographic gaps:** Port Angeles was underrepresented among registrants.
- **Barriers to adoption:** Concerns about weed control and slower results hindered confidence in using natural products.

Background/Strategy

The West Sound Stormwater Outreach Group, or WSSOG, is a multijurisdictional partnership between Kitsap County and the Cities of Bainbridge Island, Bremerton, Gig Harbor, Poulsbo, Port Angeles, and Port Orchard. The group works together to improve water quality by reducing pollutants in stormwater runoff, which are a major source of pollution to local waterways and the Puget Sound. The following report details results and findings from the second-year implementation of the Natural Yard Care campaign.

This program satisfies the current Western Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater NPDES permit to affect behavior change (S5.C.2). Planning for the program began in 2018, and the pilot occurred in 2021. In 2022, the campaign was expanded to all the WSSOG-member jurisdictions and full implementation continued through 2024. The following activities were conducted through the multi-year effort:

- **Social Marketing Sessions/Campaign Planning** - The WSSOG conducted five social marketing planning sessions to define key project elements, including the campaign's focus on getting residents to reduce the use of chemical fertilizers on their lawns.
- **Initial Audience Research** - Research was conducted to better understand the priority audience's perceived barriers, benefits, and motivators in relation to the desired behavior.
- **Creative Development and Testing** - Based on research findings, creative concepts were developed then tested among the priority audience.

- **COVID-19 Pivot to Research** - Due to COVID-19, the 2020 pilot was delayed to 2021. While the pilot was delayed, additional research was conducted to further refine planned campaign tactics and messaging.
- **Pilot Campaign in Poulsbo** – A pilot was conducted in Poulsbo during peak fertilizer season in spring 2021, and included webinars hosted by WSU Kitsap County Extension Master Gardeners; an organic fertilizer discount offered through a partnership with a local retailer; and campaign communications including a Facebook ad campaign, a postcard, and government delivery channels such as e-newsletters, organic social media, and utility bill messaging.
- **Campaign Expansion** – 2022 - 2024, the campaign was expanded to include all WSSOG jurisdictions. Natural lawn and yard care webinars were hosted by WSU Kitsap County Extension Master Gardeners; an organic fertilizer discount was offered at local nurseries locations; and campaign communications included a postcard mailer, Facebook ad campaign and local government delivery channels. In 2024, a hands-on event was added. In-store advertising for coupons was also added in 2024.
- **Completion of High Level Evaluation** – In 2023 and 2024, Kathryn Owen Consulting was contracted to develop, implement and interpret a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of the campaign and offer recommendations for improvement.

The current campaign strategy focuses on encouraging the adoption of natural lawn care techniques by offering coupons to residents in WSSOG jurisdictions to by natural/organic fertilizer at participating retailers. This is supported by natural lawn care webinars offered by Kitsap Master Gardeners, a hands-on natural lawn care demonstration event, and follow up email support from Master Gardeners for those interested.

Campaign Summary

Evaluation

Campaign Evaluation

Kathryn Owen consulting conducted a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of this campaign during 2023 and 2024. (The evaluation was completed by March 2024. This left the WSSOG with limited ability to incorporate recommendations into the 2024 campaign.) Key findings are below.

Nearly half of respondents are interested in the target behavior: stopping weed and feed

Roughly 40% of survey respondents indicated an interest in adopting the target behavior of stopping use of weed and feed-type fertilizer and switching to natural/organic. Very few (5%) were uninterested in using organic fertilizer, though a third said they didn't want to use *any* fertilizer products.

Respondents found the ads compelling and a third said they would influence their lawn care behavior

Respondents (both with and without children or pets at home) found the ad campaign very compelling, citing the images of things they care about – in particular, protecting marine life and Puget Sound, and protecting their children and pets. A third said the campaign ads were “likely” or “very likely” to influence their own lawn care practices. Just under 30 people attended a webinar on natural yard care. While response rates were too low to make confident predictions about the impact on attendees as a whole, most of those who did respond had, six months later, taken steps towards natural yard care including stopping the use of weed and feed.

Participating nurseries and garden centers are interested in future events, and raised a few suggestions

All of the retailers interviewed after the campaign were interested in participating in future events and campaigns related to natural yard care. Some raised suggestions for future promotions, including changing the discount to a flat fee rather than a percentage, having discount coupons available on days when there is a workshop or demo on natural lawn care, and collecting additional info to find out whether the coupon is generating new customers for the retailers or new users of organic fertilizers.

Overall, responses showed significant interest in natural yard care & the topic of alternatives to lawns

Many respondents are taking additional natural yard care steps at home, such as setting the lawnmower higher, weeding by hand, overseeding with clover, etc. There was substantial interest in learning how to control weeds/invasive plants without toxic chemicals, which was a barrier for many in terms of consistently use of organic products. There was also substantial interest in alternatives to grass lawns.

A three-page summary of this evaluation, prepared by Kathryn Owen Consulting, is in Appendix A.

2024 Evaluation

Evaluation of the 2024 campaign was conducted through pre and post webinar surveys, engagement metrics from advertising efforts, and coupon use.

Advertising

Social Media

The webinar, coupon, and in-person event ad sets each featured two ads with different copy to A/B test, with one set of copy from the 2023 campaign. The ads encouraged residents to reduce pollutants in stormwater by signing up for a \$15 coupon discount on organic or natural fertilizer, and to attend webinars and an in-person event to learn about spring lawncare tips from Master Gardeners.

The campaign reached a total of 367,138 people and received 10,948 link clicks, a 63% increase in link clicks from the 2023 campaign (6,691). This increase can be attributed to a variety of factors including incorporating interest targeting, expanding the ads set to 3 (6 ads overall) to test and therefore reach a broader audience using different messaging, and adding Instagram, exposing the

ads to a larger audience. Additionally, adjusting CTA copy from “Get 25% off” to “Get \$15 Off” and incorporating more direct, actionable messaging (e.g., “Make the healthier, safer choice”) may have also made the offers more compelling, contributing to higher link clicks.

For full results of the digital ad campaign, please see the report prepared by C+C in Appendix B.

Postcard

Jurisdiction	Relative Population	# Allocated	# Actual submitted with duplicates removed
Unincorporated Kitsap County	59.20%	8880	9142
Bremerton	14.00%	2100	2088
Bainbridge Island	8.20%	1230	1249
Port Angeles	6.50%	975	1030
Port Orchard	4.80%	720	558
Poulsbo	3.70%	555	553
Gig Harbor	3.60%	540	521
Extra for distribution at events		500	500
TOTAL	100%	15000	15141

Table 1 - Postcard Mailing by Jurisdiction

Postcards were sent out to advertise the webinars and which also served as a coupon. Each jurisdiction selected its mailing area based on locally relevant criteria. Some factors considered were proximity to water, lot size, and whether the area had received a mailing in the past. Return rate of postcard coupons is discussed in the coupon section.



Image 1 - Front of Postcard

In Store

Based on requests received from retailers for in store advertising a flyer was developed including a QR code link to the coupon, see Image 2. This may have helped contribute to a higher number of coupon redemptions in 2024. However, the challenge with offering in-store coupons is that, like other coupon promotions, it is not possible to discern whether coupon users are changing their behavior or simply using the coupon to purchase a product they already use.

Webinars

A total of three natural lawn care webinars were held on 4/20/2024, 4/27/2024 and 5/1/2024. One hundred two (102) unique individuals registered for these events. (Some people registered for multiple events but were only counted once.) A total of 51 unique individuals attended the sessions.

Webinar evaluation

Evaluation of the webinars was comprised of a set of questions that registrants answered as well as a post-webinar evaluation. The evaluation provided valuable information about the characteristics of those who registered for the webinar (referred to as “registrants”) and those who attended (referred to as “attendees”). However, because the post-webinar was administered through a different tool, before and after results could not be obtained for individual attendees. Those who took the post-webinar survey are referred to as “respondents.”

Eighteen (18) webinar attendees completed post-webinar evaluations, a 36% response rate. Their responses to the survey are below. Because of the low response rate, results should be considered qualitative rather than quantitative.

Satisfaction

Overall, the webinar was well-received. A significant majority of respondents (84%) rated the webinar a 7 or higher in terms of meeting their expectations. Similarly, a large portion of



Image 2 - In-Store Coupon Ad

respondents (72%) indicated they were likely to recommend the webinar, rating it an 8 or higher. This suggests that attendees found the content valuable and engaging. However, it is important to acknowledge that a small percentage of respondents (6% for each question) gave low ratings (1 or 2), indicating that the webinar did not meet their needs.

To what extent did this webinar meet your expectations?	# respondents	% respondents
1 - Did not meet my expectations	1	6%
Two	0	0%
Three	0	0%
Four	1	6%
Five	2	11%
Six	1	6%
Seven	3	17%
Eight	3	17%
Nine	4	22%
10 – Exceeded my expectations	3	17%

Table 2 - Satisfaction with Webinar

How likely are you to recommend webinar	# of respondents	% of respondents
One	1	6%
Two	1	6%
Three	0	0%
Four	1	6%
Five	1	6%
Six	2	11%
Seven	1	6%
Eight	2	11%
Nine	2	11%
Ten	6	33%

Table 3 - Likelihood to Recommend Webinar

Audience

The target audience for the webinar was households with kids and/or pets, as these households are often more concerned about the potential impacts of conventional lawn care products. While a substantial proportion of both registrants (71%) and attendees (67%) fell into this category, the post-webinar evaluation responses skewed towards individuals without kids or pets (72%).

	# of Registra nts	% of Registra nts	# of Attendee s	% of Attendee s	# of Respond ents	% of Respond ents
Have kids and/or pets at home	72	71%	34	67%	5	28%
No kids or pets at home	30	29%	17	33%	13	72%

Table 4 - Webinar Audience Demographics

Webinar registrants came from throughout the Puget Sound region, but primarily from the Kitsap Peninsula. All WSSOG jurisdictions were represented in the registrants with the exception of Port Angeles. This suggests an opportunity to increase outreach efforts in that specific area for future webinars.

Zip	City or area	Total from zip
98006	Bellevue	1
98092	Auburn	1
98110	Bainbridge Island	9
98310	Bremerton/East Bremerton	5
98311	Bremerton/Silverdale	7
98312	Bremerton/West of 16	10
98322	Burley	1
98332	Gig Harbor/Purdy	5
98335	Gig Harbor/Artondale	7
98337	Bremerton/Gorst	3
98340	Hansville	1
98346	Kingston	4
98353	Manchester	1
98359	Olalla	2
98366	Port Orchard east of Hwy 16	10
98367	Port Orchard west of Hwy 16	14
98370	Poulsbo	11
98380	Seabeck	3
98382	Sequim	1
98368	Port Townsend	1
98383	Silverdale	7

98391	Bonney Lake	1
98392	Suquamish	1
98436	Tacoma	1

Table 5 - Zip Code of Webinar Registrants

Behavior Change

The purpose of this campaign is to encourage people who currently use weed and feed to switch to organic lawncare products. The survey reveals a mixed bag of current lawn care practices among respondents. Among respondents to the webinar survey, 33% were using some type of conventional lawn care products, but only 11% had used weed and feed, meaning there was limited opportunity to reach people using weed and feed.

The "other" category, which includes individuals who don't use any products, highlights a segment of the population that may require different messaging. An early concern among WSSOG members in developing this campaign was the possibility that we could inadvertently increase fertilizer use (and therefore nutrient pollution) by encouraging those who currently do not apply any fertilizer to start using natural or organic fertilizer.

Which of these products, if any, have you used on your lawn in the past few years? Check all that apply.	# of respondents	% of respondents
Natural or organic fertilizer	9	50%
Non-organic fertilizer	4	22%
Fertilizer & herbicide combination (weed & feed)	2	11%
Weed killer	4	22%
Moss killer	5	28%
Other (please describe)*	7	39%
*Four of the "other" responses were people that indicated that they did not use anything on their lawn.		

Table 6 – Previous Behavior of Webinar Survey Respondents

When people change their behavior, there are often stages that they go through prior to adopting the behavior consistently. They may start at a point where they are not interested in the behavior, then move to thinking about the behavior, then planning the behavior, engaging in the behavior occasionally, and then adopting the behavior all of the time. To gauge the success of the webinars, respondents were asked if they planned to change their behavior, but also, if they had moved along this continuum of behavior change.

A positive shift was observed in the respondents' stage of behavior change. There's a notable increase in the percentage of people who are *planning* to use natural/organic products (33%) compared to attendees (22%). This suggests the webinar effectively motivated individuals to move closer to adopting natural lawn care practices. The absence of respondents in the "not interested" category and the emergence of an "N/A" category further indicate a shift in mindset towards considering or using natural/organic options.

	# of Registrants	% of Registrants	# of Attendees	% of Attendees	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
I am not interested in using any products on our lawn	9	9%	5	10%	0	0%
I've never thought about using natural/organic products on my lawn instead of non-organic	9	9%	4	8%	*	*
I am thinking about using natural/organic products on my lawn instead of non-organic	24	24%	13	25%	4	22%
I am planning on using natural/organic products on my lawn in the near future instead of non-organic	22	22%	11	22%	6	33%
I sometimes use natural/organic lawn products	23	23%	9	18%	2	11%
I only use natural/organic lawn products	20	20%	9	18%	3	17%
N/A (I don't use anything on my lawn)	**	**	**	**	2	11%
*This question was not asked in the post-webinar evaluation because by virtue of attending the webinar, respondents would have had to think about natural/organic lawn products.						
**This was not an option in the registration question.						

Table 7 - Stages of Change for Webinar Registrants, Attendees and Survey Respondents

People's confidence in their ability to make a change can be a barrier. Another goal was to find out if webinar attendees felt confident in their ability achieve a healthy lawn using natural/organic products.

The varied confidence levels suggest that while some attendees felt empowered by the webinar, others still had reservations. The comments from those with lower confidence provide valuable insights into the specific barriers that need to be addressed through targeted messaging and resources.

How confident are you that you'll be able to create a healthy lawn using natural/organic products?	# of Respondents	% of Respondents	Percent in the top, middle and bottom thirds
1 - Not at all confident	0	0%	17%
Two	2	11%	
Three	0	0%	
Four	1	6%	
Five	5	28%	45%
Six	1	6%	
Seven	2	11%	
Eight	3	17%	
Nine	1	6%	34%
10 - Extremely confident	2	11%	

Table 8 - Confidence in Using Natural Lawn Care Techniques Post-Webinar

Among those who rated their confidence a five or lower, four respondents left comments that help indicate why they do not feel confident and may indicate topics that should be addressed in future webinars. Their reasons included:

- Uncertainty about whether their spouse would agree to using organic products
- Understanding that results will take longer than they anticipated to realize and that they may have to tolerate a less than perfect lawn
- Belief that the products would not get rid of dandelions or clover
- Concern about a problem area of the lawn

Initial audience research showed that changing from conventional lawn care methods to natural lawn care can take some time until people are happy with the look of their lawn. A key strategy in this campaign was offering follow ups with Master Gardeners for webinar attendees. Of the survey respondents, 6 (33%) were interested in receiving a follow up contact from Master Gardeners.

Coupon Use

A key part of the strategy for this campaign is offering a coupon to help offset the perceived higher cost of using organic/natural fertilizer. In 2024, more coupons were redeemed than in previous years. Tables 9 and 10 show coupon redemption rates. For a full report on retail partnerships and coupon redemptions, please see the report prepared by C+C in APPENDIX C.

Store	Digital (Phone/Printed)	Postcard	Printed In-store	Total
Airport Garden Center (Port Angeles)	-	-	12	12
Bay Hay & Feed (Bainbridge Island)	1	38	-	39
Bremerton City Nursery (Bremerton)	15	16	-	31
Gig Harbor Ace Hardware (Gig Harbor)	11	5	-	16
Vern's Organic Topsoil (Poulsbo)	1	6	-	7
TOTAL	28	65	12	105
Percent of Total	27%	62%	11%	

Table 9 - Coupon Use by Retailer

	Total # of Coupons Redeemed	# of Retailers	Average Coupons Redeemed per Retailer	Coupon Start	Coupon End	# of Days for Coupon	Average Coupons Redeemed per Store Each Day
2021	18	1	18	30-Mar-21	22-May-21	53	0.34
2022	70	5	14	1-Apr-22	30-May-22	59	0.24
2023	68	6	11	1-Apr-23	18-Jun-23	78	0.15
2024	105	5	21	1-Apr-24	30-Jun-24	90	0.23

Table 10 - Coupon Use by Year

Hands-On Event

One of the recommendations from the evaluation report, completed by Kathryn Owen Consulting in 2024 was to help people overcome doubts about their ability to effectively manage their lawns using natural yard care techniques by focusing on skill building.

The event was advertised via social media (see Appendix B) and Master Gardener email lists. A short presentation about natural lawn care was given by a Master Gardener twice during the event so that attendees did not have to attend the entire event to get the full content.

A variety of lawn care tools were purchased for the event so that attendees could try them, three different types of weeding tools, a dethatching tool, and an aerating tool.. The event was held at Frank Raab Park in Poulsbo and the Poulsbo Parks Department gave permission for attendees to use the tools on the lawn at the park. Once attendees had had a chance to try all the tools, they could enter a raffle to win the tool of their choice. It was helpful to have multiple styles of hand-weeding tools since some attendees preferred one over the other, but there was not a clear consensus on which one people liked best. This also helped avoid the perception that any of the organizing entities (the county, cities, WSU Extension or Master Gardeners) were endorsing one particular brand.

A total of nine people attended the event. Several were Master Gardeners, so it is possible that they were already using some natural lawn care techniques. However, there was enough enthusiasm for the event among those present that we recommend continuing this event.

Post-Campaign Decision Making

In the fall of 2024, the WSSOG embarked on a process to evaluate the Natural Yard Care and determine if focusing on nutrient reduction was still a priority for the WSSOG jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction reviewed the evaluation of the existing campaign. They also gathered information about priority pollutants within their jurisdiction. Based on these priorities, the group came up with a list of potential pollutants and related behaviors on which to focus the upcoming campaign.

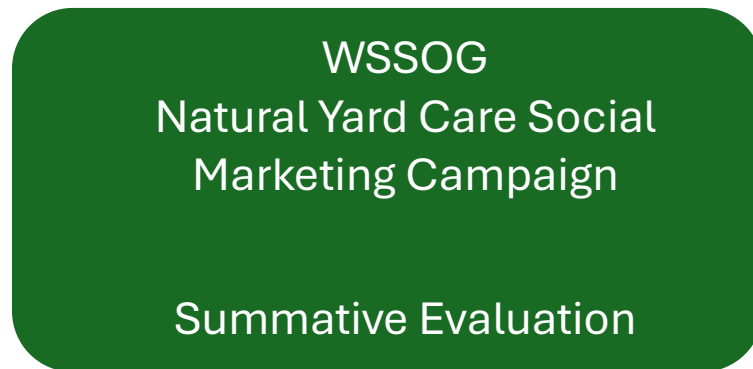
Potential Behaviors and Pollutant	Nutrients	Bacteria	Herbicide
Installing pet waste stations on shorelines		X	
Discouraging wildlife feeding		X	
Managing compost bins to discourage wildlife		X	
Close dumpster lids to discourage vermin and minimize leaks	X	X	
Pick up pet waste at home		X	
Use organic fertilizer - current program	X		
Hand pull weeds	X		X
Grass cycling	X		
Preventing fertilizer overspray	X		

Table 11 - Potential Areas of Focus for Future WSSOG Social Marketing Campaigns

Each WSSOG jurisdiction then rated each of these behaviors based on the following criteria: relevance in their jurisdiction, impact on water quality, impact on overburdened communities, ability to perform size of market not doing the behavior, measurability of the behavior (or behavior change and their confidence in their answers. Each behavior was assessed across all criteria for each relevant audience including, residents, businesses, property owners/managers, and the general public. An average score was calculated for each potential behavior. Based on these results, the group decided to move forward in 2025 with a campaign that focuses on encouraging businesses to close their dumpster lids.

After several years of implementing the natural yard care campaign with the WSSOG, Kitsap County will continue to support an education-only natural yard care campaign through its interlocal agreement with Washington State University Extension. This campaign will retain the educational elements of the existing campaign (webinars and hands-on events) but will not include a coupon, will not be advertised with a postcard, and will have a much smaller capacity for advertising.

Appendix A



Overview

Project purpose & evaluation goals

Kitsap County contracted with Kathryn Owen Consulting LLC to conduct a summative evaluation of the Natural Yard Care Social Marketing Campaign carried out by the West Sound Stormwater Outreach Group (WSSOG), a multi-jurisdictional partnership between Kitsap County, the Cities of Bainbridge Island, Bremerton, Gig Harbor, Poulsbo, Port Angeles, and Port Orchard. The aim of this campaign was to help reduce nutrient runoff - a major source of pollution to local waterways and to Puget Sound as a whole.

The target behavior for the Natural Yard Care (NYC) campaign was to encourage homeowners to switch from weed-and-feed type products to natural or organic fertilizer.¹ The target audience was initially identified as households who a) have a lawn, b) maintain the lawn themselves, and c) have children or pets with access to the yard as part of the household.

This evaluation summarizes findings from the most recent year of this multiyear campaign, which began in 2018. The evaluation centered on exploring the campaign's impact on audience receptivity to the messages, intent to engage in the target behavior, and actual engagement in the target behavior. Towards this end, we surveyed 2481 households within WSSOG jurisdictions. We also conducted in-person and phone interviews with partners (i.e., nurseries and garden centers involved in distribution of a discount coupon for organic fertilizer).

Evaluation findings

In spite of significant challenges posed by the COVID 19 pandemic, this campaign was able to produce a compelling ad campaign that spoke to the target audiences' interests and concerns and that many said would influence their behavior; to hold a series of webinars on natural lawn care that participants found valuable and that encouraged the target behavior; and to begin developing successful partnerships with local nurseries and other retailers. Key findings include:

¹ The campaign used the phrase "natural/organic" in most of its marketing literature, which has been shortened to "organic" for readability, unless quoting campaign materials.

- ❖ Roughly 20% of survey respondents have used weed and feed, moss killer, weed killer, or a nonorganic, slow-release fertilizer. Only 5%, however, identified themselves as “*not interested*” in using organic fertilizer.
- ❖ In all, 40% of the audience falls into the “willingness to change” category. They have already thought about doing the target behavior, have planned to start doing it, or have started doing it at least some of the time. Among those who are willing to engage in the target behavior, the challenge of controlling weeds and/or invasive plants was the most frequently mentioned barrier. Among the audience as a whole, the most prominent barriers were the perceptions that a) organics don’t work as well as chemical fertilizer, and b) are too expensive.
- ❖ One-third of survey respondents said they were not interested in using *any* type of fertilizer on their lawns, and there was significant interest in alternatives to grass lawns.
- ❖ Over a third of the audience said the NYC campaign ads were “*likely*” or “*very likely*” to influence their lawn care practices. Not counting those who were already using organic exclusively, 19% of the audience showed intent to adopt this new behavior. This translates to a potential 3,457 pounds or 1.72 tons of nutrient runoff diverted from local waterways; if extrapolated to the entire audience reached (not just survey respondents) the figure comes to 23,673 pounds or 11.8 tons.
- ❖ The aspect of the ad campaign the audience found particularly compelling was the focus on things they cared about: protecting marine life and Puget Sound; protecting their children, pets, and families; and protecting nature in general. People also liked the use of direct and compelling words like “*healthy*” and “*safe*,” and some appreciated the offers for fertilizer discounts and webinars. In addition, we found that households with and without children or pets were equally likely to find the ad campaign compelling.
- ❖ When given the opportunity to make general comments about their own lawn care practices or about natural yard care in general, the most frequent topics that emerged were:
 - Comments on NYC steps the respondent was taking aside from not using weed and feed-type products
 - Comments about wanting to reduce or remove their lawn
 - Comments about topics the respondent would like help with, including learning and/or resources
 - Comments about the perceived benefits of not using weed and feed-type products or other lawn chemicals
 - Comments of appreciation and/or agreement with WSSOG’s NYC campaign
- ❖ While comments did not vary greatly by jurisdiction, there were a few differences:
 - Respondents from Bainbridge Island were the most likely to share additional NYC steps they have taken, and to make comments of agreement or appreciation for the campaign.
 - Respondents from Gig Harbor and Port Orchard were the most likely to make comments reflecting lack of agency. I.e., referencing their HOA’s rules – or a housemate’s control – as barriers to taking action.

- ❖ The three webinars on natural yard care offered by a Master Gardener were attended by 29 individuals, out of 103 registering. While they reached a fairly small audience, the webinars had a high satisfaction rate, and the majority of attendees said they were likely to recommend the webinars to others. Of the attendees surveyed six months later, the majority reported having taken one or more steps towards natural lawn care.
- ✚ All of the nurseries and garden centers were interested in participating in future campaigns. Retailers' suggestions included changing the discount to a flat fee rather than a percentage, having discount coupons available on days when there is a workshop or demo on natural lawn care, and collecting additional info to find out whether the coupon is generating a) new customers for the retailers, and b) new users of organic fertilizers.

Recommendations

- ✚ While there were people who *were not* interested in the target behavior because they don't agree that nonorganic fertilizers pose a hazard – to their households or to Puget Sound – this group was quite small. For this reason, we **recommend focusing future efforts on moving beyond awareness to skill building**. To address the needs of the audience most likely to engage in the target behavior, the campaign could offer follow-up activities that can help people learn how to treat areas of concern (weeds, invasive plants, moss) without using toxic chemicals. These are most likely to be successful if they feature one-on-one conversations, which are able to respond to individualized conditions (e.g., lawn size, slope, proximity to water) and can contextualize the behavior.
- ✚ If WSSOG wants to continue using a social marketing approach, we recommend revisiting the target behavior and **identifying a behavior that is non-divisible (doesn't contain multiple steps) and end-state**. That is, the behavior will produce the desired outcome for the audience without requiring additional action. If the desired outcome is caring for the lawn without chemicals, the current target works; we suspect, however, that the desired outcome among these households is for a lawn that looks good (weeds are under control, for instance).
- ✚ **Continue and expand the use of social marketing tools**, including social diffusion and norms, public commitment, and making the behavior convenient. If the campaign were to adopt a non-divisible and end-state behavior, some of these additional tools could be employed more effectively. For instance, if the campaign were to encourage the behavior of adjusting lawnmower height to crowd out weeds, households could make a public commitment and help establish norms by putting up a small yard sign. Or the behavior could be prompted through reminders placed in nurseries and garden centers and take-home stickers.

Clarify the intent of the fertilizer discount. The discount coupon for 25% off organic fertilizer was provided as a way to reduce the barrier of cost for people interested in switching to organic. But because the coupon is for one-time use, it may not maintain the behavior beyond one application. If unfamiliarity with the products and where to find them were the main barrier, simply introducing people to the organic options through a coupon would be helpful. But with a product consumers buy repeatedly, the discount may be seen as having limited value. If WSSOG feels it would be helpful in convincing people of the benefits of organics, a cost comparison for customers showing organic and nonorganic costs over time could also be helpful.

In addition, because the participating nurseries focus on organic products already, it was unclear whether the discount coupons were encouraging first-time customers or first-time organic users – rather than people who already use organics and appreciate the discount. Our suggestion is to collect data during coupon redemption to find out the percentage of a) first time customers to that retailer, and b) first-time organic users, to find out whether the coupon is having the desired effect.

Appendix B

Kitsap Natural Yard Care 2024 Advertising

Following the success of the Kitsap Natural Yard Care campaign in 2023, C+C leveraged a paid Meta campaign in 2024 to reach priority audiences across Kitsap County, Port Angeles and Gig Harbor on Facebook and Instagram. The 2024 campaign introduced a new ad set for the in-person event, alongside the webinar and coupon ads. The campaign consisted of six static ads, using images from the spring 2023 campaign.

The webinar, coupon, and in-person event ad sets each featured two ads with different copy to A/B test, with one set of copy from the 2023 campaign. The ads encouraged residents to reduce pollutants in stormwater by signing up for a \$15 coupon discount on organic or natural fertilizer, and to attend webinars and an in-person event to learn about spring lawncare tips from Master Gardeners.

Results

The campaign reached a total of 367,138 people and received 10,948 link clicks, a 63% increase in link clicks from the 2023 campaign (6,691). This increase can be attributed to a variety of factors including incorporating interest targeting, expanding the ads set to 3 (6 ads overall) to test and therefore reach a broader audience using different messaging, and adding Instagram, exposing the ads to a larger audience. Additionally, adjusting CTA copy from “Get 25% off” to “Get \$15 Off” and incorporating more direct, actionable messaging (e.g., “Make the healthier, safer choice”) may have also made the offers more compelling, contributing to higher link clicks.

The average cost per link click (CPC) was \$0.50, outperforming last year’s average CPC of \$0.75 and the Meta CPC benchmark of \$1.72. This means that the ads were very cost-efficient and there was strong audience interest in the content.

The A/B testing for the webinar, coupon, and in-person event ads all resulted in approximately the same amount of link clicks and people reached. Since both versions of the ads performed well, we decided to keep both ads running through campaign duration within each ad set to maximize reach and engagement. This approach helped to maintain fresh creative content for the audience by having multiple versions running.

Webinar Ad Set (April 1, 2024 to April 30, 2024)

- Link clicks: 2,505
- Media Budget: \$1,497.91
- Impressions: 396,615
- Reach*: 181,553
- Cost Per Link Click: \$0.60
- Engagements: 165
 - 4 comments
 - 139 reactions

- 8 shares
 - 14 saves
- Frequency: ~2

Coupon Ad Set (April 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024)

- Link clicks: 7,142
- Media Budget: \$3,249.25
- Impressions: 489,338
- Reach*: 220,381
- Cost Per Link Click: \$0.45
- Engagement: 142
 - 13 comments
 - 110 reactions
 - 17 shares
 - 2 saves
- Frequency: ~2

In-person Event Ad Set (May 13, 2024 to June 7, 2024)

- Link Clicks: 1,301
- Media Budget: \$748.52
- Impressions: 170,252
- Reach*: 81,654
- Cost Per Link Click: \$0.58
- Engagement:
 - 4 comments
 - 67 reactions
 - 7 shares
 - 3 saves
- Frequency: ~2

**116,450 people saw multiple ads resulting in 367,138 total people reached*

Webinar Ad 1 (2023 copy)

 Kitsap County - Government  
Sponsored

Get your green thumb ready because lawn care season is almost here! That's why we're bringing you 'Pull the Weeds, Not Your Hair,' a FREE webinar about natural lawn care. Catch one of our webinars in April and May, or in-person event in June, to get expert advice on weed control, soil health, organic fertilizing, and more.

 April 20, 10am – 11am
 April 27, 10am – 11am
 May 1, 6pm – 7pm

 June 8, 10am – 12pm - Join us for an in-person, hands-on weeding and natural lawn care demonstration



kitsap.gov
JOIN OUR FREE WEBINAR
Get Lawn Advice from Master... 

Webinar Ad 2 (Top Performer)

 Kitsap County - Government  
Sponsored

Control pesky weeds the natural way by catching one of our free 'Pull the Weeds, Not Your Hair' webinars in April and May, and free in-person demonstration event in June. Don't miss out on tips, tricks, and proven tactics from Master Gardeners:

 April 20, 10am – 11am
 April 27, 10am – 11am
 May 1, 6pm – 7pm

 June 8, 10am – 12pm - Join us for an in-person, hands-on weeding and natural lawn care demonstration



kitsap.gov
Free Lawn Care Webinar
Learn natural gardening from ... 


Coupon Ad 1 (2023 copy)

Coupon Ad 2 (Top Performer)

Kitsap County - Government
Sponsored · 🌱

One simple way to reduce your family's exposure to harmful chemicals is choosing lawn and garden care products labeled "natural" or "organic."

Save now on fertilizers that are safer for your family, your lawn and wildlife.



Grow a healthier lawn that's...

Safer for your family...
...and for theirs.

kitsap.gov
GET \$15 OFF ORGANIC FERTILIZER

Sign up

Kitsap County - Government
Sponsored · 🌱

Ditch the harmful chemicals. Make the safer, healthier choice by switching to organic or natural lawn and garden care products. Right now, we're offering \$15 off organic fertilizer at partnering retailers.



Grow a healthier lawn that's...

Safer for your family...
...and for theirs.

kitsap.gov
Save \$15 on organic fertilizer
Fertilize your lawn, not our w...

Get offer

In-person Event Ad 1

In-person Event Ad 2 (Top Performer)

Kitsap County - Government
Sponsored · 🌱

Get your green thumb ready because lawn care season is here! That's why we're bringing you 'Pull the Weeds, Not Your Hair,' a FREE in-person, hands-on demonstration event about weed control, soil health, organic fertilizing, and more.

🌱 Join us on June 8 between 10am – 12pm for expert advice and techniques on weeding and natural lawn care. Space is limited—reserve your spot today!



kitsap.gov
JOIN OUR FREE EVENT
Get Hands-on Advice from M...

Sign up

Kitsap County - Government
Sponsored · 🌱

Control pesky weeds the natural way by joining our free 'Pull the Weeds, Not Your Hair' in-person, hands-on demonstration event on June 8 between 10am – 12pm. 🌱 Don't miss out on tips, tricks, and proven tactics from Master Gardeners. Space is limited—reserve your spot today!



kitsap.gov
Free Lawn Care Event
Learn natural gardening techn...

Sign up

2023 – 2024 Campaign Comparison

This year's ad campaign budget was \$5,500—a 10% increase over the 2023 budget of \$5,000. Interest targeting was introduced this year and the campaign runtime was extended for an additional week. The 2024 campaign generated over 4,200 more link clicks than the 2023 campaign, and reached over 272,000 more people.

Recommendations for Further Evaluation and Next Steps

- Refresh the visuals for the ads, since the images have now been used for both the 2023 and 2024 campaigns and the target audience remains the same each year.
- Continue to leverage interest targeting to introduce the ads to qualified audiences.
- Continue to use A/B testing with multiple sets of ad creative to maximize and optimize performance.
 - The 2024 ad copy performed slightly better than the 2023 ad copy, so for the next campaign we recommend using the high performing 2024 ad copy and A/B test with a new set of ad copy.

Appendix C

Kitsap Natural Yard Care 2024 Retail & Coupon Redemption

Retail Store Outreach and Coupon Redemption Results

In 2024, C+C and WSSOG conducted another year of robust outreach to solicit retailer participation in Kitsap's Natural Yard Care campaign. This year, five stores across the West Sound participated in Kitsap's Natural Yard Care coupon promotion, providing coverage across the county and into Port Angeles.

Through these retailers, customers (West Sound residents) could receive \$15 off select natural or organic lawn fertilizer.

To support the retailer promotions in-store, the team provided an 8.5"x11" flyer for every retail partner to put in their stores as another touchpoint for customers to see messaging related to the campaign.

During the 13-week period the coupon was active (between April 1 and June 30), 105 total coupons were redeemed at participating stores—a significant increase from both the 2022 campaign (drove 70 coupon redemptions) and the 2023 campaign (68 redemptions).



In-store Flyer

C+C and the WSSOG tracked which kinds of coupons were turned in to get a sense where customers received coupons; of the 105 coupons redeemed, 28 customers received it through digital ads and the website (presenting the coupon on their phone or printed out) and 65 customers received it as a mailed postcard or in person at Master Gardening events hosted by WSSOG at Gig Harbor Ace Hardware and Airport Garden Center in Port Angeles. 17 received a printed coupon in-store from Airport Garden Center staff.

Store	Digital (Phone/Printed)	Postcard	Printed In-store	Total
Airport Garden Center (Port Angeles)	-	-	12	12
Bay Hay & Feed (Bainbridge Island)	1	38	-	39
Bremerton City Nursery (Bremerton)	15	16	-	31
Gig Harbor Ace Hardware (Gig Harbor)	11	5	-	16
Vern's Organic Topsoil (Poulsbo)	1	6	-	7
TOTAL	28	65	12	105

Percent of Total	27%	62%	11%	
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Two new features were added to the 2024 campaign:

- **Increased Redemption Timeline:** This year, the team increased the time customers had to redeem the coupon from 11 weeks in the spring 2023 campaign (April 1, 2023 to June 18, 2023) to 13 weeks for the spring 2024 campaign (April 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024).
- **‘\$15 off’ Offer:** To help move past any cost barriers associated with natural or organic fertilizer, the project team adjusted the incentive offer to provide a flat ‘\$15 off’ on all eligible products. This “\$15 off” offer was new in 2024, replacing the “25% off (up to \$15)” offer used in previous years of the Natural Yard Care campaign.



Coupon Offer

WSSOG and C+C also received other valuable insights from retailers about spring sales overall for 2024. Airport Garden Center and Vern's Organic Topsoil both reported that excessive rain and cloudy days in April and May may have contributed to a slower spring gardening season this year. To help boost awareness, Airport Garden Center designed a front-of-store display just for the WSSOG promotion.



Airport Garden Center Display

West Sound Stormwater Outreach Group (WSSOG) 2025 Work Plan

Objectives from Exhibit “A”

West Sound Stormwater Outreach Group Scope of Work & Budget for 2023-2025

Sustain Successful Efforts with Pet Waste Outreach (Objective 2)

- Review data and other programs (2.1)
 - Develop an updated Mutt Mitt program plan.
 - Consider adopting updated Mutt Mitt program plan.
- Continue Pet Waste Outreach (2.2)
 - Continue to implement Mutt Mitt program plan.
 - Participate in the regional STORM Pet Waste workgroup as appropriate.

Continue Social Marketing Campaign Development (Objectives 3 and 6)

- Launch Dumpsters Campaign (3.1)
 - Review and adapt original Dumpsters campaign.
 - Coordinate adaptation of any printed materials.
 - Develop RFP (consultant for evaluation).
 - Review submissions with WSSOG.
 - Manage consultant contract.
 - Prior to full implementation, have consultant collect baseline data.
 - Develop strategy and schedule for new campaign and program evaluation plan by **July 1, 2025**.
 - Implement campaign by **September 1, 2025**.
 - Follow-up evaluation by **March 31, 2029**.

Collaborate on Joint Outreach for the Business Inspection Program (Objective 4)

- Look for new opportunities to develop materials to support the business inspection program (4.1).

Collaborate on Mutually Beneficial Outreach Opportunities (Objectives 5 and 6)

- Continue Spills Hotline Outreach (5.2)

- Distribute paint sticks, when feasible.
- Promote the SeeClickFix application and spills reporting phone number via social media, print, or digital communications.
- Continue Participation in Puget Sound Starts Here (PSSH) Outreach (6.3)
 - Promote PSSH Month.
 - Distribute PSSH-branded merchandise (e.g., coasters, pet waste bag holders) when feasible.
 - Participate in STORM-sponsored regional ad buys and/or place local ads.

Strengthen Coalition and Represent WSSOG on Regional Efforts (Objective 6)

- Participate in the STORM Steering Committee and PSSH committee (6.1).
- Participate in STORM's regional workgroups as appropriate (6.4).
- Provide STORM and PSSH support and attend quarterly meetings (6.1).

Track and Maintain Records of Education and Outreach Activities (Objective 7)

- Provide an ****annual summary of activities****, track and maintain records, and report on programs as appropriate.
- Ensure compliance with the ****Washington State Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit****, as required by the ****National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)**** under the ****Clean Water Act (40 CFR Part 122)****.
- Kitsap County will provide a draft summary of activities to WSSOG jurisdictions by ****March 2025****, with the final report submitted no later than ****mid-March**** to align with ****annual NPDES permit reporting requirements****.