

## **Wet Weather Team Education and Outreach Idea List Working Draft – May 9, 2008**

The following is a list of education and outreach ideas identified by Wet Weather Team (WWT) members for consideration for the Wet Weather Program. The list will act as a resource for MSD and the technical team as they develop and refine the draft education and outreach plan for MSD's Wet Weather Program. (The focus of this list is on long-term education, outreach, and public engagement efforts, rather than near-term activities such as public meetings occurring during the WWT process.) These ideas were identified both at WWT meetings and through individual communications with WWT members (e.g., via e-mail). This list will remain "live" throughout the remainder of the WWT effort, and WWT members are encouraged to send additional ideas for this list to the facilitation team.

New ideas will be listed under a "What's New" section at the beginning of the document for easy reference, as well as under the appropriate section later in the document. The remainder of the document is organized into two main sections, Section I, which focuses on MSD Wet Weather Program education and outreach efforts, and Section 2, which covers efforts that are only partly within MSD's control.

### **What's New (April / May 2008)**

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1. (1-B-13) – Share the messages from MSD's IOAP Vision at Project WIN public meetings and with builders and other contractors.
2. (II-A-4) – Create a centralized water education center, such as the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center in Gwinnett County, Georgia.

### **I. MSD Wet Weather Program Education and Outreach Efforts**

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#### ***A. Education/Outreach Program Characteristics***

1. MSD should expand upon its existing education and outreach efforts, including Project WIN and other MSD programs such as Living Lands and Waters.
2. Education efforts should be comprehensive, adequately resourced, and human scale to encourage behavior changes (e.g., stewardship practices).
3. To be successful, public involvement efforts should include:
  - a. A corporate or programmatic identity: logo, leader, advisory board, budget, mission, goals, website, etc.
  - b. Communications: announcements, fliers, newsletters, radio/TV appearances, etc.
  - c. Stewardship: removing invasive vegetation from riparian zones, planting wetlands, [and yes] litter cleanups
  - d. Education: stream science, water quality monitoring
  - e. Conservation: promoting rain gardens, rain barrels, and responsible alternatives for sump pumps and downspout connections.
  - f. Coordination: linking the public involvement activity with MSD and the wet weather team
  - g. Celebration: festivals, canoe floats, and other events that call positive attention to the area's waterways.
4. Outreach efforts should show people that there is an open and transparent process within which MSD is making decisions on behalf of the community.

## ***B. Audiences, Objectives, and Messages***

1. Target education efforts in “critical CSO neighborhoods” and schools in those areas.
  - a. Use a targeted direct-mail approach to help address local, site-specific problems.
2. Involve commercial and industrial customers and solutions through PR and planning, not just residential customers.
3. Make a presentation to the full Metro Council.
4. Work with schools (in conjunction with Earth Day and river/creek cleanups) to involve both students and parents.
5. Message ideas:
  - a. Develop positive educational messages about the value of clean water to supplement other education and outreach messages. (CSO warning signs, river sweeps, and other elements of MSD’s outreach activities send a negative message about the community’s water resources.)
  - b. Can the “water is dirty, stay away from it” signs that EPA designated include a promise that the public can change the situation?
  - c. Translate Consent Decree activities into dollar impacts for residents.
  - d. Communicate that we have no choice but must comply with the requirements of the consent decree in a timely manner.
  - e. Help people understand how they are connected to the problem.
  - f. Help change the perception people have of streams to a positive one (people think that streams are “dead”).
  - g. Help people understand that green infrastructure can be incorporated into urban areas, since urban areas can be redeveloped.
  - h. Craft messages explaining the importance of addressing private sources of infiltration and inflow, and people’s personal responsibility for addressing it.
  - i. Create community ownership of the solutions.
  - j. Stress that there are two sides to EPA compliance, and note that programs will affect some people more directly than others because of the way the sewer system has developed over time:
    - i. What MSD is going to do with its infrastructure that will affect the whole community.
    - ii. What citizens and businesses will be asked to do.
  - k. Inform the community that EPA is targeting three parts of the sewer system: CSO sewersheds, the “Big 4” SSO sewersheds, and the other SSO sewersheds.
  - l. Help people understand that, even though MSD is paying the EPA Consent Decree rate surcharge, the community as a whole must help solve the problem.
  - m. Help people understand the differences between the combined sewer system and the sanitary sewer system.
  - n. Explain funding concepts and choices to the public. Showing side-by-side cost comparisons could be a particularly useful way of doing this.
  - o. Thoroughly explain the financial assistance component of any private infiltration and inflow reduction program.
  - p. Some information from MSD’s Sewer Overflow Response Protocol training (such as how MSD prepares for wet weather events) could be useful to share with the public, potentially during weather forecasts.

- q. Educate people about the benefits of green projects that are the result of partnerships between MSD and other agencies.
- 6. Involve neighborhoods in identifying potential green infrastructure solutions (e.g., by having a neighborhood competition to get grassroots ideas for potential solutions).
- 7. Develop education programs for schools that allow children to take information home.
- 8. Educate local leaders on the need for source reduction. One way to do this would be to show them the cost of specific solutions to SSO and CSO problems.
- 9. Explain problems and programs related to SSOs directly to homeowners (individually if necessary), and enlist neighborhood associations and other neighborhood institutions to help when appropriate.
- 10. Conduct an aggressive education effort before instituting any new requirement that would address private-side infiltration and inflow sources.
- 11. Develop and implement a public information and involvement strategy for each of the three parts of the sewer system that EPA is targeting: the “Big 4” SSO sewersheds, the other SSO sewersheds, and the CSO sewersheds.
  - a. Each area should be mapped and made publicly available on MSD’s website.
  - b. Public information should roll out in consecutive waves so the different programs can be explained to the larger community and the direct effects can be explained to the parts of the community that may need to do more to make them work.
  - c. The first wave of public information should address the “Big 4” SSO sewersheds, followed by the other SSO sewersheds, and then the CSO sewersheds.
- 12. Communicate effectively with the community regarding rate increases.
  - a. Keep the message positive.
  - b. Include as part of the message that the alternative to the Wet Weather Program is having the federal courts impose requirements on the community.
  - c. Tell residents what they are getting for their money and how these efforts are improving public health.
  - d. Help people feel involved in the process and understand that they have some responsibility for helping solve the problem (e.g., through communications that ask, “can you help us?” instead of “we’re going to do this”).
  - e. Help residents understand what they are paying for and what the community has to do to improve water quality and comply with the Consent Decree.
- 13. Share the messages from MSD’s IOAP Vision at Project WIN public meetings and with builders and other contractors.

***C. General Outreach and Education Strategies and Techniques***

- 1. Use a variety of communication media to inform Louisville residents about issues, opportunities, and activities related to the Wet Weather Program and the Consent Decree. Examples include:
  - a. feature articles and/or advertisements in the Courier Journal
  - b. direct mail
  - c. public service announcements on television
  - d. radio (WLOU/WLLV 1350 and 101.3 FM for the west)
  - e. e-mail lists (“UofL announcements” to University of Louisville employees, e-mail lists for Metro Council members)
  - f. website(s) (provide information, as well as solicit input and questions)

- g. community meetings (“piggy back” on other events/meetings such as the Mayor’s Night Out, community association meetings, Metro Council meetings, etc.)
  - h. media “groundbreaking” events
  - i. 5-minute DVD video (highlight the central issues and indicate the short and long-term consequences)
  - j. hold a “creek concert” to raise awareness of stream issues to young people
  - k. develop/use a Kentucky State Fair Exhibit (permanent or traveling)
  - l. hold a speaker’s forum and/or have a group of people available that could speak at community meetings and events
  - m. work with the Mayor’s press staff and the Louisville Metro Neighborhoods Department to get the word out
  - n. hold a press conference
2. Develop/use posters and visual displays to illustrate concepts to the public and provide context to Wet Weather Program activities. Specific suggestions include:
    - a. Schematic of a combined sewer overflow
    - b. Schematic of sump pumps and downspouts connected to sanitary sewers
    - c. Map of the combined sewer area and outfalls against blue line streams and landmarks (road system would do)
    - d. Map of SSO outfalls including the sewersheds of the “big four,” as above
    - e. Water Quality maps from the Beargrass Creek report card, also water quality info about Ohio River related to CSO outfalls
    - f. Comparison of city sewer rates indicating which cities have consent decrees
    - g. Time frames for the major deliverables in the Consent Decree
    - h. Create visible representations of the solution, since they can be helpful for explaining project concepts to the public. Use these visual representations when soliciting community input.
  3. Initiate a dialog with neighborhoods, potentially including door-to-door outreach, to better understand local water quality problems and to solicit local input on potential solutions.
  4. Develop a speakers bureau to attend chamber/business association meetings and other groups that use speakers.
  5. Conduct demonstration projects (Note: Overlaps with demonstration projects in Solution Ideas List). Specific ideas include:
    - a. Create a demonstration area in each Jefferson County watershed to demonstrate and interpret healthy stream habitats and what MSD is doing to study and protect them.
    - b. Strategically place demonstration projects (e.g., porous pavement) near neighborhoods.
    - c. Create some sustainable lawns as pilot projects
    - d. Develop a green infrastructure best management practice site similar to SD1 (Sanitation District Number 1 of Northern Kentucky).
    - e. Add green demonstration/education facilities to old urban schools.
    - f. The Clifton neighborhood is motivated, so would be a good demonstration area to show the effects of behavior change.
    - g. Use the Butchertown Greenway Pump Station that is offline for an education and demonstration facility.

6. Present “Where is your CSO or SSO?” information on-line: On the MSD or LOGIC website, have the ability to type in your address and have it call up the location of the CSO or SSO that the property owner’s waste goes to. The website could describe the watershed that contributes water and runoff to that individual CSO or SSO.
7. Support the identification of public watershed advocates for each Jefferson County watershed. Each watershed needs a public advocate. It could be connected with a nature center, or be an independent citizen advocacy group.
8. Make MSD facilities visitor friendly. For example, add educational exhibits around the flood wall, the history of flooding, etc. to the Beargrass Creek Pump Station and near the flood detention basins at the Fairgrounds.
9. Have MSD employees be educational ambassadors, as a way of making Louisville environmentally literate.
10. Public meeting ideas:
  - a. To increase attendance, consider latching onto other meetings.
  - b. Ideas for places/ways to advertise the public meetings:
    - i. Churches
    - ii. PTA meetings.
    - iii. Metro Council and neighborhood newsletters
    - iv. Channel 25 (Metro Louisville programming)
    - v. Short recorded messages on phones
    - vi. Send announcements about the public meetings through the Department of Neighborhoods distribution list to get word out to neighborhood groups.
    - vii. Listservs
    - viii. Get the word out at local schools so kids can take information home to their parents.
    - ix. Local TV or NPR piece
    - x. Homeowners Association newsletters
    - xi. Suburban city newsletters
  - c. Start public meeting presentations with information on rates to get people’s attention.
  - d. At public meetings, consider the fact that people need time to digest information from presentations and written materials.
  - e. Avoid using acronyms in presentations and discussions with community members.
  - f. Conduct direct outreach to block watch groups, neighborhood associations, and business associations to identify neighborhood leaders.
  - g. Give people at least two weeks advance notice of the public meetings.
  - h. Have the Metro Council representative for the local area host the public meetings.
  - i. Hold public meetings at local schools, maybe in conjunction with other meetings that are already taking place.
  - j. Give information that is as specific in terms of location as possible at the public meetings.
  - k. Advertise some of the potential solutions being considered, and hold the meetings near some of the likely places of disruption, as a way to get people to attend public meetings.
  - l. Bring up the green aspects of the Wet Weather Program at public meetings in order to find more partners for MSD to collaborate with on green projects.

11. Add a portal to MSD's website where people can submit comments on Project WIN; run a public service announcement to inform people about the issues and the website address for submitting comments.
12. Develop and run an information booth at selected festivals in the community (similar to the booth used for Project XL).
13. Use the potential disruption along Hikes Lane (part of the Big Four SSO plan) as an opportunity for broader education of the public about wet weather sewer overflow issues.
14. Yard signs similar to those used in Portland's residential Downspout Disconnection Program could be useful for education and outreach about MSD's Wet Weather Program. [Note: Overlaps with CSO and SSO Point Source Controls in Solution Ideas List.] Specific ideas for signs include:
  - a. Messages such as "I disconnected my downspout" and/or "I have a rain barrel."
  - b. The bottom of the sign could invite readers to "ask me" for more information.
15. Invite people to "join" Project WIN by installing rain gardens, rain barrels, reducing their use of lawn chemicals, etc.
  - a. Add a page to MSD's website where people can submit notes or pictures of their efforts.
  - b. Give out plaques or other awards to those who "join."

***D. Education to Change Behavior [Overlaps with Behavior Change Strategies in Solution Ideas List]***

1. Influence behavior of residential and commercial landowners through education.
  - a. Promote water conservation practices: rain gardens, rain barrels, and responsible alternatives for sump pumps and downspout connections.
  - b. Encourage stewardship: removing invasive vegetation from riparian zones, planting wetlands, litter cleanups, etc.
  - c. Conduct education regarding fertilizer, weed killer, and other stormwater best management practices to neighborhood groups.
  - d. Develop and educate residents about urban farming opportunities
  - e. Teach and promote sensible/responsible development.
  - f. Discourage chemical treatment and mowing near waterways to help keep debris from waterways.
2. Regularly distribute billing inserts (like LG&E's) to MSD customers with facts and tips to encourage certain behaviors (e.g., lawn chemical management, pet waste management, landscaping practices).
3. Hold "CSO Action Days" (like Ozone Action Days) during or right after a hard rain to raise awareness and promote behavior change (e.g., don't use your dishwasher or clothes washer, wait to drain your bathtub, etc.).
4. Develop a pledge for customers that clearly lays out behaviors that will help MSD meet Consent Decree requirements. For an example, see <http://www.watershedpledge.org>
5. Encourage the use of best management practices for chemical use in lawn management practices.
  - a. Inform greens keepers about best management practices (BMPs), since non-point source runoff is made worse by golf course chemicals.
6. Provide technical assistance to support behavior-change efforts.
  - a. Develop a program in which residents could pay a small fee for MSD or another agency to conduct a water/wastewater audit on a house similar to the energy audits offered by LG&E.

### ***E. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability***

1. Conduct a baseline survey and follow-up surveys of residents to determine whether education and outreach efforts are effective in raising awareness and in changing behavior and perceptions on issues related to the Wet Weather Program. [Note: This is also included in the Solution Ideas List.]
  - a. Develop a survey instrument (potentially with a coalition of cities) and use it every year.
2. Collect baseline data, monitor performance, and ensure “high stakes accountability” for all of the education and outreach objectives of the Wet Weather Program.
  - a. Evaluate the extent to which citizens value clean water, support MSD, understand best management practices for homes and businesses, and have a basic understanding of ecological conditions and processes.
3. Consider creating/supporting an evaluation center to evaluate and document the effectiveness of education and outreach programs.
4. Develop a “report card” for MSD’s Wet Weather Program to post on MSD’s Project WIN website and publish it in print format regularly (e.g., annually). This report card would report on performance measures related to the goals of MSD’s Wet Weather Program and implementation of the consent decree.
5. Support volunteer monitoring efforts, such as those practiced by the Salt River Watershed Watch program (<http://kywater.org/watch/salt/>).

## **II. Ideas Partly or Completely Outside the Scope of MSD’s Wet Weather Consent Decree**

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### ***A. Municipal Government Actions (Only Partly within MSD's Control)***

1. Develop a “comprehensive solution” for local environmental improvement and education efforts.
  - a. Fund and staff a collaborative planning effort to link the environmental education programs of multiple local agencies (MSD, Louisville Water Company, Metro government departments, Mayor’s Office, TARC, etc.) together, develop specific goals and assessment systems, and then hold agencies accountable to those goals.  
[Note: This is also included in the Solution Ideas List.]
2. Transform governmental facilities to be role models and learning laboratories—demonstrate how to do the right thing.
  - a. Encourage local government agencies (e.g., Jefferson County Public Schools, Metro Parks) to adopt preventative practices to decrease stormwater runoff and wastewater volumes (e.g., low-flow toilets, pervious pavement, additional tree coverage, etc.).  
[Note: This is also included in the Solution Ideas List.]
3. Work with other building inspectors to raise awareness of wet weather issues during inspections.
4. Create a centralized water education center, such as the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center in Gwinnett County, Georgia.