



C O N N E C T I C U T R I V E R

S t o r m w a t e r C o m m i t t e e

MS4 Permit Year 6
Annual Report for Public Education and Outreach
MCM 1 and additional requirements in Appendixes F and H

July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024

September 18, 2024

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1. Coalition Purpose and Membership	1
2. Water Quality Considerations in the Region.....	2
Annual Report Part II: Self-Assessment	3
1. Education and Outreach on Bacteria/Pathogens.....	3
2. Education and Outreach on Nitrogen and Phosphorous (combined)	3
Annual Report Part IV: MCM 1 – Public Education and Outreach.....	3
1. <i>Think Blue Connecticut River</i> Website.....	3
2. Messages related to bacteria and pathogens	7
3. Messages related to phosphorus and nitrogen.....	13

The Connecticut River Stormwater Committee annual report provides a summary of all the work undertaken during the July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 reporting period. All of this work is directly applicable to all member communities' EPA annual reporting requirements.

Content has been formatted in a manner consistent with the format of the EPA annual report template for Year 6. Because the Connecticut River Stormwater Committee is a regional partnership program, these sections are written from a "regional" perspective rather than municipality-by-municipality. Additional details of community-specific efforts are reported in each municipality's annual report.

In communication with PVPC, who facilitates the coalition, EPA has endorsed and encouraged a regional Annual Reporting approach whereby Connecticut River Stormwater Committee member communities can satisfy the Public Education and Outreach reporting requirement (within MCM 1 and Appendixes F and H) by referencing the coalition's annual report with a url link in their own annual report.

Page left blank intentionally.

Introduction

1. Coalition Purpose and Membership

The Connecticut River Stormwater Committee is an intergovernmental compact of 19 municipalities, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission organized to work cooperatively in meeting US EPA Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit (“MS4 Permit”) requirements for stormwater education and outreach. Facilitated and staffed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the Committee also works together to meet other permit compliance activities where appropriate and needed. Work for the group is funded through annual dues paid by each member and through occasional grants. Member communities are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Connecticut River Stormwater Committee Member Communities

Member Community	Committee Representatives and Departments
Agawam	Tracy DeMaio and Mike Albro, Department of Public Works
Belchertown	Sarah Fortune and Stephanie Sansoucy, Conservation Department
Chicopee	Quinn Lonczak, Department of Public Works
East Longmeadow	Bruce Fenney and Mark Berman, Department of Public Works
Easthampton	Dianne Rossini, Department of Public Works
Granby	Dave Derosiers, Highway Department
Hadley	Scott McCarthy, Department of Public Works, and Carolyn Brennan, Town Administrator
Holyoke	Miira Gates, Department of Public Works
Longmeadow	Tim Keane, Department of Public Works
Ludlow	Jim Goodreau, Department of Public Works
Northampton	Doug McDonald, Department of Public Works
Palmer	Matthew Morse, Department of Public Works
South Hadley	Melissa LaBonte, Department of Public Works
Southampton	Randall Kemp, Highway Department
Southwick	Randall Brown and Jon Goddard, Department of Public Works
Springfield	Vacant
West Springfield	Connor Knightly, Department of Public Works
Westfield	Joe Kietner and Casey Berube, Department of Public Works
Wilbraham	Tonya Basch and Dena Grochmal, Department of Public Works
University of Massachusetts - Amherst	Terri Wolejko, Environmental and Hazardous Materials Management Services Department, and Neils LaCour, Campus Planning Department

2. Water Quality Considerations in the Region

All Connecticut River Stormwater Committee communities are subject to additional MS4 permit requirements in Appendix F based on waters that are tributaries to the Long Island Sound, which has an approved TMDL for nitrogen.¹ Some member communities are also subject to additional MS4 permit requirements based on the following:

- Lakes and ponds with approved TMDLs for phosphorous (additional requirements within Appendix F of the MS4 permit)
- Waterbodies and their tributaries that are impaired for water quality due to phosphorous (additional requirements within Appendix H of the MS4 permit)
- Waterbodies and their tributaries that are impaired for water quality due to bacteria or pathogens (additional requirements within Appendix H of the MS4 permit)
- Waterbodies and their tributaries that are impaired for water quality due to solids (total suspended solids) (additional requirements within Appendix H of the MS4 permit)

It is important to note that the MS4 permit stipulates that certain additional requirements for public education and outreach messaging in the appendixes can be combined where appropriate. Specifically, Appendix H part I and II as well as Appendix F part A.III, A.IV, A.V, B.I, B.II and B.III.

¹ TMDL = identifies the Total Maximum Daily Load of nitrogen that can be discharged, in this case to Long Island Sound, without significantly impairing the health of the Sound.

Annual Report Part II: Self-Assessment

1. Education and Outreach on Bacteria/Pathogens

- √ Annual Message encouraging the proper management of pet waste, including noting any existing ordinances where appropriate
- √ Disseminated educational material to dog owners at time of issuance or renewal of dog license, or other appropriate time
- √ Provided information to owners of septic systems about proper maintenance

See description of messaging in section 2 below.

2. Education and Outreach on Nitrogen and Phosphorous (combined)

- √ Distributed an annual message in the spring (April/May) that encourages the proper use and disposal of grass clippings and encourages the proper use of slow-release fertilizers
- √ Distributed an annual message in the summer (June/July) encouraging the proper management of pet waste, including noting any existing ordinances where appropriate
- Distributed an annual message in the fall (August/September/October) encouraging the proper disposal of leaf litter²

See description of messaging in section 3 below.

Annual Report Part IV: MCM 1 – Public Education and Outreach

The required general education messages to four audiences under the existing MS4 permit were completed with work in Year 5. As such, this section here describes additional work completed in Year 6, primarily under the continuing annual public education and outreach requirements under Appendixes H and F of the MS4 permit.

1. *Think Blue Connecticut River Website*

Message description and distribution method: The *Think Blue Connecticut River* website is at the core of all regional messaging about stormwater. The website at www.thinkblueconnecticutriver.org does the following:

- Covers major areas of messaging about reducing polluted stormwater flows, including lawn and yard care, pet waste management, car care, controlling soil erosion, soaking up the rain, and septic system care
- Addresses the key 4 audiences plus educators
- Serves as the “landing place” for information on nearly all social media messaging

² Notice regarding administrative continuance of the existing MS4 permit did not get posted/distributed in time for PVPC staff to help communities with this particular annual requirement as in the past. In past years and in this current Year 7, we have and will exceed this requirement to compensate. Please see description of activities under section 3 below.

In the past year, PVPC has added to the *Think Blue Connecticut River* website a design library of green infrastructure stormwater management facilities prepared under an EPA-MassDEP Clean Water Act Section 604b grant. The 5 stormwater control facilities featured in the design library were selected by an advisory group of public works officials in the region as most easy to integrate into municipal projects and to maintain for long-term performance. In addition to the “pull from the shelf” technical drawings, the design library includes a corresponding set of performance and cost optimization tables. All 5 designs address the water quality issues in the Connecticut River watershed.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE BMP DESIGN STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE TEMPLATES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. HOW TO GUIDE
3. BMP OPTIMIZATION
4. URBAN BIOSWALE/ TREE PLANTER ONLINE/OFFLINE
5. RIGHT OF WAY BIOSWALE/TREE PLANTER
6. URBAN ARLINGTON INFILTRATION TRENCH
7. RIGHT OF WAY INFILTRATION TRENCH
8. DETENTION POND – GRAVEL WETLAND RETROFIT
9. PRETREATMENT – LOW INTENSITY TRASH AND DEBRIS LOAD
10. PRETREATMENT-LOW TO MEDIUM INTENSITY TRASH AND DEBRIS LOAD
11. PRETREATMENT-MEDIUM TO HIGH INTENSITY TRASH AND DEBRIS LOAD
12. PRETREATMENT-MEDIUM TO HIGH INTENSITY TRASH AND DEBRIS LOAD
13. BIORETENTION SOIL MIX
14. OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE
15. SIZING AND PERFORMANCE TABLE-URBAN BIOSWALE
16. SIZING AND PERFORMANCE TABLE-RIGHT OF WAY BIOSWALE
17. SIZING AND PERFORMANCE TABLE-URBAN INFILTRATION TRENCH
18. SIZING AND PERFORMANCE TABLE-RIGHT OF WAY INFILTRATION TRENCH
19. SIZING AND PERFORMANCE TABLE-GRAVEL WETLAND

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION
WATERSTONE ENGINEERING
CPORTER DESIGNS
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (MASSDEP)

DATE : MARCH 27, 2023 REV. APRIL 25, 2023

THE CREATION OF THIS BMP DESIGN GUIDANCE HAS BEEN FINANCED PARTIALLY WITH FEDERAL FUNDS FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA) TO THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (MASSDEP) UNDER A SECTION 604(B) WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLANNING GRANT TO THE PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION.

Promoting awareness and use of the design library has included the following.

- E-mail message with tool web link to all conservation commissions and planning boards in the region.
- Presentations on the design library in the past year to:
 - The entire membership of the Connecticut River Stormwater Committee
 - Joint Transportation Committee in the Pioneer Valley region that drew record attendance
 - Massachusetts Statewide Municipal Stormwater Coalition

Plus, following up on a series of statewide trainings for the developer/engineering audience held last June, PVPC posted videos of the training sessions, including one on the design library, to the *Think Blue Connecticut River* website. The video session by consulting engineer Rob Roseen on the design library is called, “Retrofitting Existing Properties,” and can be accessed at: <https://thinkblueconnecticutriver.org/developers/post-construction-operation-and-maintenance/>

Targeted audiences: Residents, business/institutional/commercial, developers, and industrial, and municipalities throughout the region

Responsible Department/Parties: PVPC staff and Connecticut River Stormwater Committee members

Measurable goal(s): A total of 3,137 people visited the *Think Blue Connecticut River* website during Year 6 and spent an average of 31 seconds on viewing pages on stormwater best practices. Beyond the web analytics reported below on specific messages, there were the following views of the general audience pages on the *Think Blue Connecticut River* website:

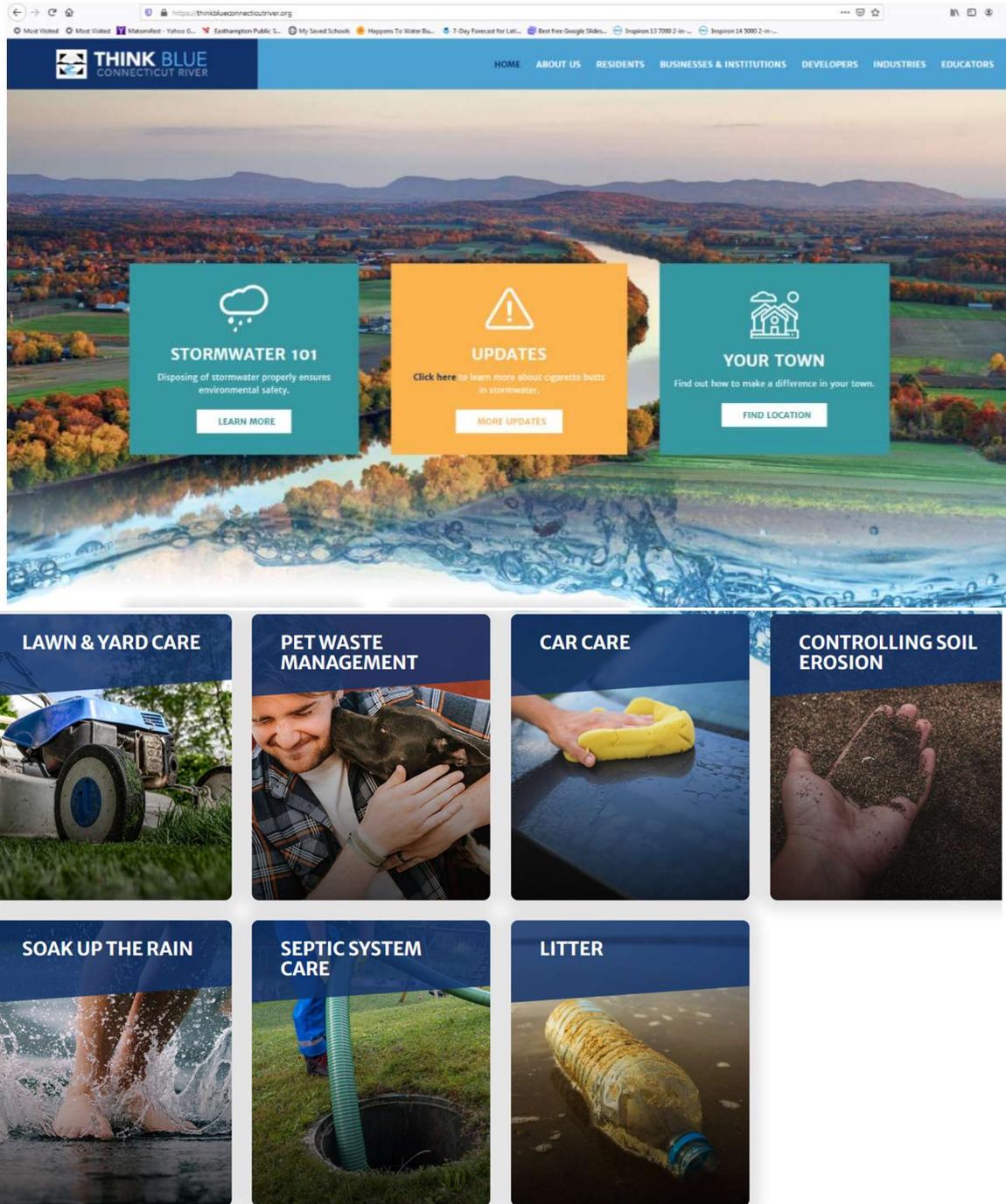
Residents views = 62; Businesses and Institutions views = 58; Developers views = 161; Industries views = 27; and Educators views = 53.

Message dates: July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024

Message completed for: Appendix F requirements Appendix H requirements

Was message different than what proposed in your NOI/SWMP? Yes No

If yes, describe why the change was made: As indicated in previous annual reports, the website was not mentioned in the NOI and SWMP, but it has been central to all messaging in the region, providing additional information and resources on key topics.



Above is an image of the home page for the Think Blue Connecticut River website.

2. Messages related to bacteria and pathogens

Proper management of pet waste

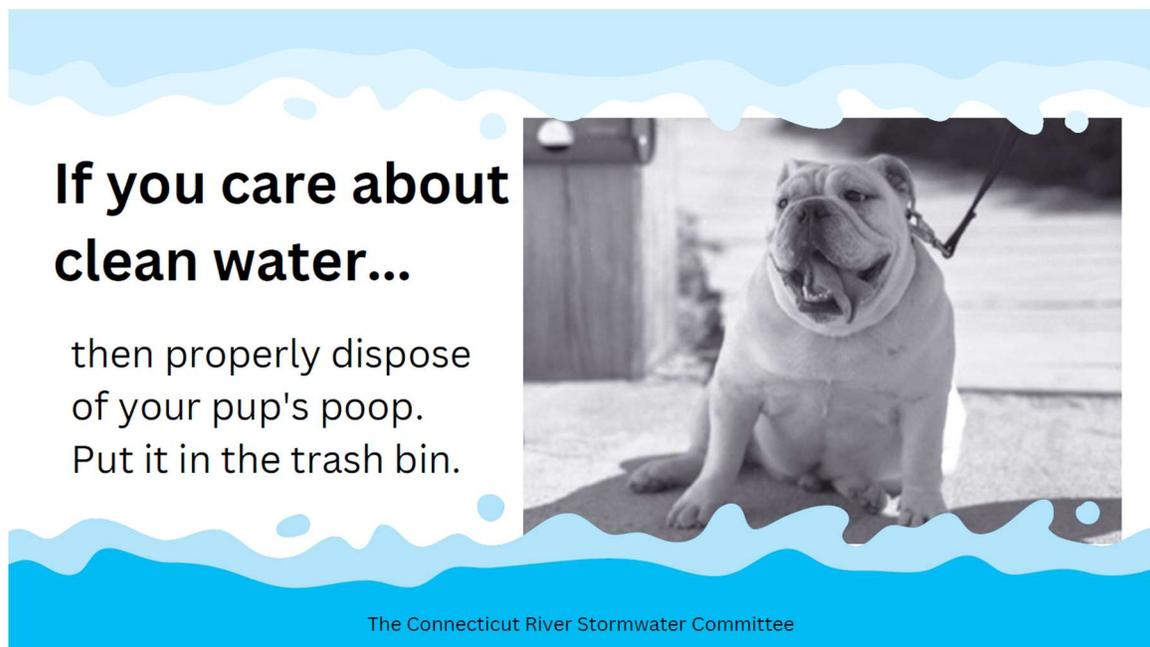
Message description and distribution method: Pet waste messaging in Year 6 occurred at time of licensing and during the summer months and was based on the message: “Think picking up Spike’s poop is gross? Try swimming in it.” In part, the aim of messaging has been to drive people to the pet waste pick up pledge on the *Think Blue Connecticut River* website.

At time of licensing

Messaging included a slide for use by local cable access television stations, and an e-mail message to municipal clerks/dog officers providing materials for use in the licensing process.

The cable access message was simplified based on feedback from cable tv stations on a Year 5 fall leaf litter messages. This message in Year 6 on pet waste also focused specifically on communicating that pet waste *should be put in a trash bin*. Public works officials on the Connecticut River Stormwater Committee had stressed the importance of this point because they are frequently finding bagged pet waste in catch basins.

Materials provided to municipal clerks and licensing officers was based on a survey done in Year 3 about what might be the most effective methods for messaging through their licensing process.



If you care about clean water...

then properly dispose of your pup's poop. Put it in the trash bin.

The Connecticut River Stormwater Committee

The above message was provided to 18 local cable access television stations in the region.



Did you know that there are about 47,000 dogs in the Pioneer Valley, and that together, they produce about 17.5 tons of animal waste a day?

Dog waste does not act as an effective fertilizer. Stormwater runoff can wash dog waste into ponds, lakes, streams and drinking water supplies, causing outbreaks of *E. coli* and other bacteria harmful to both people and wildlife. It can contaminate parks, athletic fields and places where children play.

We all need to pick up and properly dispose of our pet's waste in the trash can. Join all the dog owners in your neighborhood who are showing they care and take the PUP (Pick up Poop) Pledge at:

www.thinkblueconnecticutriver.org/pup-pledge-form/

PVPC provided the above electronic message to be placed on municipal dog licensing web pages in member communities.



JOIN PIONEER VALLEY DOG OWNERS BY TAKING THE PUP (PICK UP POOP) PLEDGE!

Here in the Valley, we have about 47,000 dogs that together produce more than 17.5 tons of waste per day. Dog poop left on the ground — or thrown down a storm drain— washes with the next rainfall straight to our rivers and lakes. The cumulative impacts of improper waste disposal make our local waters unsafe. Show that you care and take the PUP Pledge to help keep our waters BLUE.

TAKE THE PUP (Pick Up Poop) PLEDGE!



SCAN ME

Follow the web link, or scan the QR code to access the pledge.

www.thinkblueconnecticutriver.org/pup-pledge-form

Messaging was slightly modified as shown above to also serve members communities as a postcard for distribution with dog licenses.

Summer

Paid placement social media messages on Facebook and Instagram at the start of the summer swimming season targeted people in Connecticut Stormwater Committee zip codes who had identifiers that match “pets at home” and “dog walking.”



Above is the paid social media message that ran on Facebook and Instagram. The pledge button links to the pledge form on the Think Blue Connecticut River website.

Measurable goal(s):

During time of licensing

The cable access message went to 18 local stations

Summer

Messaging reached 53,437 people in Stormwater Committee communities with 840 individuals clicking on the “Pledge” button to go to the Pick Up Poop pledge on the *Think Blue Connecticut River* website.

Analytics for the *Think Blue Connecticut River* website, indicate that there were another 176 people went to the pet waste landing page on the *Think Blue Connecticut River* website.

Message dates:

The social media message ran on Facebook and Instagram for eight days from June 24 to July 1, 2024.

Message completed for: Appendix F requirements ✓ Appendix H requirements ✓

Was message different than what proposed in your NOI/SWMP? Yes No

The NOI/SWMP indicated pet waste messaging only in summer months as PVPC understood that messaging under the Appendixes could be combined. EPA has indicated that additional messaging to dog owners “at time of licensing” is required. Messaging at time of licensing was added, starting in Year 2, along with additional messaging on pet waste during “stay at home” orders with the pandemic (given the increased visibility of associated problems).

If yes, describe why the change was made: To provide additional messaging.

Proper septic system care

Message description and distribution method: Paid placement social media messages at the start of the summer targeted people in Connecticut Stormwater Committee zip codes who had identifiers that match “septic tank.” Messaging involved running paid placement on Facebook and Instagram from May 31 to June 7, 2024. The add provides a link to a great infographic on septic system maintenance developed by Whatcome County Public Works and Health Department.

Targeted audience: Residents

Responsible department/parties: PVPC staff and Connecticut River Stormwater Committee members

Measurable goal(s): The social media ad on Facebook and Instagram reached 55,586 people whose interest matches “Septic Tank” in Connecticut Stormwater Committee zip codes. There were 1,568 clicks on the ad’s “Learn More” button which links to the *Think Blue Connecticut River* website septic system landing page.

Message dates: The social media ad ran between May 31 to June 7, 2024.

Message completed for: Appendix F requirements Appendix H requirements

Was message different than what proposed in your NOI/SWMP? Yes No

If yes, describe why the change was made: The NOI/SWMP indicated septic system messaging would be done in Year 3 only as MS4 permit language in Appendix H was not entirely clear on the timing of this message. EPA has since indicated that septic system messaging must occur each year. The Connecticut River Stormwater Committee adjusted accordingly, starting in Year 2.



Above is the ad that ran on Facebook and Instagram..

MAINTAINING YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

EVALUATE every 1-3 years & **PUMP** when solids reach 1/3 of tank volume

Keep all vehicles, heavy equipment and farm animals off the drainfield area. The only exception is the lawn mower.

Solids sink to the bottom of the septic tank and need to be pumped when they reach 1/3 of the tank volume.

Why Maintain Your Septic System?

SAVE MONEY
Evaluations help to find small problems that can be fixed before they become big, expensive problems.

FAMILY HEALTH
Sewage contains harmful pathogens that can make people sick. Malfunctioning septic systems can leak raw sewage into your yard and nearby waters, leaving family and neighbors at risk.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT
Keeping your system in good operating condition prevents sewage from entering drinking water sources, and creeks, rivers, and bays used for recreation and shellfish harvest.

Be water efficient and spread out water use.
When too much water enters the tank in a short period of time, the tank doesn't function correctly. Solids don't have enough time to separate and can be flushed into the drainfield.

Avoid pouring fats, grease and food solids down the drain. Only flush natural waste and toilet paper. Limit the amount of household cleaners that you use. Things like paints, anti-freeze, medications, bleach, and other disinfectants do NOT belong in your septic system.

DRAINFIELD
Partially treated water exits the tank and is distributed into the drainfield. The soil in the drainfield removes bacteria and viruses from the liquid waste.

SEPTIC TANK
The septic tank is buried in your yard. This is where solids and liquids separate. Installing risers from the buried tank to the yard surface can make access easier.

Image courtesy: Whatcom County Public Works and Health Department

The “learn more” button on the ad above links to this infographic on septic system maintenance.

Geese and waste management

Message description and distribution method: Reprinted and updated letter from Year 4—signed by Connecticut River Stormwater Committee Chair and Vice Chair—to property owners identified as having goose problems. The letter recommends specific strategies and resources, including signage to discourage people feeding geese and strategies to managing “residential” goose populations. Contact information for USDA Wildlife Services officials in Amherst is offered as a source of technical assistance and operational management. Also included in the letter are two illustrations of landscaping along water's edge to provide idea of modifications that could help to reduce direct stormwater flows and creates barriers for goose movement from water to foraging area. For Year 6, the distribution list included 31 land owners identified by Committee members with likely ongoing goose issues.

Targeted audience: Businesses/institutions/commercial facilities

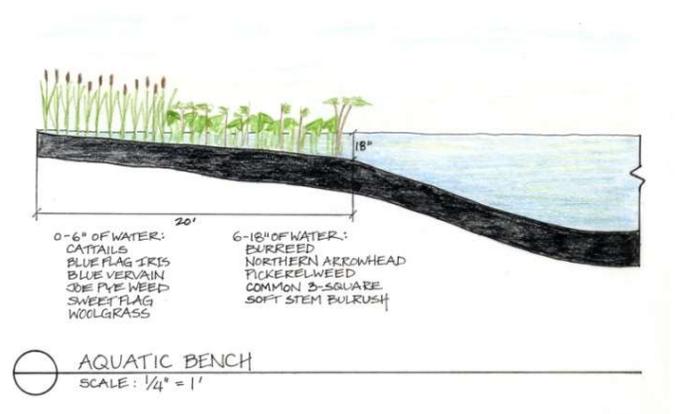
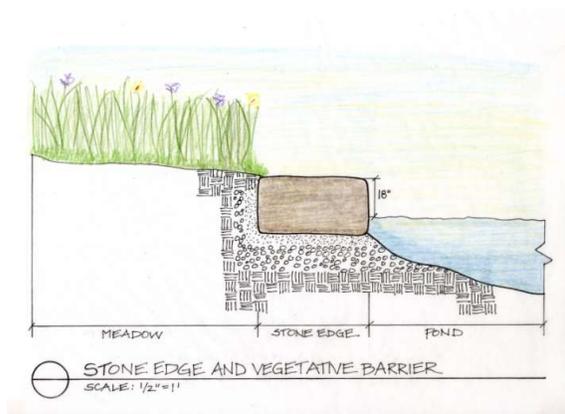
Responsible department/parties: PVPC staff and member municipalities

Measurable goal(s): Letters sent to 31 property owners with likely ongoing goose problems (animals that are “residential” to the area and not migratory)

Message dates: June 20, 2024

Message completed for: Appendix F requirements ✓ Appendix H Requirements ✓

Was message different than what proposed in your NOI/SWMP? Yes No ✓



Illustrations included in letter to landowners showing approaches to landscaping along water's edge to reduce direct stormwater flows and create barriers for goose movement from water to foraging area.

3. Messages related to phosphorus and nitrogen

Disposal of grass clippings and proper use of slow-release fertilizers

There were two messages under this requirement, one targeted to property owners in the region (both residential and commercial) and the other targeted to those professionals offering land care services in the region.

Message #1 description and distribution method: The first message involved a 30-second radio announcement that ran on local radio stations from April 8 through July 6, 2024 with a total of 216 spots aired in the region on WRSI, WHMP, and Lazer 99.3.

The radio message read as follows:

*It's lawn care season!
So remember, what you put on your lawn and garden can wash with the next rainstorm to our rivers and lakes.*

Here's two tips for better lawn care:

- *One: Test your soil! Find out what your lawn needs before spending money on product. UMass Extension offers testing.*
- *Two: Leave grass clippings where they fall! When mowing, this will put nutrients back into your lawn naturally.*

*Healthy lawns, healthy waters.
Brought to you by the Connecticut River Stormwater Committee.
Learn more at Think Blue Connecticut River.org*

Targeted audience: Residential and business/institutions/commercial facilities owners

Responsible department/parties: PVPC staff and Connecticut River Stormwater Committee members

Measurable goal(s): The radio message reached a total estimated audience of 65,000 people per week.³ Analytics for the *Think Blue Connecticut River* website page on lawn care, indicate that there were a total of 48 views on the website landing page

³ This is based on the weekly Cume from Nielsen (the estimated number of people who listened to a radio station over the course of a week). For WLZX (Lazer 99.3 from Springfield), the weekly cume is 34,700; WRSI (93.9 The River) – 22,600; and WHMP – 8,400.

Message dates:

72 spots on each WHMP and WRSI between 4/8 through 4/27/24
48 spots on Lazer between 6/19 through 6/29/24; and
24 spots on Lazer between 7/1 through 7/6/24

Message completed for: Appendix F requirements ✓ Appendix H Requirements ✓

Was message different than what proposed in your NOI/SWMP? Yes No ✓

If yes, describe why the change was made: N/A

Message#2 description and distribution method: The second message involved an updated letter that went to 130 landscaping companies operating in the region. The letter, signed by the Connecticut River Stormwater Committee Chair and Co-chair, continued to emphasize two important strategies:

1. Leave grass clippings where they fall. Of course, you want to leave things nice and neat for your clients, but let them know that grass clippings left on the lawn will decompose, returning valuable nutrients back into the soil. This will save them money by reducing the need for applied fertilizer and promote a healthier lawn. To make best use of this free, natural fertilizer: mow high according to the grass species and use of the turf, do not remove more than 1/3 of the blade per mowing event, and mow when grass is dry.
2. Test your client's soil. A soil test lets you know more specifically what your client's lawn and garden need for nutrients so that you don't waste time and money. UMass Extension provides soil testing services. See: <http://umass.edu/soiltest> If a soil test shows your client's lawn needs nutrients, go for slow-release fertilizers. These products more effectively deliver what plants need and don't wash off as easily as chemical fertilizers. Also, take the time to understand how much and when and where to apply fertilizers.

Targeted audience: Business/institutions/commercial facilities

Responsible department/parties: PVPC staff and Connecticut River Stormwater Committee members

Measurable goal(s): Letter – sent to 130 landscaping companies in the region

Message dates: Letter - sent June 6, 2024

Message completed for: Appendix F requirements ✓ Appendix H Requirements ✓

Was message different than what proposed in your NOI/SWMP? Yes No ✓

If yes, describe why the change was made: N/A

Proper management of pet waste

Summer messaging was combined with annual messaging requirements for bacteria and pathogens. See description in section 2 above.

Proper disposal of leaf litter

As noted above, the notice regarding administrative continuance of the existing MS4 permit did not get posted/distributed in time for PVPC staff to help communities with this particular annual requirement in Year 6. In past years and in this current Year 7, PVPC and members have and will exceed this requirement to compensate. Following are the related messaging activities in Year 5 and the planned messaging activities for Year 7.

For Year 5, PVPC and members communities went above and beyond messaging requirements for both the residential and commercial audiences.

For the residential audience in Year 5, PVPC worked with the *Be a Leaf Hero* social media posts developed by the Cape Cod Commission, subsequently customized for the Connecticut River Stormwater Committee. Messaging to the residential audience included the following:

- Slides displayed by local cable access television stations
- A regionally posted social media message, and
- A flyer for posting on member webpages

All three messaging elements included a “call to action,” providing a link to a series of tips and more in-depth content on the *Think Blue Connecticut River* website. The flyer included a link to locations for proper disposal of leaves and yard waste in each community. See website page at: <https://thinkblueconnecticutriver.org/be-a-leaf-hero/>. The content seeks to promote better practices with leaf litter and build understanding about potential contamination of stormwater with leaf litter.

BE A LEAF HERO

HELP KEEP OUR WATERWAYS CLEAN

*From the Connecticut River Stormwater Committee:
Towns of Agawam, Belchertown, East Longmeadow,
Granby, Hadley, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Palmer,
South Hadley, Southwick, Southampton,
West Springfield, and Wilbraham; Cities of Chicopee,
Easthampton, Holyoke, Northampton, Springfield,
and Westfield; University of Massachusetts—
Amherst; and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.*



COURTESY, CTRF-COO STORMWATER MANAGERS GROUP

With the next rainfall,
leaves washing from our
driveways and streets into
storm drains will spike our rivers
and streams with nutrients.

Be a leaf hero and prevent flows
that can harm local waters.

Check out these tips at the following website
or at the QR code below:

<https://thinkblueconnecticutriver.org/be-a-leaf-hero/>



COURTESY, CTRF-COO STORMWATER MANAGERS GROUP

Above are the two slides provided to cable access television stations in the region.

CLEAN WATER
BEGINS WITH YOU



KEEP FALLEN LEAVES OUT OF STREETS

Leaves raked or blown into streets will leach nutrients into stormwater runoff and contribute to pollution in our local waterways. Leaf litter can also plug storm drains and increase flooding issues.

Better options:

- Mulch leaves in place with your lawnmower to put valuable nutrients back into the soil
- Gather leaves and other "yard waste" into a compost pile and let overwinter and decompose for use as fertilizer next growing season
- Dispose of your leaves locally. Find out where at: :
<https://thinkblueconnecticutriver.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Muni-disposal-resources-Leaves-updated-10-16-22.pdf>



BE A LEAF HERO

What is Stormwater Pollution?

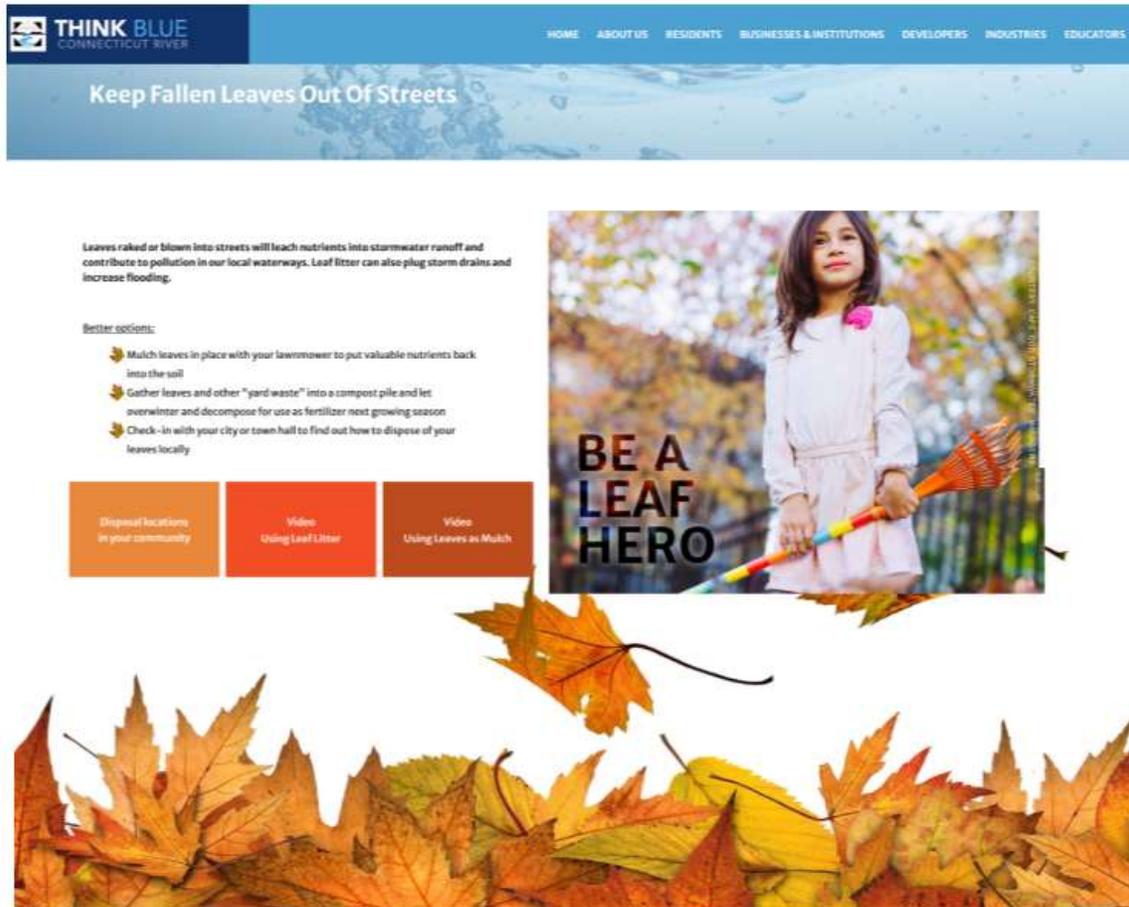
It's the toxic mix of bacteria, chemicals, metals, nutrients and other contaminants that washes over pavement and other impervious surfaces and flows down storm drains to our waterways.

For more tips and information visit:

www.thinkblueconnecticutriver.org/be-a-leaf-hero

ADAPTED COURTESY CAPE COD STORMWATER MANAGERS GROUP

This flyer, which includes a link to a list of locations for proper disposal of leaves, was provided for members to post on municipal websites.



Above is the Think Blue Connecticut River website landing page on leaf litter, where social media clicks take the audience to additional information, including a list of disposal locations in Stormwater Committee communities and two instructional videos.

For the business and commercial audience in Year 5, PVPC issued a letter to reach 145 landscaping and landcare companies in the region with best practices messaging on disposal of leaf litter. Signed by the Committee Chair and Co-chair, the letter promoted several key best practices:

- Keep leaves off of driveways and roadways where they can easily wash into storm drains and contribute to higher nutrient flows during the fall season.
- Use a mulching mower. By mulching the leaves into turf areas, you avoid having to rake/blow and bag and you offer a way to manage autumn leaves while providing clients with free fertilizer. Mulched leaves recycle nutrients and reduce the overall need for applied fertilizer, which can help to reduce nutrient loading for local rivers, streams, and lakes.
- Alternatively, if your client has an existing compost pile, you can recommend that they consider allowing you to add leaves to the pile. Leaves provide a critically important element (carbon) to the composting process, making for a more soil enriching product to be used in the next growing season. Be sure compost piles are located away from streams, lakes, or storm drains as these decomposing materials and nutrients could easily reach these water resources.



CONNECTICUT RIVER

Stormwater Committee

October 17, 2022

Hello professional landscaper,

Town of Agawam
Town of Belchertown
City of Chicopee
Town of East Longmeadow
City of Easthampton
Town of Granby
Town of Hadley
City of Holyoke
Town of Longmeadow
Town of Ludlow
City of Northampton
Town of Palmer
Town of South Hadley
Town of Southampton
Town of Southwick
City of Springfield
Town of West Springfield
City of Westfield
Town of Wilbraham
University of
Massachusetts
Pioneer Valley
Planning Commission

As you may know, many communities here in the Pioneer Valley are subject now to more stringent federal stormwater permit requirements. This permit requires communities to reduce contaminated storm flows to local rivers, streams, and lakes.

Why should you care as a professional landscaper?

Many lawn care practices can contribute to storm flows that are especially high in nutrients. Improper use and disposal of fertilizers, leaves, and grass clippings, can put nitrogen and phosphorous into these storm flows that enter local waters.

Under the Clean Water Act, we have made important strides toward fishable and swimmable waters, but we still have some distance to go. Do your part and learn more about best land care practices. To be sure, these are shifts in practice that will involve your client as well. To that end, our group has posted information for property owners on better management practices. See: www.thinkblueconnecticutriver.org/be-a-leaf-hero/ For your work this fall, you might start by considering the following:

- Keep leaves off of driveways and roadways where they can easily wash into storm drains and contribute to higher nutrient flows during the fall season.
- Use a mulching mower. By mulching the leaves into the lawn, you avoid having to rake/blow and bag and you offer a way to manage autumn leaves while providing your client with free fertilizer. Mulched leaves put nutrients back into the ground and reduce the overall need for more soluble fertilizer products, which present greater problems for our local waterways.
- Alternatively, if your client has an existing compost pile, you can recommend that they consider allowing you to add leaves to the pile. Leaves provide a critically important element (carbon) to the composting process, making for a more soil enriching product to be used in the next growing season. Be sure compost piles are located away from streams, lakes, or storm drains as these decomposing materials and nutrients could easily leach to these water resources.

Thank you for considering these better land care practices for leaf litter. We will continue to reach out to you as part of our stormwater permit compliance work.

Our facilitator, Patty Gambarini at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, would be happy to hear from you about your thoughts on ways to improve leaf litter practice in the region. What are your needs around this? Please contact her at: pgambarini@pvpc.org.

Sincerely,



Joseph Kietner, Committee Chairman
Stormwater Coordinator, City of Westfield



Randal Brown, Committee Vice Chair
Public Works Director, Town of Southwick

Above is the letter sent to 145 landscaping companies in the region.

For Year 7, PVPC and its members will update and repeat all messaging on proper disposal of leaf litter to both audiences as provided in Year 5. Given the election season this fall, however, there will be no related social media messaging. In past election seasons, there has been heightened security around social media and the work to get through barriers to post has been extremely time consuming. With the U.S. presidential election this fall, it is anticipated that these issues will only be compounded.