



2025 Final Report

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2025 Highlights

Annual Report 2025 Metrics Highlight

In 2025, the Protect Wisconsin Waterways (Rock River Stormwater Group) focused on organic and partner-driven digital reach and had an **in-person presence at 37 events** (including the clean-ups). Tabling and other activities at in-person events **engaged 2,014+ individuals**. The Protect Wisconsin Waterways annual cleanup held in September included **213 volunteers** across **10 locations**. Combined with Protect Wisconsin Waterways’ digital outreach efforts (website, email, social media), the RRSB + community partner outreach resulted in over **301,000 digital impressions** (excluding the statewide WI Stormwater Week efforts).

The 2026 outreach efforts include continuing an active presence at in-person events to recruit additional Storm Drain Protectors (adopt-a-storm drain program). RRSB also intends to continue offering mini-grants while expanding support and collaboration with key partners (e.g., Rock River Coalition, SaltWise, Statewide Stormwater Consortium) to implement additional stormwater-related projects and outreach in RRSB member communities.

Total Digital Outreach Summary Statistics – Year Over Year

Combined Digital Outreach	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Total Impressions	301,000+	297,000+	289,000+	277,900+	228,733+

**Note: Combined impressions include RRSB metrics + data provided by community partners related to social media posts, email messages, etc. (e.g., chambers of commerce, partner alliances, and others)*

Website & Storm Drain Protector Summary Statistics – Year Over Year

Website Metrics	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Total Views (RRSB site)	13,354	33,776	17,996	8,412	8,010
Total Views (Stormwater Week site)	5,432	5,735	7,139	n/a	n/a
Storm Drain Protector Program	220	295	125	218	241

**Note: 2023 and 2024 included paid ads that drove additional website visits.*

Event Summary Statistics – Year Over Year

Event Metrics	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021*
Total Events	37	38	37	32	20
Total Event Reach/Impressions	2,014+	1,529+	1,441+	1,697+	2,360+



Clean-Up Summary Statistics – Year Over Year

Clean-Up Metrics	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020*	2019	2018
Total Volunteers	213	295	257	201	187	-	196	130
Total Trash Collected	161	194	166+ bags + other items	80+ bags + other items	200+ bags + other items	-	151+ bags + other items	37+ bags + other items

**Note: The 2020 clean-up was canceled due to COVID. Other items include tires, large pieces of metal, or other debris that is too large or heavy to fit inside a trash bag.*

Facebook Summary Statistics – Year Over Year

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Posts	243	267	235	104	119
Followers	1,392	1,139	1,083	1,007	897
Page Reach (# unique accounts reached)	25,099	28,122	26,535	3,201	n/a
Facebook Page Visits (# of times profile page visited)	3,364	4,200	2,258	652	n/a
Content Views (# of times played or displayed)	51,022	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Content Viewers (# of unique accounts who viewed once+)	13,292	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Interaction Rate	2.16%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

**Note: FB added new “viewer” metrics for content published after July 31, 2025. RivalIQ.com reported a benchmark average across industries of a 0.046% FB engagement rate compared to our 2.16% interaction rate.*

Instagram Summary Statistics – Year Over Year

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Posts	292	213	189	129	89
Followers	1,461	1,201	1,167	1,078	1,019
Instagram Reach (# unique accounts reached)	24,288	8,335	4,806	1,890	n/a
Instagram Profile Visits (# of times profile page visited)	1,179	704	1,136	1,064	n/a
Instagram Views (# of times played or displayed)	62,149	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Interaction Rate	2.97%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

**Note: RivalIQ.com reported a benchmark average across industries of a 0.36% IG engagement rate compared to our 2.97% interaction rate.*



2025 Year-in-Review

Introduction

The following document provides an overview of the Rock River Stormwater Group's (RRSG) public education and outreach activities (branded as Protect Wisconsin Waterways) as part of regional stormwater public education and outreach during the 2025 calendar year.

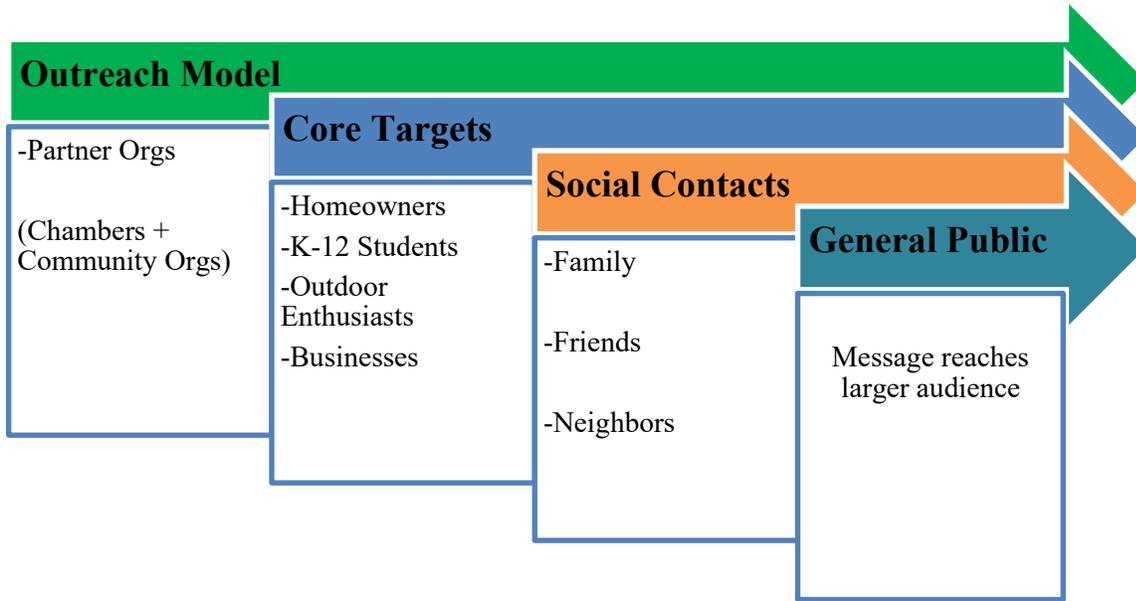
The Protect Wisconsin Waterways regional stormwater public education efforts had a presence at **27 in-person events** in 2025 (not including clean ups). Community-based events included farmers' markets, festivals near downtown areas or along waterways, and other events organized by community partners. Protect Wisconsin Waterways also sponsored nine waterway clean-up events on September 20th, 2025 (**10 total waterway clean-ups**) that engaged **213 volunteers**. Each event contributed to active education efforts for the general public. We also funded **one mini-grant program** in Waupun that resulted in the installation of a permanent sculpture "Eddies and Etchings." The RRSG also contributed to the strategic planning and implementation of the **2025 statewide Wisconsin Stormwater Week**. This includes funding and support for the Stormwater Week website and securing the Governor's Proclamation.

On a digital front, RRSG maintained partnership efforts through various community-based organizations. Stormwater-focused communications shared through these organizations, plus Protect Wisconsin Waterways' social media efforts, resulted in over **301,000+ digital impressions**. In combination, the efforts helped the Protect Wisconsin Waterways brand increase the reach of public education efforts compared to the 2024 efforts.



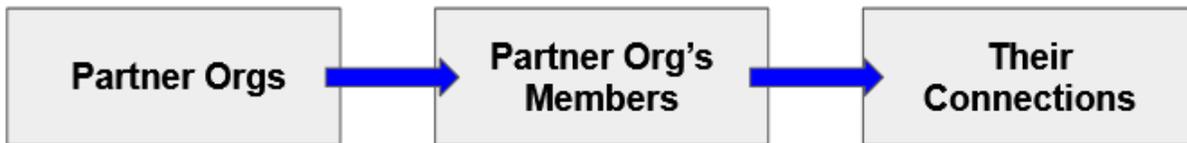
Target Audiences & Outreach Communication Model

Protect Wisconsin Waterways’ outreach and communication plan in 2025 focused on leveraging partnerships with community-based organizations to help engage our core targets, their social contacts, and, by extension, the general public.



Initiative #1: Digital Brand Awareness & Community Partnerships

Community Partners: Expanding on existing brand awareness through establishing and maintaining community partnerships is a crucial strategy for Protect Wisconsin Waterways to enhance its outreach and impact. By building strong relationships with local organizations, environmental groups, schools, and businesses, PWW can strengthen its presence within communities across Wisconsin. These partnerships help raise awareness about the importance of preserving water resources and foster collaborative efforts in environmental education, advocacy, and clean-up initiatives. Maintaining these partnerships will ensure that PWW remains a trusted and visible leader in waterway protection, amplifying its message and mobilizing more individuals to take action to safeguard Wisconsin's precious waterways for future generations.



In addition to maintaining ongoing sponsorships/partnerships with WI SaltWise and the Rock River Coalition, RRSg digital outreach efforts occurred via chambers, community organizations, and other local groups. Their outreach through social media is a crucial aspect of this advocacy, enabling them to reach a broader and more diverse audience. Using platforms like Facebook and Instagram, RRSg shares educational content, updates on local water quality issues, and details of upcoming events or clean-up initiatives. Social media also facilitates real-time communication, allowing RRSg to engage directly with community members, answer questions, and encourage participation in waterway protection efforts. Moreover, it helps create a sense of community, rallying support from individuals who might not otherwise have been involved. By maintaining an active and engaging presence online, RRSg amplifies its impact and fosters a network of informed citizens who are committed to protecting and preserving local water resources.





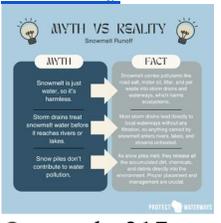
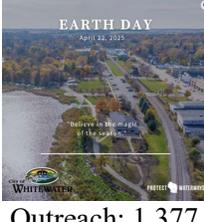
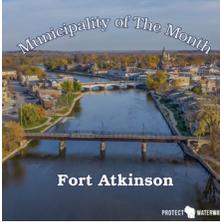
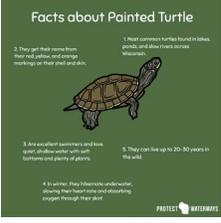
Social Media: In 2025, we continued our Protect Wisconsin Waterways social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram. Content highlighted MS4-related topics, Myth/Facts, “Featured Municipality of the Month” to showcase the waterways within the cities/townships in the Rock River watershed, and other content series. Throughout 2025, the Facebook and Instagram pages gained a total of 513 new followers. Social media efforts on the Protect Wisconsin Waterways’ Facebook and Instagram pages included over **113,171 impressions** across a total of **535 posts**.

Monthly Content Calendar

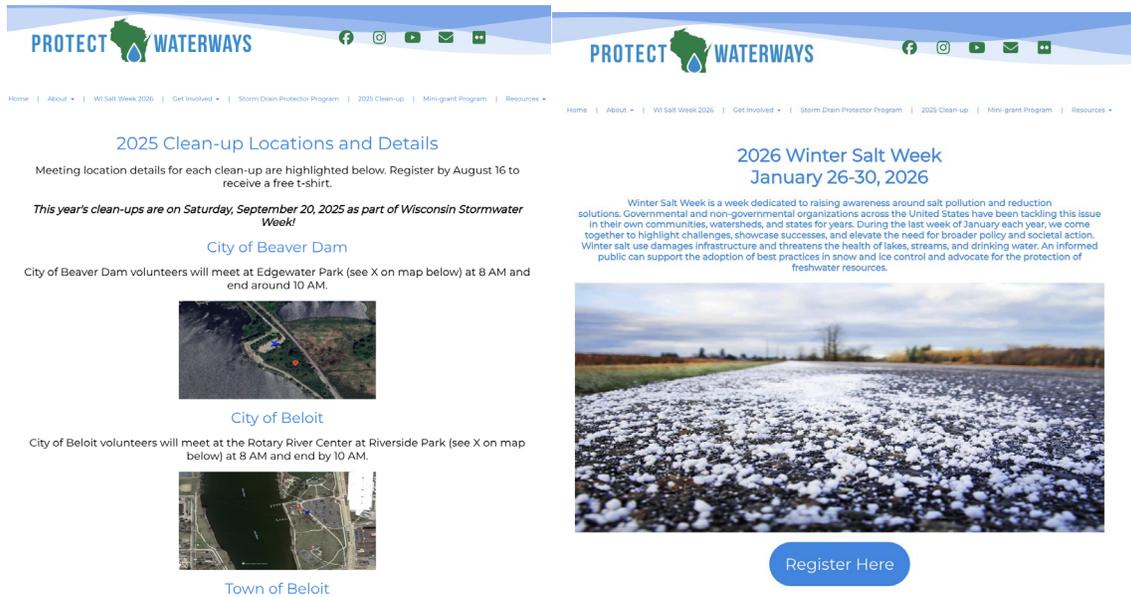
Month	Theme	Municipality
January	Pollution Prevention Education	Town of Beloit
February	Snow Melt Runoff	Whitewater
March	Construction Site and Post-Construction Stormwater Management	Jefferson
April	Green Infrastructure & Low Impact Development	Beaver Dam
May	Fertilizer Pesticide Application	Monroe
June	Residential Infiltration	City of Beloit
July	Yard and pet waste management	Fort Atkinson
August	Household and Hazardous Waste Disposal	Townships of Janesville, Rock, Turtle, Harmony
September	Vehicle Washing	Janesville
October	Stream and Shoreline Management	Watertown
November	Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination	Waupun
December	Salt Use	Milton

Example social media posts related to RRSB activities.

Top post from every month in 2025

<p>January</p>  <p>Outreach: 366 accounts</p>	<p>February</p>  <p>Outreach: 317 accounts</p>	<p>March</p>  <p>Outreach: 859 accounts</p>
<p>April</p>  <p>Outreach: 1,377 accounts</p>	<p>May</p>  <p>Outreach: 269 accounts</p>	<p>June</p>  <p>Outreach: 808 accounts</p>
<p>July</p>  <p>Outreach: 2,690 accounts</p>	<p>August</p>  <p>Outreach: 374 accounts</p>	<p>September</p>  <p>Outreach: 2,225 accounts</p>
<p>October</p>  <p>Outreach: 544 accounts</p>	<p>November</p>  <p>Outreach: 1,751 accounts</p>	<p>December</p>  <p>Outreach: 2,923 accounts</p>

Website: Overall, the website reached 13,354. While down from the previous year, we didn't pay for digital ads in 2025 that had led to an increase in 2024.



2025 Clean-up Locations and Details

Meeting location details for each clean-up are highlighted below. Register by August 16 to receive a free t-shirt.

This year's clean-ups are on Saturday, September 20, 2025 as part of Wisconsin Stormwater Week!

City of Beaver Dam

City of Beaver Dam volunteers will meet at Edgewater Park (see X on map below) at 8 AM and end around 10 AM.



City of Beloit

City of Beloit volunteers will meet at the Rotary River Center at Riverside Park (see X on map below) at 8 AM and end by 10 AM.



Town of Beloit

2026 Winter Salt Week
January 26-30, 2026

Winter Salt Week is a week dedicated to raising awareness around salt pollution and reduction solutions. Governmental and non-governmental organizations across the United States have been tackling this issue in their own communities, watersheds, and states for years. During the last week of January each year, we come together to highlight challenges, showcase successes, and elevate the need for broader policy and societal action. Winter salt use damages infrastructure and threatens the health of lakes, streams, and drinking water. An informed public can support the adoption of best practices in snow and ice control and advocate for the protection of freshwater resources.



[Register Here](#)

Initiative #2: Outreach & Engagement via Community Events

Storm Drain Protector Program:

The Storm Drain Protector Program was initially launched in 2019 to engage homeowners with storm drains adjacent to their property. The program aims to raise awareness among municipal residents of the nature of stormwater and what they should look for to preserve water quality. We ask homeowners to sign up to become “storm drain protectors” and pledge to keep their storm drains clear of leaves, grass clippings, and other debris. The 2025 efforts included online sign-ups at our tabling events and social media content.

2025 Storm Drain Protector Sign-ups: 201 sign ups

Community Events:

Volunteers represented the Protect Wisconsin Waterways brand at **37 total community events** (including the 10 clean-ups). Tabling included distributing brochures and information about different MS4-related topics, highlighting the storm drain protector program and clean-ups, and activities like the Enviroscene and Stormwater Around Your Home demonstrations. In combination, the brand ambassador volunteers **engaged 2,014+ individuals** and the 213 volunteers at the clean-ups across the 2025 events as outlined in the table.

Annual Waterway Clean-Up: RRSB municipalities hosted **ten waterway clean-up events** in parks across the area on Saturday, September 20, 2025, during Wisconsin Stormwater Week. We had **213 volunteers** participate in the 2025 clean-up events.



Community Engagement Event Reports

Event	City	Date	# of People Engaged
Story Time with Splash – Beaver Dam Library	Beaver Dam	4/21/25	12
Beaver Dam Earth Day Event Clean-up	Beaver Dam	4/26/25	50
Janesville Sustainability Fair (Library)	Janesville	4/26/25	81
Jefferson Earth Day Festival	Jefferson	4/26/25	70
Rotary Botanical Garden Earth Day Event	Janesville	4/27/25	60
Earth Day Celebration	Beloit	4/26/25	18
Invitation to Wonder the Waubesa Wetlands	Watertown	4/30/25	13
Story Time with Splash	Whitewater	5/9/25	15
Milton Community Days	Milton	5/9/25	55
Midtown Market	Waupun	6/14/25	10
Janesville Farmers Market	Janesville	6/7/25	35
Beloit Farmers Market	Beloit	6/21/25	30
Story Time with Splash - UWW Children’s Center	Whitewater	6/27/25	20
Watertown Kids Festival	Watertown	7/13/25	25
Beloit Farmers Market	Beloit	7/19/25	12
Janesville Farmers Market	Janesville	8/16/25	105
Whitewater Farmers Market	Whitewater	9/9/25	15
Clean-ups (see table below)	10 locations	9/20/25	213
Milton Days	Milton	10/10/25	20
Whitewater Farmers Market	Whitewater	10/14/25	200+
Downtown Beloit Halloween Parade and Party	Beloit	10/25/25	200+

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Watertown Boo Bash	Watertown	10/25/25	500+
Trunk or Treat	Whitewater	10/30/25	100+
Tabling UC at UW-Whitewater	Whitewater	11/4/25	100+
UWW Bookstore Tabling	Whitewater	11/8/25	20
Story Time with Splash - UWW Children's Center	Whitewater	11/18/25	12
Story Time with Splash - UWW Children's Center	Whitewater	11/20/25	12
Story Time with Splash - UWW Children's Center	Whitewater	11/21/25	11
TOTAL			2,014+



2025 Waterway Clean-Ups

City	Time	Location	Volunteers	Trash Bags
Milton	8 am - 10 am	Schiller Park	9	13
Waupun	8 am - 10 am	Shaler Park	49	20
Beaver Dam	8 am - 10 am	Edgewater Park	9	7
Watertown	9 am - 11 am	Riverside Park	25	15
Fort Atkinson	9 am - 12 pm	Bicentennial Park	20	8
Janesville	10 am - 12 pm	Wilson Elementary Lot	27	25
Whitewater	8 am - 10 am	Cravath Lakefront	33	25
Town of Beloit	10 am - 12 pm	Preservation Park	11	22
City of Beloit	8 am - 10 am	Rotary River Center	25	22
City of Monroe	10 - 12 pm	Twinning Park	5	4
TOTAL			213 volunteers	161 trash bags

Initiative #3: RRSB Mini-Grant Program

Mini-Grant 2025:

In 2022, Protect Wisconsin Waterways launched the Mini-Grant program to engage community organizations and help spread awareness of protecting and keeping our local waterways clean. The program encourages community organizations and other eligible groups to apply for project funding of up to \$5,000 related to stormwater public education efforts.

In addition to promoting on the Protect Wisconsin Waterways website and social media, outreach was conducted with community organizations across RRSB communities. In 2025, we funded one new applicant (Create Waupun). The mini grant helped pay for the permanent installation of the “Eddies & Etchings” sculpture placed in Harris Mill Park. The sculpture was created by Minnesota-based sculpture artists James and Ryan Pedersen and represents the curves of the Rock River as it flows through Waupun. A ribbon cutting was held immediately following the Waupun cleanup event held September 20, 2025.

“Eddies and Etchings” 2025



Initiative #4: Municipal Worker & Other Trainings

The RRSg provides all members access to an online library of training resources (i.e., videos and other materials) on different stormwater topics. Each January, we encourage members to provide DPW and other employees with time to complete relevant training. Our continued partnership and sponsorship of Salt Wise also offer additional training opportunities and workshops specific to salt use, equipment calibration, and related topics. We also promoted SaltWise workshops to the business community through our Chamber of Commerce connections. Municipal members also send employees to other training.

Municipal training resources include coverage of the following topics.

- Spill Prevention Control Countermeasure (SPCC)
- Stormwater MS4 ‘Rain Check’
- Stormwater Construction ‘Ground Control’
- Stormwater ‘Storm Watch’ Municipal
- IDDE ‘A Grate Concern’ Employee Training

RRSG hosted municipal staff training programs on erosion control run by Water Resources & Associates in Watertown (9/9/25 – 12 attendees) and Janesville (9/16/25).

The Rock River Coalition conducted volunteer stream monitoring training and other events not reported earlier.

Monitoring Sites

County	Baseline Monitoring Sites	Total Volunteers	Total Nutrient Testing Sites	Total Sites with Thermistors
Dodge County	15	31	4	6
Fond du Lac County	2	4	0	2
Jefferson County	19	29	2	4
Rock County	11	18	4	0
Walworth County	12	8	10	5
Total	60	90	20	17

Monitoring Sites Within 10 Miles of RRSg Member Municipalities

Municipality	Number of Sites	Waterbodies Monitored
Beaver Dam	5	Beaver Dam River, Beaver Creek, Mill Creek, Unnamed Tributary to Lake Sinissippi (WBIC 5031431)
Beloit	2	Spring Brook, Turtle Creek
Fort Atkinson	4	Allen Creek, Bark River, Unnamed Trib to Rock River @ CTH J, Unnamed (809000) north of Rockdale Rd
Janesville	3	Blackhawk Creek, Spring Brook
Jefferson	5	Rock Creek, Johnson Creek
Milton	2	Otter Creek, Saunders Creek
Watertown	3	Silver Creek, Riverside Park Creek
Waupun	2	South and West Branches of the Rock River
Whitewater	4	Bark River, Whitewater Creek, Spring Brook Creek, Bluff Creek



Waupun Open House: Held on October 6th, 2025. Over 100 community and municipal members attended.

Beloit Rain Barrel Workshops: Two workshops were held on May 10th at the City of Beloit Utilities and Engineering Facility. The Rock River Coalition staff led 45-minute water conservation and stormwater management presentations, followed by rain barrel assembly demonstrations. 54 participants attended, with 27 rain barrels distributed.

Waupun Rain Barrel Workshop: Held on April 12, 2025, at The Waupun Community Center, the workshop included similar presentations and hands-on assembly sessions with 38 participants and 23 rain barrels.

Stream Monitoring Training: Held in multiple locations in Rock County. There were 12 participants, 10 of which were new.

Watertown Riverside Park Native Planting Report: Saturday, Sept. 20, a group of 26 volunteers helped improve Watertown's Riverside Park Creek by planting native plugs at several sites along the creek. This was Phase II of the Creekside Restoration Planting. RRC Staff and 2-3 volunteers continued to install plants on Sept. 21, 23, 27, 29, 30, and Oct. 1. More than 2,000 native plants were installed on the banks of Riverside Park Creek to help reduce runoff into the creek, prevent soil erosion and flooding.

Initiative #5: Library Package

Protect Wisconsin Waterways continued a *Splash into Learning Library Package* for the municipality libraries. The program included an informative display and a donation of 11 books to the libraries for residents to check out, bookmarks featuring a community waterway photo, children’s activities, and the opportunity to make “raindrop” pledges to keep our waterways clean. Libraries also had the opportunity to schedule an appearance by our Splash mascot for a storytime! The program is designed to get kids excited about reading, learn more about stormwater pollution, and discover things they can do around their homes to make a positive impact on Wisconsin’s waterways. List of books provided to each library included:

- Landscaping with Native Plants of Wisconsin
- We are Water Protectors
- The Great Big Water Cycle Adventure
- All the Way To the Ocean
- Hello from Renn Lake
- Saving Tally
- Let’s Build a Rain Garden
- Me and Marvin Gardens
- Two Little Raindrops
- Zoey and Sassafras Merhorses and Bubbles
- Plasticus Maritimus and Invasive Species





2025 Activities & RRSB's Public Education & Outreach Goals

The following section outlines the relationship between RRSB's specific activities and accomplishments to the group's public education and outreach goals.

Goal 1 - Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination: Promote detection and elimination of illicit discharges and water quality impacts associated with such discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems.

1. Illicit Discharge was the November monthly theme for social media and the e-newsletter, the Runoff Rundown. Posts were made identifying illicit discharge and what to do if they see it happening.
2. A "Report a Violation" tab was added to the website, allowing users to report illicit discharge violations in 2017. No "violations" were reported via the website in 2025.

Goal 2 - Household Hazardous Waste Disposal/Pet Waste/Management/Vehicle Washing: Inform and educate the public about the proper management of materials that may cause stormwater pollution from sources including automobiles, pet waste, household hazardous waste and household practices.

1. The social media monthly theme in May, June, July, August, and September aligns with the discussion of proper management for automobiles, pet waste, and household practices. Most other monthly themes also included information on how community members could improve their household practices.
2. Our informational brochures for the Storm Drain Protector Program included information on how to protect the waterways from one's home. We have continued our Be Wise campaigns surrounding this content.
3. Clean-up events were held on September 20th, 2025 (ten locations).

Goal 3 - Yard Waste Management/Pesticide and Fertilizer Application: Promote beneficial onsite reuse of leaves and grass clippings and proper use of lawn and garden fertilizers and pesticides.

1. Our monthly themes in May and July were fertilizer/pesticide application and pet/yard waste such as lawn clippings, waste disposal, and leaves, respectively.
2. "Lawn Wise" and "Yard Wise" digital content were created to share key tips and best practices that help homeowners "Be Wise" and Protect Wisconsin Waterways.
3. A new "Lawn Wise" demonstration model and educational materials were created in collaboration with the Rock River Coalition.

Goal 4 - Stream and Shoreline Management: Promote the management of streambanks and shorelines by riparian landowners to minimize erosion and restore and enhance the ecological value of waterways.



1. Our monthly theme in October was stream and shoreline management where we discussed the best practices to benefit and help stream and shorelines.

Goal 5 - Residential Infiltration: Promote infiltration of residential stormwater runoff from rooftop downspouts, driveways, and sidewalks.

1. The monthly theme in June promoted better systems to allow more infiltration of residential stormwater.
2. The “Yard Wise” or “Lawn Wise” graphics were created to expand on this concept, during the fall months when leaves can be prevalent.
3. A new “Lawn Wise” demonstration model and educational materials were created in collaboration with the Rock River Coalition.

Goal 6 - Construction Sites and Post-Construction Storm Water Management: Inform and educate those responsible for the design, installation, and maintenance of construction site erosion control practices and stormwater management facilities on how to design, install and maintain the practices.

1. Our monthly theme for March was Construction Sites and Post Construction Storm Water Management.
2. By working with municipal representatives, we gathered information about different erosion control practices.

Goal 7 - Pollution Prevention: Identify businesses and activities that may pose a stormwater contamination concern, and educate those specific audiences on methods of stormwater pollution prevention.

1. Pollution Preventions was our theme for January.
2. Educational efforts focused on community members and homeowners discussing various possible pollutants that they can help prevent from entering the waterways.
3. RRSB members had municipal/DPW employees complete online training via our Excal video library, Salt Wise, and Fortin virtual training.

Goal 8 - Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development: Promote environmentally sensitive land development designs by developers and designers, including green infrastructure and low-impact development.

1. Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development was April’s monthly theme.
2. By promoting things like rain gardens and educating people on erosion control, we promoted environmentally sensitive land development.
3. Rain barrel workshops were held in collaboration with the Rock River Coalition.