

Rain Barrels as a Stepping Stone to Better Stormwater Management at Home



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EPA National Conference for Nonpoint Source and Stormwater Outreach

Presentation Overview



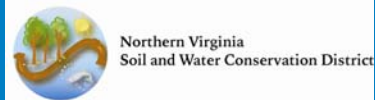
- How did the program start?
- Program organization
- Results
- Effectiveness

Initiation of Program



- Clean Virginia Waterways received grant funding to run “Train the Trainer” rain barrel workshops in Virginia.
- Several representatives from local jurisdictions and non-profits took the training, and discussed collaborating on a program.
- Group ordered 1 truckload of barrels (300) for pilot program in 2007.

Partners



Participating Localities



Development of Program



- First round of workshops were very successful, with all workshops selling out and 200+ people on a waitlist.
- Partners decided to expand program, and use some funds from rain barrel sales to hire part-time staffer to help coordinate the program.



Program Costs



- We received one load of barrels from pickle company for ~\$5/barrel, but were not able to get additional loads from them.
- We found other barrel suppliers at a cost of approximately \$20-30/barrel (truckload of 300 delivered).
- Parts to convert to rain barrels run about \$10/barrel.
- Additional one-time cost for drills, gloves, safety glasses, etc.
- Budget for 900 barrels ~\$42K.

Program Considerations



- Rain barrel design (many variations)
- Start-up funds (buy barrels, tools, etc)
- Who will serve as fiscal agent?
- Storage for barrels
- Transport of barrels to workshops
- Management of registrations
- Volunteers



Workshop Details

- Held “Make your own” (\$50/barrel) and “pre-made” (\$60/barrel) events
- Advertised workshops jointly on one web site (no residence requirements to attend).
- Workshops generally run about 90 minutes, with instructional presentation followed by rain barrel making activities.
- Participants: usually 40 for workshops, 100-150 for pre-made events.
- Generally have 2 staff and 2-3 volunteers for each workshop.



Volunteer Recruitment

- Held a “Train the Trainer” workshop for volunteers in early spring. Free rain barrel = volunteering at a future workshop.
- Also have partnered with local business and Scout troops to assist with building rain barrels for “pre-made” sale.



Results



- To date, sold 1200 rain barrels (~60,000 gallons per rain event)
- Additional 600 barrels on hand for '09
- Follow up survey in late 2008 showed:
 - 78% of workshop attendees had installed barrels
 - 64% of purchased one rain barrel and 36% purchased two rain barrels
 - 91% of workshop attendees were satisfied with their rain barrels

Additional Results



- Motivation reported for installing rain barrel:
 - water conservation (85%),
 - having water during dry periods (41%), and
 - reducing runoff (37%).
- Other actions to reduce stormwater runoff:
 - installing raingardens (12%),
 - re-directing downspouts (71%),
 - reducing paved areas or adding permeable pavement (12%).

Impact

- We know that rain barrels are not a silver bullet for stormwater reduction, due to small capacity.
- Can take advantage of high degree of interest that people have in rain barrels to educate them about ways to better manage stormwater.



Lessons Learned

- People are mad for rain barrels!
- Price point around \$50?
- Part time help for program coordination was very important
- Many groups/schools see this as a fun group activity.
- Did a free workshop for teachers/PTA volunteers, for barrels at Schools.

Program Improvements



- Barrel design – increased size of overflow outlet.
- Follow up survey was helpful to find out what challenges people were having, and what additional info they needed.
- People requested information about diverters, accessories, and installation assistance.



Other Complementary Programs



- Raingarden workshops
- Green Home and Garden Tour
- Green It! Arlington workshops
- Green Building/Green Home Choice

