What’s Your Doggy Doo Doing?

Stormwater runoff pollution reduction through watershed-based pet waste control education and community partnerships.
Background

- Clean Water Act was passed
- U.S. EPA began stormwater management programs for municipalities
- Local governments must improve the quality of water that enters the waterways from the storm sewers that drain the streets.
Example Problem

- The Pike Creek Watershed is facing a TMDL for bacteria and nutrients.

- Based on a study by DNREC in some areas up to 12% of the total coliform bacteria present is due to dog waste.

Provided by DelDOT & DNREC
Isn’t dog waste natural?

Yes, but . . .

- Animal waste acts as a fertilizer in the water, just as it does on land. It can promote excessive aquatic plant growth that can choke waterways, increase algae blooms and rob the water of vital oxygen.

- It also pollutes the water with disease causing bacteria.
Shocking Poo Fact

- In 2000 68 million Americans owned dogs, that’s 40% of all households.
- 3.6 billion pounds of dog waste a year is produced in the U.S. alone, equaling 800 football fields, one foot high.

American Pet Products Manufacturers Association
www.poopbutler.com/pooper-scooper-health.htm
Does all of this little stuff matter?

According to a 2001 study done by the Pelegrin Research Group, it conservatively estimated that each month in LA County, residents contribute to storm water pollution by:

- Walking a dog without picking up the droppings more than 82,000 times
- Dropping cigarette butts on the ground nearly 915,000 times
- Dropping litter on the ground or out a car window more than 830,000 times
- Allowing paper or trash to blow into the street more than 800,000 times
Still more...

- Throwing something in the gutter or down a storm drain nearly 280,000 times
- Emptying a car ashtray into the street more than 40,000 times
- Hosing debris off a driveway or sidewalk into the street nearly 420,000 times
- Washing off paint brushes under an outdoor faucet more than 130,000 times
- Spraying the garden or lawn with pesticide more than 210,000 times

www.poopbutler.com/pooper-scooper-health.htm
Motivations for Behavior Change

- Fines don’t work.

What does?

- Relevant consequences
- Social pressure
- Convenience
Partnership Approaches

- Municipalities & Agencies
- Civic Associations
- Park Managers
- Veterinarians & Other Pet Professionals (i.e. groomers, dog trainers, etc.)
- Rescues, Breeders & Pet Shops
- Media Outlets
- Pet Owners
Municipalities & Agencies

- Due to regulations passed down from the Clean Water Act, local governments are required and looking for programs to educate the public on ways to reduce nonpoint sources of pollution.
- Can usually assist with funding.
- May be able to do water quality monitoring.
Civic Associations

- Many were already looking for ways to reduce nuisance dog waste
- Helped select high dog use areas
- Agreed to maintain Dogi Pot bag dispensers (biodegradable bags)
- Agreed to print articles in their newsletters and distribute tip cards
Park Managers

- Many were already looking for ways to reduce nuisance dog waste
- Helped select high dog use areas
- Agreed to install and maintain Dogi Pot bag dispensers
- Displayed educational information at park offices
Veterinarians & Pet Professionals
(groomers, trainers, etc.)

- Set up displays at offices with bags on board and educational tip card
- Installed and maintained Dogi Pot bag dispensers outside on their properties to reduce on-site polluted runoff.

Holds 15 biodegradable bags and clips onto a leash
Rescues, Breeders & Pet Shops

• Set up displays with Bags on Board and educational information
• Created mandatory cleanup policy for staff and volunteer dog walkers.
• Integrated responsible clean up as part of new dog owner training
Media Outlets

• Provided template articles to civic associations for their newsletters.
• Sent out press releases at various steps and locations highlighting participants.
• Worked with TV report who was an avid kayaker to do a piece on the evening news.
Pet Owners

- Sent a direct mailing to registered dog owners with a Bags on Board, brochure and dog treat.
- Provided the tools and information for an immediate behavior change.
Survey Results – Civic Assns.

- All were still refilling the bag dispensers
- Only 1 out of 41 Dogi Pots was vandalized
- Over 50% could visually see a noticeable decrease in dog piles
- All said the program was received positively by their community
Survey Results - Veterinarians

- All of the Bags on Board and tip cards had been distributed.
- 4 of the 5 vets installed Dogi Pot units outside.
- All said the program was received positively by their clients.
- They reported that the majority of their clients were previously unaware of the environmental impacts of their dog’s waste.
Outcomes

Example: Pike Creek Watershed

Dogi Pot Bag Dispensers

25 dispensers - installed in neighborhoods
21 dispensers - installed in parks
46 dispensers x 400 bags =

Possibility of 18,400 less piles
(before you even refill a box)
Outcomes

Bags on Board

2,870 - distributed at vets
950 - mailed to dog owners
3,820 x 15 bags/unit =

A possibility of 57,300 less piles
(not including future refills)
Since 40% of all households have dogs this is an excellent gateway pollution to educate individuals about all different types of nonpoint source pollutions.
Partnership Lessons

- Almost none of the partners had a true interest in improving water quality
- Must identify their obstacles/concerns in becoming involved
- Communications and logistics need to align with your partners abilities
Questions?

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