

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Education materials



Overview

In the Schuylkill River Watershed, residents are accustomed to turning on a tap and receiving clean, safe drinking water, with little or no thought given to the source of that water or its availability. However, clean water is not a given, and polluted water is everyone's concern. Through concentrated public education and outreach efforts, people learn how their decisions and daily actions can directly impact the water they drink, the recreation they enjoy, regional wildlife habitat, human health, and sustainability for future generations.

Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) are projects and practices designed to slow rain water runoff and get it absorbed back into the ground to improve water quality in local waterways. They can be conducted by any private or public land owner, but they are usually initiated by individuals and organizations aware of water quality challenges and invested in bringing about solutions. Support for this work often comes from the public arena, either in the form of funding or in getting the "OK" at a township meeting for a project to proceed. To gain public support for any BMP project, education and outreach must take place to raise awareness of the problems and solutions. Ideally, these efforts foster an appreciation and awareness of local water resources, inspiring stewardship and meaningful changes in daily actions.

Environmental Advisory Councils

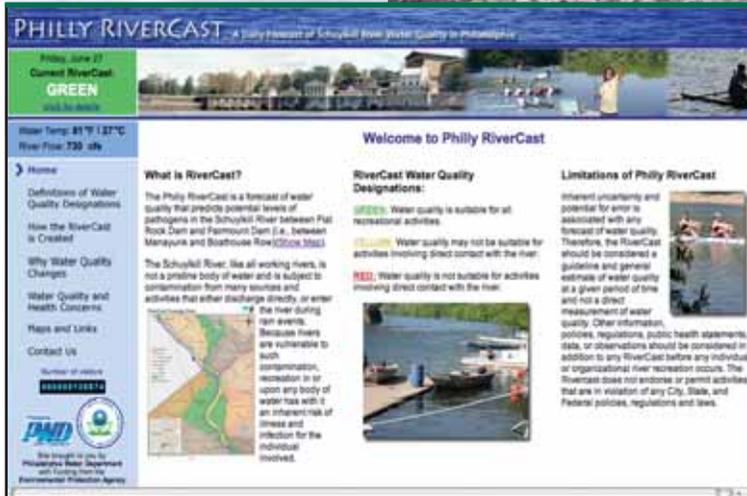




Web resources



Educational signage



The education and outreach projects implemented with Schuylkill Watershed Initiative Grant funds focus on the importance of connecting people to water quality concerns and solutions. They target efforts and activities that have potential to reach large numbers of people. The Schuylkill Action Network Education and Outreach Committee, using publications like the “Guide to Stormwater Management on Campus”, is reaching out to regional educators to determine watershed educational needs. The group is also working to build a web-based clearinghouse of information and materials for educators pertaining to protection of the Schuylkill River and other regional water resources.



An educated public can be the most valuable resource tool in restoring the health of an entire watershed. Citizens of all ages can become invested partners in improving water quality by volunteering for restoration projects, making better decisions at home, influencing BMPs at work and in their communities.

The Schuylkill Watershed Initiative Grant is a \$1.15 million targeted watershed grant awarded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the completion of a suite of water quality improvement demonstration projects. The grant is administered by the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary and the Philadelphia Water Department, and through leveraging, provided \$3 million for water quality improvements, including over \$360,000 devoted to education and outreach projects in the Schuylkill River Watershed.