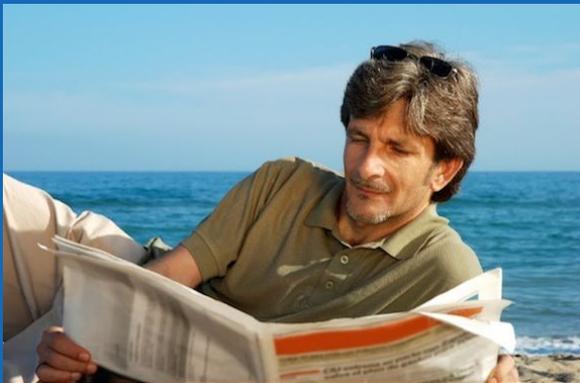




**WATER WORDS
THAT WORK**

Make a splash with your communications!



**Communication Checkup Report
Prepared for Huron River Watershed Council
and Alliance for Downriver Watersheds
June 2016**

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Overview

As part of your contract with Water Words That Work LLC, we have conducted a “Communications Checkup” for your organization. This process helps us quickly assess your organization’s strengths and weaknesses, so we can recommend appropriate investments, trainings, and procedures.

The memo summarizes and synthesizes the findings and our initial recommendations.

Next Steps

- First, please review the summary observation and recommendations
- Second, please review our detailed observations from the staff interview to ensure we have captured everything correctly
- Finally, provide us with any additional information we need from you and request any clarifications or elaborations on this document.

Summary of Observations

The Alliance for Downriver Watersheds (ADW) is in good position to work together on public education and outreach efforts as a whole. However, more work needs to be done to think through a public education and outreach strategy and developing a communications plan as a whole. Research on community residents as a target audience will be helpful to craft the outreach plan. More work also needs to be done to track stormwater public education and outreach efforts by member groups to help better understand overall impact of outreach in the downriver area.

Top Recommendations

Recommendation #1: Develop a Public Education/Outreach Plan for the ADW as a whole.

ADW members do stormwater outreach on their own as individual organizations. There is a lack of knowledge about how, when, and where outreach is happening and who is receiving the messages. The ADW could work together to create a Public Education/Outreach Plan as a whole to more clearly identify target audiences, messages, and timing to help member organizations coordinate efforts and be more effective with stormwater outreach.

Recommendation #2: Develop public-friendly messaging the ADW can use to do outreach as a group.

The ADW website is one of the main outreach tools for the group. However, by design its use is targeted for the member groups and affiliated officials. It does not contain “public friendly” information. The ADW should think through a branding or messaging strategy as a group to more effectively speak as one voice to the general public.

Recommendation #3: Develop a system to track how and when ADW member organizations are getting stormwater messages out to the public.

ADW members could be more effective at stormwater outreach efforts if there was a better understanding of what messages are being put out into the public, and when. A system to help improve coordination and collaboration on outreach efforts could be beneficial.

Recommendation #4: Develop a system to track if residents are responding to ADW messages, and figure out the best ways to reach residents.

One example of an outreach tool for the ADW is the Community Calendar. While stormwater tips are presented in the calendar, there is no way to know if residents are acting on the tips presented or not. The ADW should work to identify ways track resident responses to messages, and identify which ways residents prefer to get their information. This will help identify which outreach efforts are successful and which are not.

Basic Considerations

Staff Roles

- Alliance of Downriver Watersheds (ADW) is a coalition of 24 communities in southeast Michigan, known as the “downriver” area, downriver from Detroit.
- The ADW consists of a Steering Committee, Public Involvement and Education/Technical Committee, and Executive Committee. The Steering Committee sets the agenda for the rest of the Alliance.
- The Executive Committee has a chair, vice-chair, and treasurer within the organization. Every two years, these positions are nominated and elected. ADW has an attorney that comes to full meetings and gives opinion about bylaw language and gives updates on new permit language.

Brand Guidelines

- The ADW has a logo but no specific branding guidelines.

Budget

- Total budget is between \$200,000-300,000, which is made up from dues paid by member organizations.
- Budget in 2016 is \$380,000. \$81,500 budgeted for public education and outreach.
- Grants can add to this. The public education portion can vary with grants, but usually \$20,000-50,000 allocated to public education and outreach.

Board Meetings & Oversight

- The full ADW meets 2-3 times per year.
- The Executive Committee meets 2 times per year.
- Public Involvement and Education/Technical Committee meets 5-6 times per year as needed, for example, if there there are grant deadlines to meet.

Multimedia Resources

- The ADW does not have a formal photo collection for the alliance.
- They have started to build a collection of donated or purchased photography for specific projects. Pam keeps these with graphic files for the ADW calendar.
- Stock photos for wider ADW use are turned over to whomever houses the website.
- Wayne County has some photos from monitoring, planting, educational events.

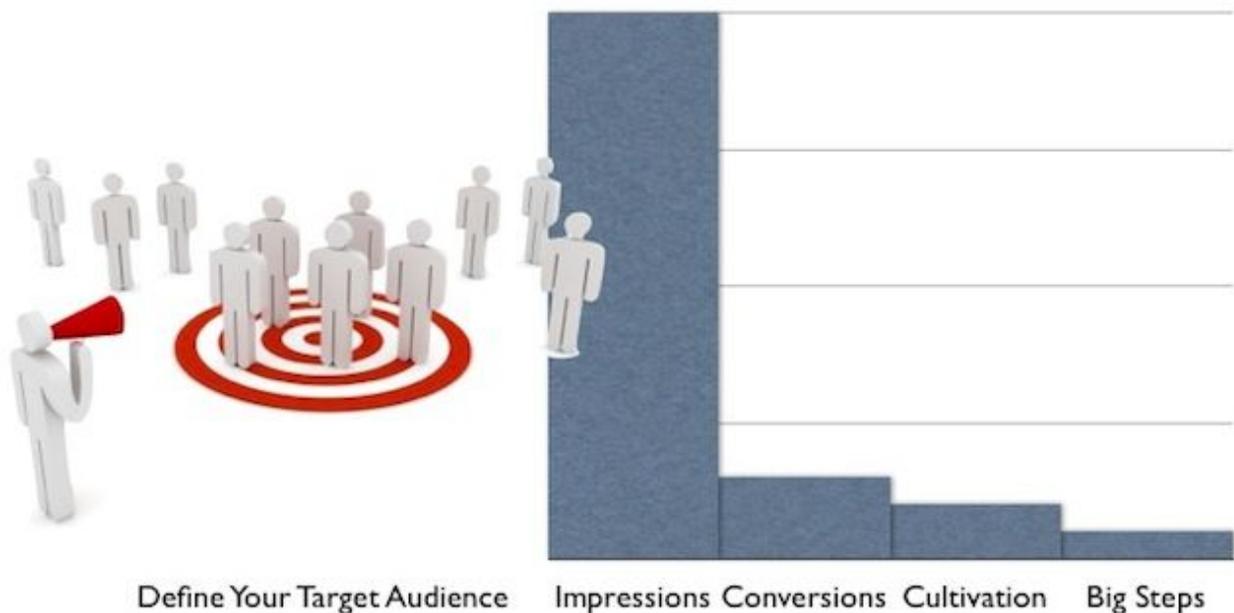
Website

- The ADW website is 2-3 years old. Wade Trim houses and maintains the WordPress website. Leah

used to work there and did the work on it. She does not currently work there but Wade Trim still houses the site. Website updates are sent to Leah and she communicates with Wade Trim to make the updates.

- The target audience for the website is partners and maybe political leaders. The website is not really meant for the general public.

The Slope



Target Audiences

- In 2014 they did a regional water quality survey of the general public to learn more about the public's knowledge and behaviors about stormwater.
- WWTW will be doing a thorough Target Audience Profile as part of this project with the ADW.

Editorial Calendar

- The ADW does not have an editorial calendar.

Impressions

Mail

- ADW members are not doing direct mailings of only stormwater education pieces. They will include small articles about stormwater education (fertilizer, pet waste, etc.) in community newsletters, etc. It is a secondary message that gets sent with other pieces from the community.
- Bill stuffers are a tool that some of the members use.

Phone

- ADW members do not seem to be using any phone, telemarketing, text messaging, mobile formatted website messaging with their communities.

Email

- The ADW does not have an email blast tool on behalf of its members. It's unclear how extensively member communities are using email for communications in general, let alone for stormwater outreach only.

Google Search

- The group does not have a good sense of what search terms people are using to search for information about stormwater, creeks, water, water quality, etc.

Social Media Groups and Advertising

- The ADW does not have a good sense of what relevant social media groups are out there for communicating with residents.
- Many of the ADW agencies have Facebook pages run by their city or township, but beyond that don't really know what else is being used for social media outreach.
- The ADW is not using online advertising.

Traditional Public Relations

- The ADW has issued a few press releases in the past for single events, but have not done any larger press conferences or press tours.
- Individual communities have gotten some press for their specific events or projects, but not as a collective.
- In 2014 they did a pet waste campaign and targeted local veterinarians and pet stores with materials to distribute to their customers.

Advertising

- The ADW Community Calendar helps to educate and give tips on stormwater pollution prevention. They printed and distributed 45,000 calendars.
- The ADW has done occasional print advertising (for their rain barrel sale, 2-3 years ago), but does not do print advertising consistently. Print ads were run in the Monroe Evening News and the News Herald (these cover the ADW area). These are regional publications.
- They have not tried billboards, bus ads, etc.
- There are creek crossing signs and "now entering this watershed signs" along the road in some locations downriver, but there is not full coverage in all of the watershed.

Face-to-Face

- ADW members have done presentations at the DRAM conference that were correlated to projects they did with schools- the grow zone and green roofs.
- Volunteer monitoring is an opportunity they use for face-to-face interaction with residents.
- There is an Invasive Species grant that involves face-to-face conversation while teaching residents how to identify areas with invasives and how to treat them.
- Some communities use tabletop displays at events. Wayne County has stormwater education displays that members can borrow for events.

Word of Mouth

- The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) primarily coordinates the volunteer monitoring program. They do targeted outreach to recruit volunteers. The Green Schools program is how they recruit students for monitoring, which is done through the teachers and schools. Benthic monitoring is an opportunity to interact with 300-400 students each year. This has been going on for the past 7

years.

Conversions

Donations

- Donations (dues) are paid by member organizations annually. The members feel that it is worth their money and it helps them meet their MS4 requirements.

Other

- They don't have any type of active response from the Community Calendar that they can measure.

Cultivation

Database

- The HRWC uses Salesforce to track its organizations volunteers, but the ADW as a collective does not track volunteers as a group.

Social Media Connections

- Most member communities are using their own distinct Facebook pages, but nothing that is specific for stormwater education.
- The ADW has discussed creating an ADW social media account, but they're not sure who would maintain it and how it would be paid for.

Member Survey

As part of the Communications Checkup, an ADW Member Survey will be distributed to member to assess their thoughts on stormwater outreach and their needs.

Q1: The Alliance of Downriver Watersheds has hired Water Words that Work, LLC to think through our education and outreach efforts going forward. Please take a moment to answer the following questions.

No answer options

Q2: How would you describe your relationship to ADW?

Answer options - radio buttons (select one):

- A1: ADW member agency employee
- A2: ADW member agency consultant/contractor
- A3: ADW Cooperating Business
- A4: ADW Cooperating Nonprofit
- A5: ADW Cooperating Individual
- A6: I am not involved with ADW (exit)

Q3: How do you divide your working hours between stormwater education & outreach and your other job responsibilities?

[Communications Checkup Report- HRWC ADW Resident Research Project](#)

Water Words That Work, LLC

905 West 7th Street, Suite 201, Frederick, MD 21701

703.829.6732 waterwordsthatwork.com

Subquestions:

A1: Stormwater education & outreach

A2: Other job responsibilities

Total units to distribute: 100%

100 steps with increment 1%

Answer options - Constant sum Sliders

(move slider to answer)

Q4: Please briefly describe your other job responsibilities

Answer options - open ended (text field)

Q5: How long have you personally been involved with ADW?

Answer options - radio buttons (select one):

A1: More than 5 years

A2: 3 or 4 years

A3: 1 or 2 years

A4: Less than 1 year

Q6: Please read this advice that EPA has issued for the MS4 Education and Outreach Minimum Control Measure:

"Operators of regulated small MS4s are encouraged to utilize partnerships with other governmental entities to fulfill this minimum control measure's requirements. It is generally more cost-effective to use an existing program, or to develop a new regional or state-wide education program, than to have numerous operators developing their own local programs. "

No answer options

Q7: Please rate the following statements about ADW and your MS4 permit requirements:

Subquestions:

SQ1: My MS4 permit requirements are similar to other ADW members' requirements

SQ2: Participating in ADW is a cost-effective way to meet MS4 permit requirements

SQ3: I want to do more regional partnership activities in the future

Answer options - sliders (move slider to answer):

A1: Strongly disagree

A2: Somewhat disagree

A3: Not sure/neutral

A4: Somewhat agree

A5: Strongly agree

Q8: Please read this advice that EPA has issued for the MS4 Education and Outreach Minimum Control Measure:

"Operators of regulated small MS4s may use stormwater educational information provided by their State, Tribe, EPA Region, or environmental, public interest, or trade organizations instead of developing their own materials... "

No answer options

Q9: Please rate the following statements about educational materials:

Subquestions:

SQ1: My agency is willing to distribute materials prepared by others

SQ2: My agency wants to develop its own materials

SQ3: My agency wants to put its logo on all materials, even those developed by others

Answer options - sliders (move slider to answer):

A1: Strongly disagree

A2: Somewhat disagree

A3: Not sure/neutral

A4: Somewhat agree

A5: Strongly agree

Q10: Your boss asks you “what needs does ADW meet for us?” How do you answer?

Answer options - open ended (text field)

Q11: Your boss asks you “what needs does ADW not meet for us?” How do you answer?

Answer options - open ended (text field)

Q12: How familiar are you with these ADW programs?

Subquestions:

SQ1: ADW Community Calendar

SQ2: ADW wall panels and displays

SQ3: ADW pet waste outreach program

SQ4: Stream/water quality monitoring

SQ5: Green Schools Tree Planting Program

SQ6: Watershed sign program

SQ7: Invasive Species mapping project

Answer options - sliders (move slider to answer):

A1: I don't know anything about it

A2: I have heard of it, but don't know

A3: I am somewhat familiar with it

A4: I am very familiar with it

Q13: The following are topics required to be addressed in the Public Education Plan (PEP) of your stormwater permits. Please rank these elements from your stormwater permits from highest priority (on top) to lowest (on bottom):

Subquestions:

13. Please rank these elements from your stormwater permits from highest priority (on top) to lowest (on bottom). 10

1. Educate the public on illicit discharges and promote public reporting of discharges
2. Promote preferred cleaning materials and procedures for car, pavement, and power washing.
3. Promote proper application and disposal of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.
4. Promote proper disposal practices for grass clippings, leaf litter, and animal wastes
5. Promote proper disposal of household hazardous wastes and motor vehicle fluids
6. Educate the public on septic system care and how to recognize system failure
7. Educate the public about the benefits of green infrastructure and Low Impact Development

Q14: Please rank these elements from your stormwater permits from highest priority (on top) to lowest (on bottom):

14. Please rank these elements from your stormwater permits from highest priority (on top) to lowest (on bottom).

1. Reducing fats/oils/grease from restaurants and commercial kitchens
2. Protecting riparian areas on agricultural land
3. Working with developers to control sediment
4. Reducing stormwater runoff from parking lots
5. Promote proper disposal of household hazardous wastes and motor vehicle fluids
6. Encouraging commercial properties to control "dumpster juice"

+ Add Seventh Item to Reorder (1 left)

Q15: Which outreach methods does your organization/agency use to reach your audiences?

Answer options - checkboxes

(check all that apply):

A1: Educational programs at schools

A2: Water bill

A3: Website

A4: Handouts and displays at community events

A5: Handouts and displays in agency lobbies or customer service areas

A6: Local (community or neighborhood) newspapers

A7: Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor.com, other)

A8: Local (community or neighborhood) newsletters

A9: Advertising

A10: None of the Above (Answer blank) (...optional text field)

Q16: Are there any other stormwater education and outreach issues that are important to you?

Answer options - open ended (text field)

Q17: Imagine ADW has \$10,000 to spend to help you. How would like them to allocate the money?

Subquestions:

A1: Conducting stormwater programs on my behalf that I can take credit for in my MS4 report

A2: Preparing materials and programs that I can easily distribute myself

Total units to distribute: \$10000

100 steps with increment \$100

Answer options - Constant sum Sliders

(move slider to answer)

Q18: Where do you want help with your stormwater education programs? Rate from most (on top) to least (on bottom).

Subquestions:

A1: Planning programs from start to finish

A2: Branding materials so they look attractive and professional

A3: Writing content that is clear and persuasive

A4: Distributing materials and promoting programs

A5: Evaluating the success of our educational efforts

A6: Demonstrating accomplishments to supervisors and elected officials

A7: Consistent messaging that's been tested with target audiences

Answer options - reorder (move up/down)

Q19: Looking ahead to your next permit, what new requirements to you expect to meet?

Answer options - open ended (text field)

Q20: Looking ahead, what changes or new programs would you like to see from ADW?

Answer options - open ended (text field)

