



STORM WATER AWARENESS WEEK 2026 PRESENTS

Public Education and Engagement Using Behavior Change Best Practices

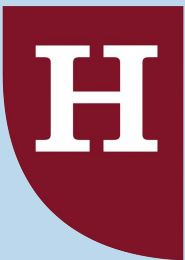
**ADOPT
A STORM
DRAIN**



A project of Hamline University



Minneapolis
City of Lakes



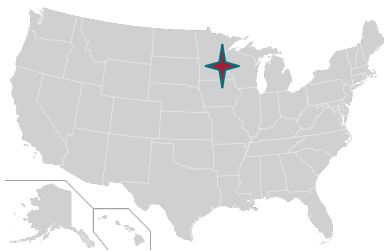
Center for Global Environmental Education

HAMLIN UNIVERSITY

*fostering environmental stewardship
in people of all ages*

Ann Zawistoski

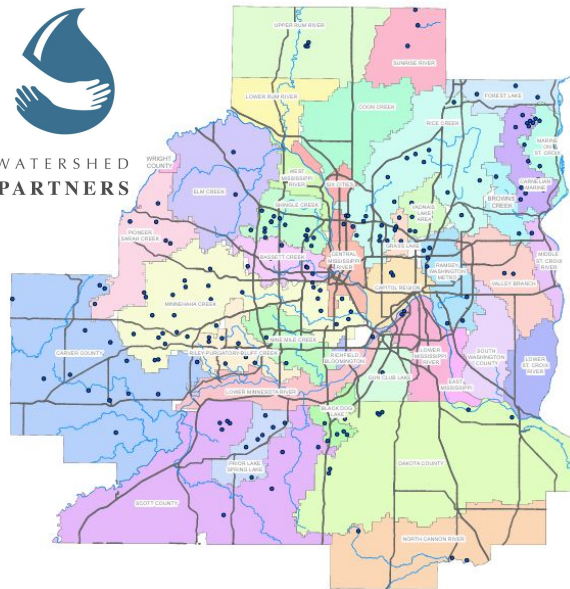
Director of Adopt-a-Drain &
Community Outreach
Hamline University
Center for Global Environmental Education



Minneapolis / St. Paul, MN Metro Watersheds



WATERSHED
PARTNERS



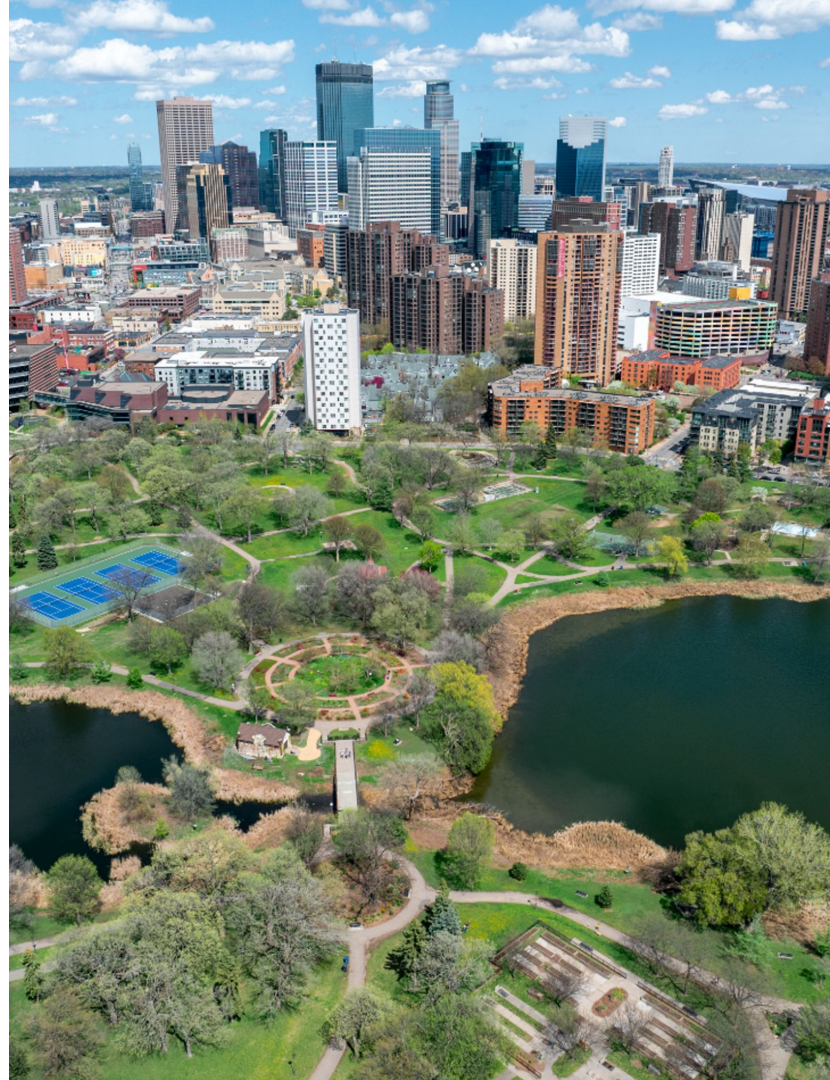


Minneapolis

Public Works

**Haley Foster MSc., Engagement
& Outreach Coordinator**

City of Minneapolis Public Works,
Surface Water & Sewers Division



and before we continue...
Who are you?



Minimum Control Measures (MCMs)

Your NPDES permit requires you to include six MCMs in your stormwater management program:

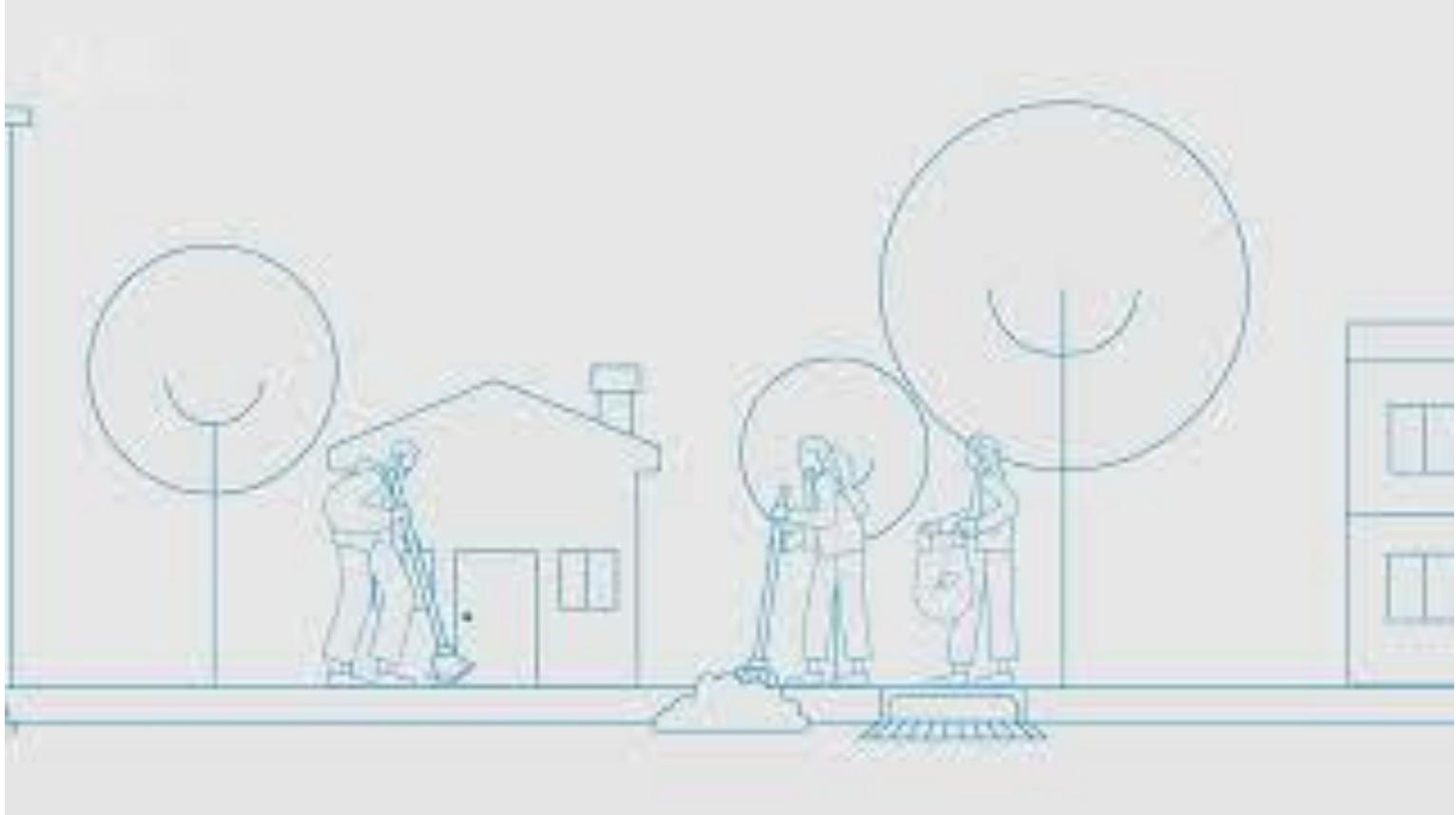
1. **Public Education and Outreach:** This MCM involves distributing educational materials and performing outreach to inform the public about the impacts polluted stormwater runoff discharges can have on water quality.
2. **Public Participation:** You should provide opportunities for the public to participate in program development and implementation. This includes effectively publicizing public hearings and encouraging community members to serve as representatives on a stormwater management panel.

- How do we reach the public?
- How do we educate the public?
- How do we engage the public?
- How do we encourage participation?

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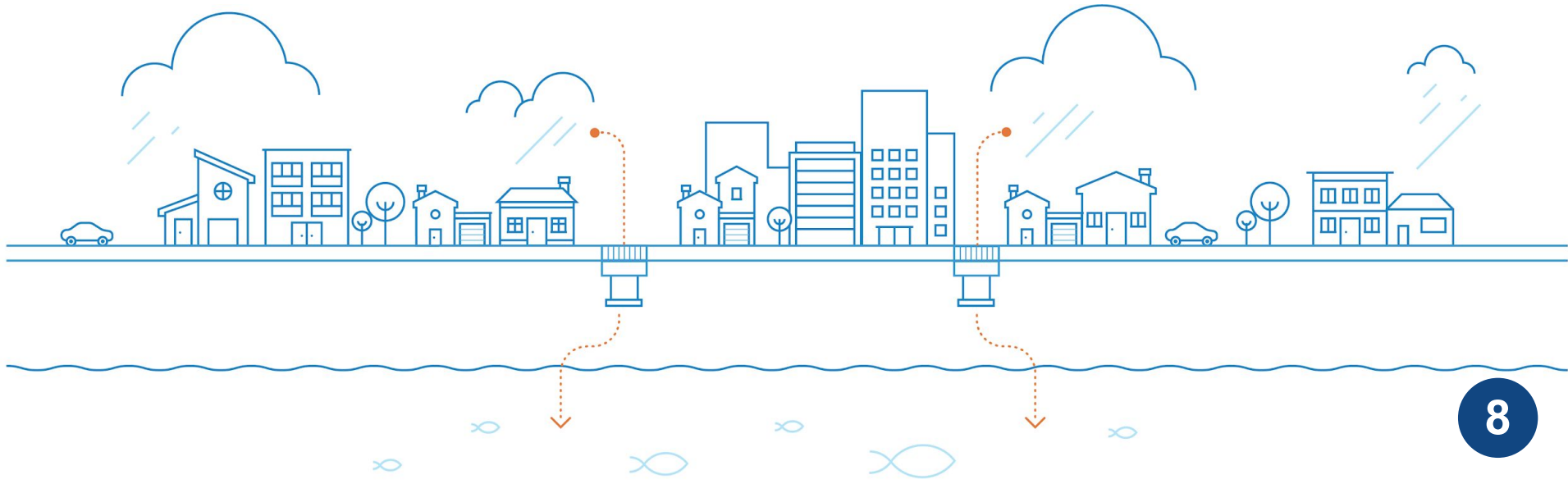
-
- REVISED EDITION
- # The Psychology of INFLUENCE
- "For marketers, this book is among the most important books written in the last ten years."
— *Journal of Marketing Research*
- ROBERT B. CIALDINI, PH.D.

Why Storm Drains?



Why Storm Drains?

- **Common, tangible connection between stormwater and water bodies**
- **Direct connection between actions and results**



What is Adopt-a-Drain?



Adopt-a-Drain asks community members to take responsibility for a storm drain and commit to removing and properly disposing of trash, leaves, or other debris.

Goals:

- Clean water
- Reduced flooding
- Education & engagement
- Connect people to stormwater and their watersheds

Adopting a drain on Adopt-a-Drain.org

[How to Adopt A Storm Drain](#) | [Drain Clearing Tips](#) | [Track Impact](#)

[Sign up](#) [Log in](#)

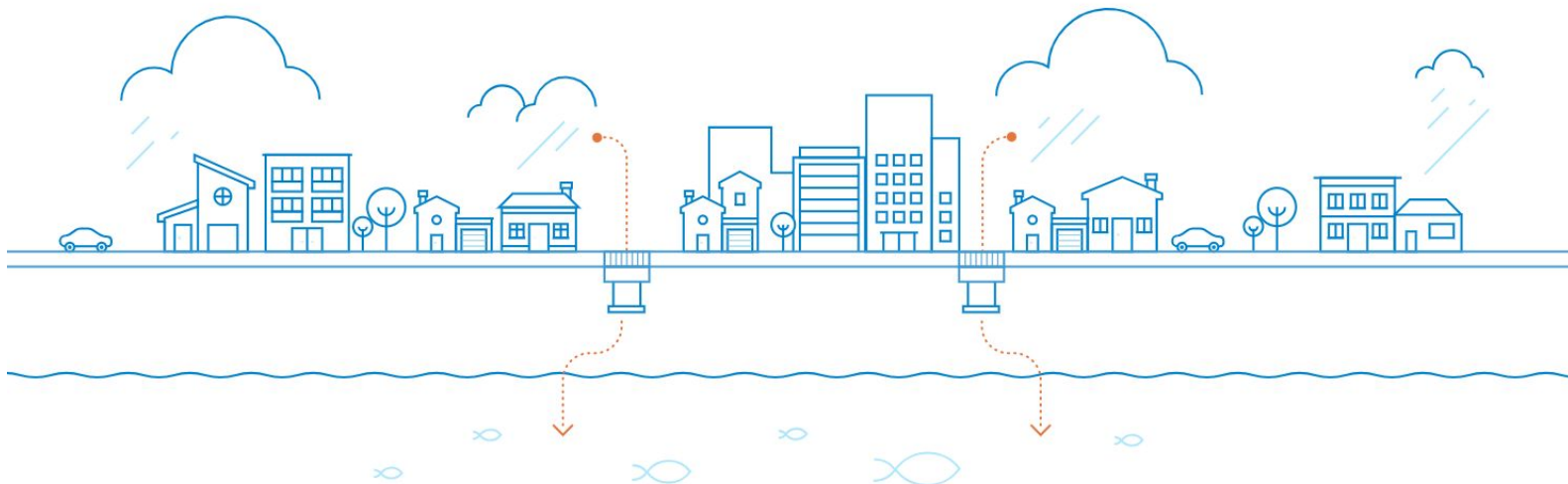


We protect our water

Sweep up! Rake up! Pick up!



Adopt a Drain



Sign up to adopt a storm drain

Already have an account? [Log in here!](#)

First, let's see if there's a drain you can adopt.

Enter your address to select a drain.

Ex: 555 Broad Street

Map

Satellite

Hubbard Ave

Hancock
Recreational
Area

Mirror of Korea

Black Sea

Ginkgo Coffeehouse

Flying Pig Thrift

Hamline Church
United Methodist

Hamline Apartments

Simpson St

W Minnehaha Ave

Google

Keyboard shortcuts Map data ©2025 Google Terms Report a map error

Don't see your drain?

[Add one here.](#)

Yes, this one is adoptable!

Adopt Drain



Alley drain is already adopted by Ann Zawistoski.

[Report Inappropriate Content](#)

My Adopted Drains

[My Adopted Drains](#)

[Adopt Another Drain](#)

[Edit Profile](#)



Alley

[Rename](#)

[Track Impact](#)

[Un-Adopt Drain](#)

Date Adopted: 7 months ago

Last Cleaning Reported: 6 seconds ago

Regional Impact

542,931 lbs*
debris collected

18,461
drains adopted

9,976
adopters

*Report your work so we can better track our impact!

Describe what you collected from your drain area:

Just pick the closest description, don't worry if it's not exact!

- It was mostly this:
- ☐ Brown leaves and/or sticks and twigs
 - ☐ Grass and/or green leaves
 - ☐ Sediment/dirt
 - ☐ Trash
 - ☐ Salt
 - ☐ Snow and/or ice
 - ☐ Pet waste
 - ☐ There was no debris

- With some of this
(optional):
- ☐ Brown leaves and/or sticks and twigs
 - ☐ Grass and/or green leaves
 - ☐ Sediment/dirt
 - ☐ Trash
 - ☐ Salt
 - ☐ Snow and/or ice
 - ☐ Pet waste
 - ☐ There was no debris

How much did you pick up?

We're just looking for a rough estimate. Don't sweat it.

Amount

gallons



How long did it take?

Time

minutes

Add Cleaning

Principle 1: Start with a small, meaningful action



Principle 2: Be explicit about what behavior you want people to take

“We try to get our audience to care, but we don’t tell them what they would do if they did care...”

“So they don’t do anything and then we think they don’t care.”

- Eric Eckl, Water Words that Work





Principle 3: Make caring for water a community norm



¡Adopte una alcantarilla!

Mantengamos limpio nuestro vecindario y protejamos los ríos, lagos y océanos locales.



¡Mantengamos nuestra agua limpia!

Regístrese



Limpie su
alcantarilla



Mida su impacto



¡Regístrese hoy!
adopt-a-drain.org/wa

ADOPT
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DRAIN



Salmon Species You Protect by Cleaning Your Drain

Trash, debris, dirt, and chemicals going down the drain harm salmon as they return to our rivers to spawn in fall.



Sockeye Salmon



Coho Salmon



Pink Salmon



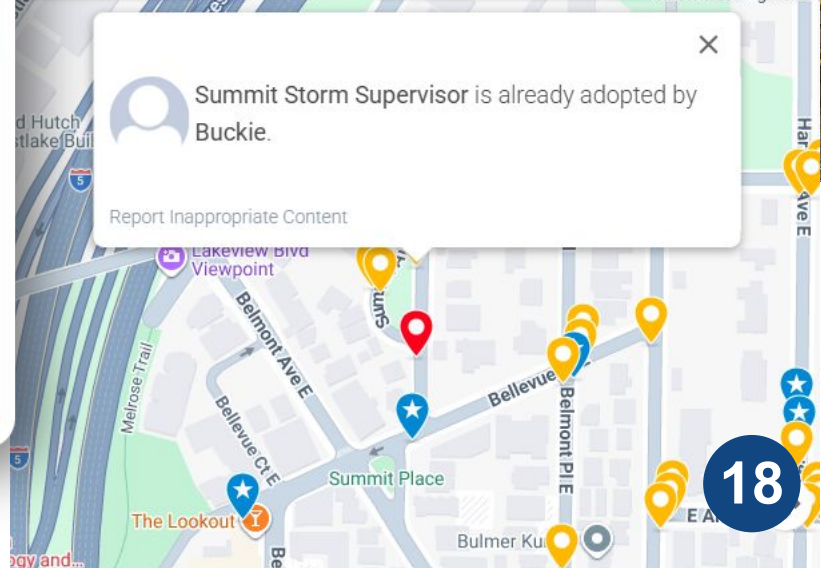
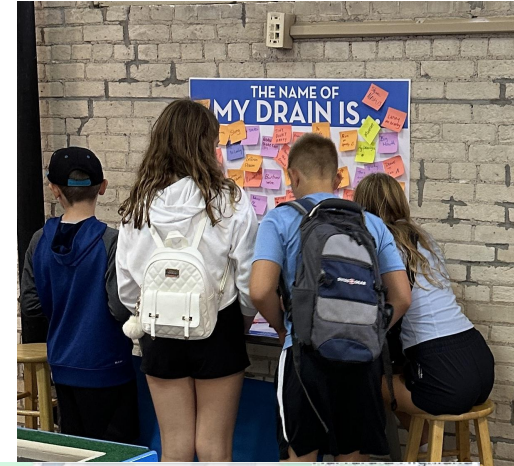
Chinook Salmon

Spot them in Washington waterways!



Principle 4: Emphasize local relevance

Principle 5: Ask for a commitment. Make it public and durable



Principle 6: Give people the information they need to be successful and increase engagement



1| Trash clogs drains and pipes causing flooding. Trash that enters storm drains flows to local waterways. Scoop it up and put it in the garbage.



2| Oil, grease, and soap grime washes into storm drains which flow unfiltered to local waterways. Keep chemicals off streets and sidewalks.



3| Dog poop carries harmful bacteria. Pick it up, bag it and put it in the garbage.



4| Fertilizers and pesticides can harm our lakes and rivers. Leaves, grass, and yard waste add to the problem.



Principle 7: Provide reminders and connect the action to the difference it makes.

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A STORM
DRAIN

A project of Hamline University



Your Reporting Is Key
to Our Success!

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Adopt-a-Drain WA

May 30, 2024 · 🌐

TRACK YOUR IMPACT REMINDER! So far over 730,000 pounds of debris have been collected! 🌟

Reporting an estimated total of the debris you collect and entering it into your online account helps us so we can gauge the cumulative results of our work. And it's super easy!

1. Log into your account at adopt-a-drain.org

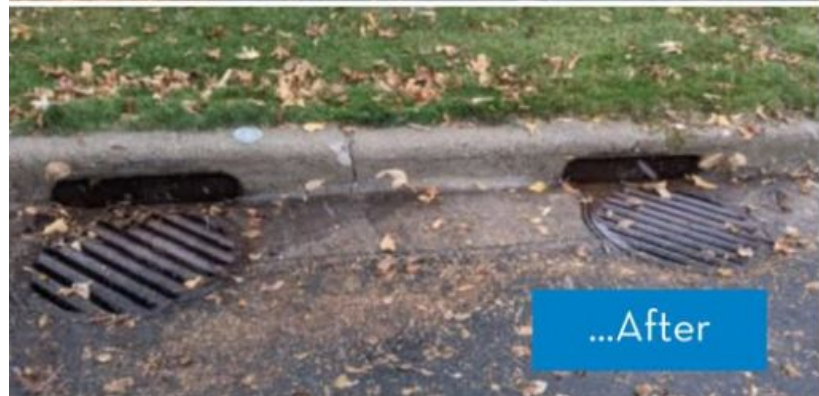
2. Click on "track impact"

3. Estimate the total amount you've collected from all of your drains since you last reported. Keep up the great work protecting and improving the quality of our water!

Before...



...After



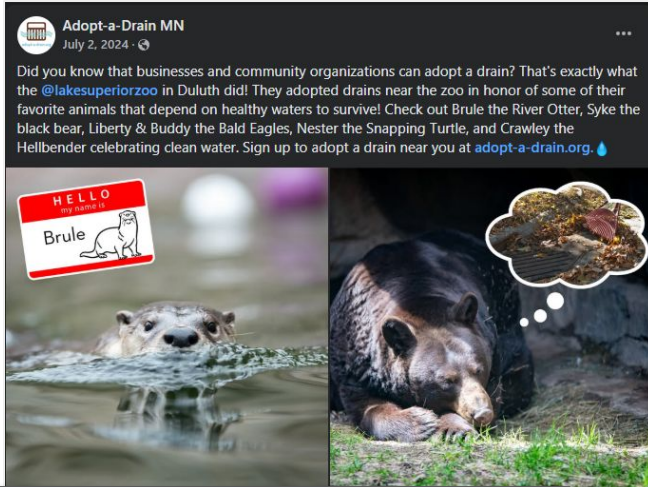


Principle 8: Measure and report impacts and successes

DEBRIS COLLECTED BY WASHINGTON VOLUNTEERS IN 2024

	Brown Leaves	9,299 LBS
	Grass/green leaves	638 LBS
	Sediment/dirt	4,726 LBS
	Trash	545 LBS
	Pet Waste	31 LBS

Principle 9: Work with trusted partners



Arlene Meraux Elementary Launches Student-Led "Adopt a Drain" Program Inspired by Mississippi River Delta Institute

By News Staff on Thursday, December 18, 2025



Front Row from Left: Greydy Perez, Christina Crego, Sophia Mauricio Dos Anjos; Back Row: Carter Williams, Mason Newton, Jayce Smith, Xander Borden.



"Adopt a Drain AIS Detectors" | Prairie Sportsman (1707)

Prairie Sportsman | Pioneer PBS
3.42K subscribers

Subscribe

13

22

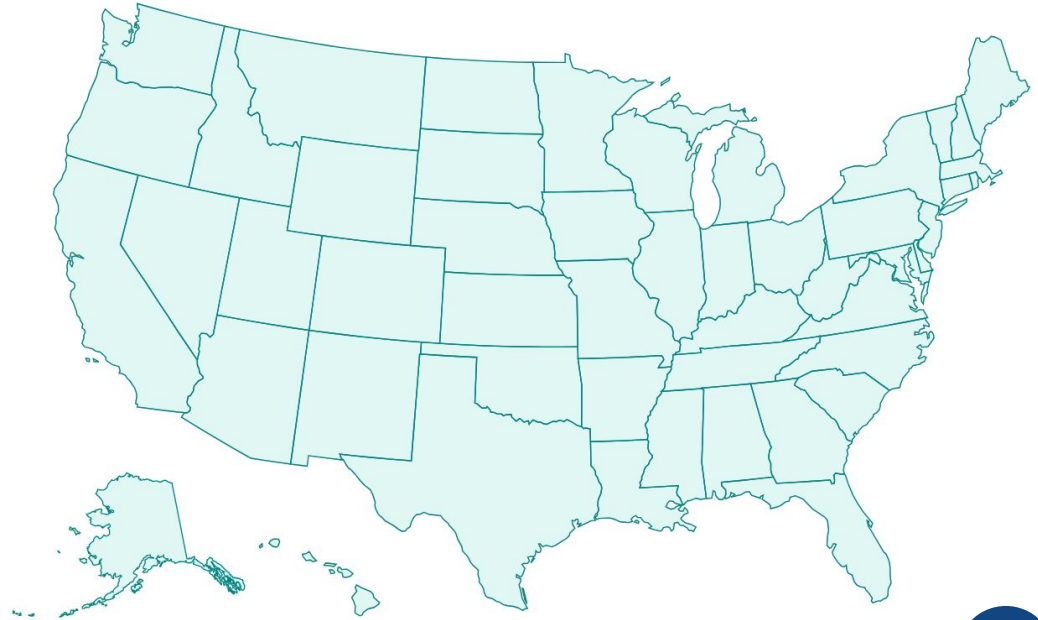
Adopt-a-Drain today

38,820
drains adopted

23,400
participants

180+
communities

We protect our water
Sweep up! Rake up! Pick up!



Outcomes

- **60%** of participants have reported at least one cleaning
- On average, participants report **5** cleanings
- Average of **11 lbs** of debris removed in a cleaning
- Over **113,000** drain cleanings
- Over **1.2 million** pounds of debris removed from drains
- Nearly **30,000** volunteer hours (more than 3 years and 5 months!)

That's 13
737 planes
or 5 million
bananas!*



Washington State 2026 Behavior Change Survey



In the past year, how often have you checked on or cleaned a storm drain inlet?

	Fall Months			Non-Fall Months		
	Once per month or more	Less than once per month	Never	Once per month or more	Less than once per month	Never
Initial survey	59%	23%	18%	42%	41%	18%
Follow-up survey	86%	13%	<1%	74%	25%	1%

2023 Minnesota Participant Survey

“Since joining Adopt-a-Drain, what changes have you been motivated to make to benefit the environment?”

“Being aware of fertilizer accidentally spilling into the street. How rain gardens work. That less water in the street means cleaner lakes.”

“I rake and sweep my driveway so the debris does not wash onto the road and into the drains.”

“I think more consciously about where water goes, and what might be in it.”



Learn how to adopt a drain
in your neighborhood
and help protect our waters

Sign Up
for the
Minneapolis Adopt-a-Drain Program



Commit to keep leaves and debris
out of our storm drains



GET A FREE SIGN FOR YOUR YARD!

Learn more at
www.Adopt-a-Drain.org

Minneapolis
City of Lakes



Outreach & Engagement

Protect your lakes and rivers adopt-a-drain.org

SWEET LIPS RAKE LIPS PICK LIPS SIGN LIPS



CELEBRATING 10,000



Minnesota State Fair



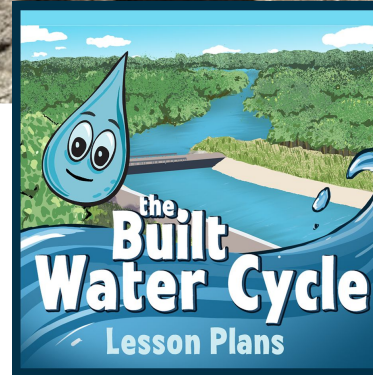
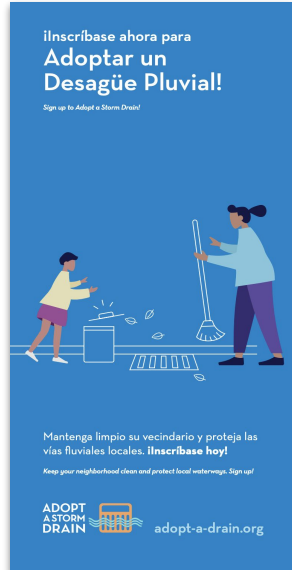
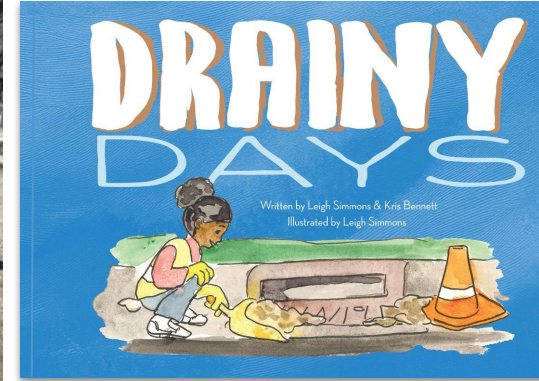
- 625 new participants
- 711 drains adopted
- 93 Minnesota cities
- 10,000+ photo booth visits



ADOPT
A STORM
DRAIN



K-12 Classroom Outreach



The St. Bernard Voice

Arlene Meraux Elementary Launches Student-Led "Adopt a Drain" Program Inspired by Mississippi River Delta Institute

(By News Staff on Thursday, December 10, 2020)



Front Row from Left: Cheyde Perez, Christina Crago, Sophia Mauricio Dos Anjos; Back Row: Carter Williams, Mason Newton, Jayce Smith, Xander Brown

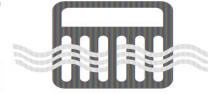
K-12 Programming In Minneapolis

- 80 Classrooms
- 2,330 Students
- 139 Drains adopted by classrooms
- 68 Drains adopted by families



Adopt-a-Drain in Minneapolis

ADOPT
A STORM
DRAIN



Minne
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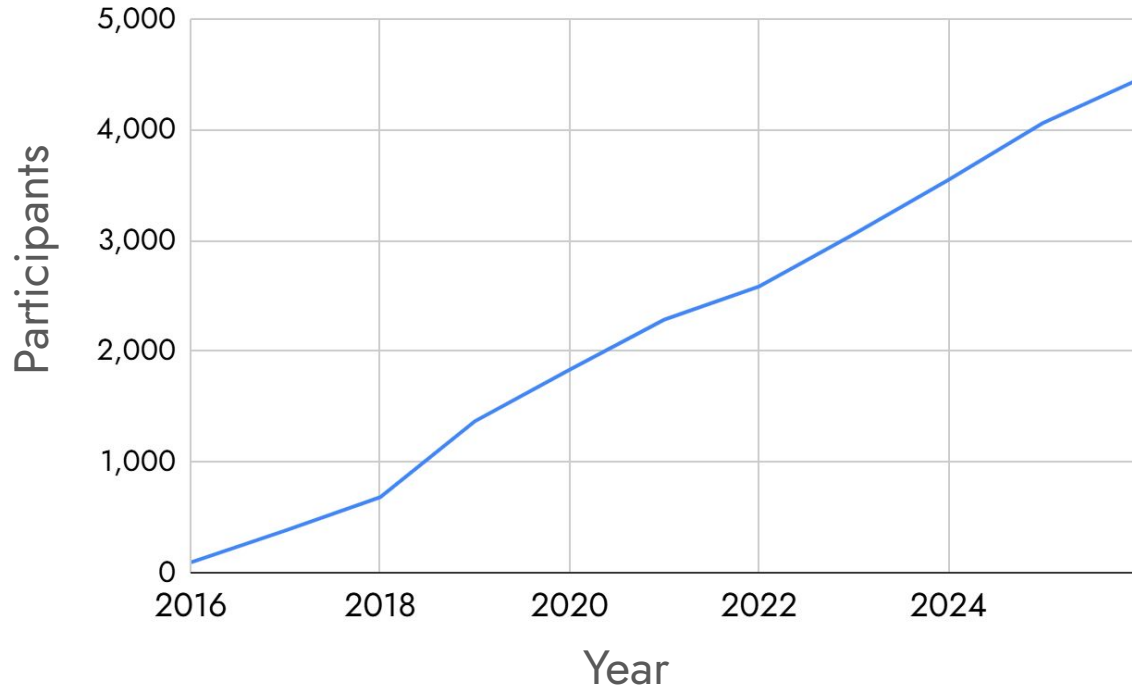
31

8,747
drains adopted

4,451
participants

1%*
of population

Participants in Minneapolis



Minneapolis Goals

- Climate & Equity Commitments
- Community Engagement Priority
- MS4/NPDES Regulatory Context



Adopt-a-Drain & Storm Drain Stenciling

Helping protect clean water one drain at a time.

The City of Minneapolis is proud to support two community-powered programs that reduce water pollution, prevent flooding, and engage residents in protecting our lakes, rivers, and creeks: **Adopt-a-Drain** and **Storm Drain Stenciling**.



Door hanging

- Systematically 2016 - 2022
- 23% (936) adopters from neighborhoods with door hanging
- Continues in conjunction with stenciling program

www.minneapolismn.gov/adoptadrain

Sign up to

Adopt a Storm Drain!



Keep Lake Hiawatha and Bancroft Neighborhood clean.
Sign up today!

How to adopt a storm drain

- 1. Sign up online**
to adopt a drain in your neighborhood
minneapolismn.gov/adoptadrain
- 2. Keep your storm drain clear**

Rain washes anything that's on streets and other paved surfaces down the storm drains and into lakes and rivers. So sweep leaves, grass clippings and trash away from the drain surface year-round.
- 3. We'll post a small sign in your yard**

to let your neighbors know you're protecting clean water. And if they ask, let them know how they can do their part.
(Talking points provided!)

ADOPT A STORM DRAIN 

A project of the City of Minneapolis, Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and Hamline University

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Neighborhood events and outreach

Outreach is tailored through neighborhood newsletters, traditional media, social media, Councilmember newsletters, and partnerships with neighborhood associations. This helps **meet residents where they are.**

10 • July 2025

NOKOMIS EAST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

By Chris Opp
board member



In cities and towns across America, stormwater drains play an essential role in keeping our streets and neighborhoods safe and clean. But like many necessary systems, they require regular attention and maintenance to function properly. Enter Adopt-A-Drain, a grassroots initiative that encourages residents to volunteer in maintaining a local storm drain in their community. By adopting a drain, citizens can help prevent flooding, protect water quality, and create a cleaner, healthier environment for all.

WHAT IS ADOPT-A-DRAIN?

The concept is simple: individuals, families, or community groups can “adopt” a drain and commit to keeping

Protect your community one drain at a time

A GROWING MOVEMENT

Adopt-A-Drain programs are popping up in cities across the United States, with participants ranging from individual homeowners to school groups, local businesses, and even environmental organizations. The idea has proven so successful that many cities have expanded the program, encouraging more citizens to get involved and raise awareness about the importance of stormwater management.

As more extreme weather events continue to happen, including heavier rainfall and more frequent storms, programs like Adopt-A-Drain will continue to be an important tool in keeping communities resilient. By adopting a drain, you’re not just making your neighborhood a better place to live – you’re contributing to a larger movement aimed at protecting the environment for future generations.

HOW YOU CAN GET STARTED

Are you ready to adopt a drain? Start

2. Commit to Regular Maintenance: Once you’ve adopted a drain, you’ll need to pledge to clean it periodically. This involves removing debris, leaves, trash, or anything else that could obstruct the flow of water. The frequency of cleaning depends on your location and the time of year, but most people find that cleaning their drain once or twice a month is sufficient. My two drains take about 5 to 10 minutes each per month. Sometimes like in the fall when there’s lots of leaves it might take a little longer, but it’s usually not bad.

3. Keep an Eye Out for Issues: In addition to cleaning the drain, it’s important to watch for signs of larger issues, like large-scale blockages that might require municipal assistance. If you notice anything unusual, report it to local authorities to prevent further damage like by calling 311.

4. Spread the Word: Encourage your neighbors, friends, and family members



Newspaper Advertising:

Southside Pride

Alley News

Southwest Voices



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Geography	Drains adopted, April - July		Change
	2024	2025	
Minneapolis as a whole	313	493	↑ 58%
Neighborhoods covered by newspapers	240	437	↑ 82%
Neighborhoods not covered by newspapers	73	51	↓ -30%

Minneapolis' 5,000th Drain Adopter

- Adopted his drain, “**Purple Drain**” during an Earth Day event with the company he works for.
- SRF Consulting employees adopted **40 drains total**; the City recognized Nick with a special oversized yard sign.



Impact Since 2019:

- **324,030 pounds** of trash, leaves, and debris removed from storm drains
- In 2025 alone: **48,745 pounds** of debris cleared



Quick Facts:

- **2025 Participants:** 4,062
- **Current Total Participants:** 4,451
- **2025 Drains Adopted:** 8,014
(24.9% of total drains)
- **Today:** 8,747 drains adopted
(27.1% of all 32,234 public drains)
- **Top Program in the U.S.:** Minneapolis ranks #1, ahead of larger cities like San Francisco (7,762 drains adopted)



Behavior Change

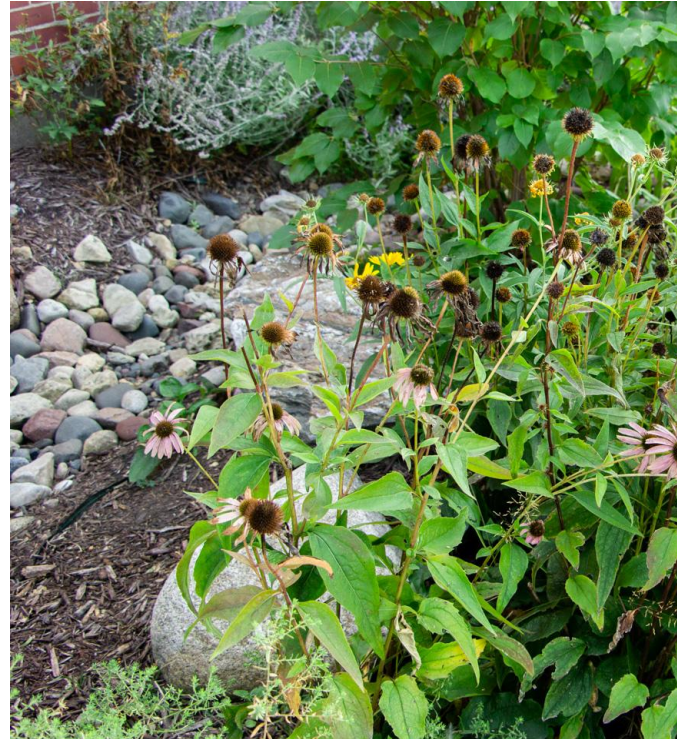
- **Total drain cleanings:** 29,930
- **Cleanings in 2026 so far:** 2,169
- **Average pounds per cleaning:** 10.8
- **Percent of participants** who have reported a cleaning: 64%
- **Average number of cleanings** reported by a participant: 6.7
- **Total hours:** 9,210 or just over 1 year



2023 Behavior Change Survey:

Other behavior changes

“Yes. I don't use salt or sand in the winter. . . I am also working on transitioning my yard from grass to rain gardens and pollinator friendly, native gardens.”



Bonus Principle 10: Have Fun!



Guess the most popular storm drain name!

Purple Drain

Drain #1

Drainy (McDrainFace)

Stormy

Brain Drain

Sir Drains a Lot

Only Happy When it Drains

Alexander the Grate



Questions?

- **Ann Zawistoski**, azawistoski01@hamline.edu
- **Haley Foster**, Haley.Foster@minneapolismn.gov