

Carolina Clear

Clemson Extension's Answer to Stormwater Education

Introduction

In 2006, South Carolina issued its long-awaited stormwater regulations, permitting more than 70 communities and counties across the state. Similar to other states, most communities have to comply with the standard six minimum control measures, including public education and public involvement. Clemson Extension personnel developed a tailored stormwater education program to assist communities in conducting regional education to comply with stormwater permit requirements. This comprehensive stormwater education and outreach program is CAROLINA CLEAR. The benefits of such a program include but are not limited to the following:

- ◆ Continued relevance of Extension within a changing and urbanizing environment;
- ◆ Utilization and elevated exposure for already successful, recognized Extension programming;
- ◆ Alliances between communities, Extension offices and Extension agents are already established;
- ◆ The blend between research and Extension is critical in approaching stormwater issues at the regional level as well as in statewide impact estimations;
- ◆ By working together regionally, communities can leverage funds by paying towards having an on-the-ground Natural Resource Agent and local stormwater education coordinator.

In its approximate five years of operation, Carolina Clear has now partnered with more than 3 dozen (almost half) of the MS4s (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer permitted communities) in the state (Fig.1). Contractual agreements are established based on permits issued within a social and hydrologic region and are five years in length. Contract rates are established by a sliding scale based on population (Fig. 2).

The Collaboration Building Process

MS4 communities in South Carolina are typically in a region of a developed corridor surrounding a highway, river, or waterbody and have similar hydrologic and social characteristics. Each region of communities agree to become a *stormwater education consortium* or part of the *regional stormwater education effort* and produce goal statements, visibility (logo), develop members, and produce education plans that incorporate activities currently in place by the members (grassroot and municipal/county). **Collaboration and partnering is critical to the successful leveraging of funds and time, avoidance of overlap, and to produce a larger impact.**

Extension agents already working locally participate in the development of the education plan, which guides the efforts of the regional partnership. Extension-based programs highlighted include the following:

- ◆ Master Gardener and Advanced Master Gardener Training;
- ◆ Master Naturalist;
- ◆ Pesticide Applicator Licensing;
- ◆ Certified Erosion Prevention Soil Control Inspector (CEPSCI);
- ◆ 4H2O Summer Camps;
- ◆ Carolina Yard and Neighborhood.



Fig. 1 MS4 Permitted Communities

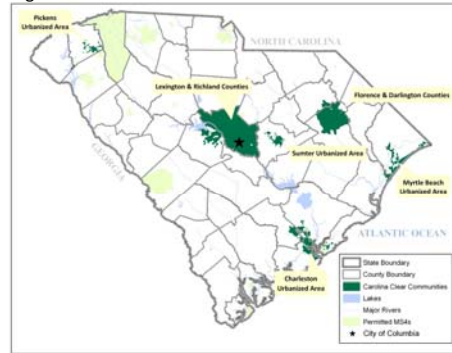


Fig. 2 Annual Contract Rates

| Pop. (Census 2000) | Annual Rate |
|--------------------|-------------|
| < 10,000 | \$3,000 |
| 10,000 – 20,000 | \$8,000 |
| 20,000 – 35,000 | \$15,000 |
| 35,000 – 50,000 | \$25,000 |
| > 50,000 | \$35,000 |

Developing a Larger Voice

Regional partnerships can also focus on joint mass media strategies since everyone within a region shares the same media network. The University's non-profit status allows Carolina Clear and partnering communities access to free public service announcement airtime, saving tens of thousands of dollars and generating effective statewide stormwater mass media campaigns. As for measuring outreach, billboards alone can yield up to 80,000 impacts per week! Similarly, 30-second television and radio commercials have aired locally.



Next Steps

Partnering with researchers and departments at Clemson will bring an advanced level of education to the communities' Carolina Clear advantage. Academia is involving design students in engineering, landscape architecture, and marketing. This partnership is yielding quality artwork, designs, and real-life experiences for classrooms.

Social marketing as well as monitoring impact and resulting behavioral change is a key focus of Carolina Clear. Telephone and web-based surveys will be conducted annually in an attempt to quantify true impact on constituents.



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