

# Chesapeake Ecology Center's PESP Strategy

## **Describe your Organization's Five-Year Goals Related to Pesticide Risk Reduction**

The Chesapeake Ecology Center's goal is to develop a Rainscaping Social Marketing Campaign to promote stormwater runoff solutions to mitigate nonpoint source pollution. Pesticides, fertilizer, and other contaminants in stormwater runoff from urban and suburban landscapes greatly impact the health of our waterways. Better management of stormwater runoff is needed so that cleaner water flows to our waterways.

The key concept is to implement a viral social marketing campaign where change takes place by using a variety of advertising techniques, presenting and working directly with citizens, and by imitation of best rainscaping practices. Messages will be disseminated via mass media and live venues to reach 50 percent or approximately 250,000 (total population 509,000) Anne Arundel County residents. Using the City of Annapolis (pop. 36,500) as our test focus for monitoring, we expect rainscaping messages to result in the implementation of rain gardens, rain barrels, pervious pavement, and green roofs by 3 percent or 1,095 Annapolis homeowners and businesses, which we will measure through website feedback and on-site visits, with extrapolated numbers applicable to the County. Innovative and standard marketing techniques will target urban and suburban landowners—especially gardeners, environmentalists, cultural creatives, home enthusiasts—and students in Anne Arundel County that have the value, but may not necessarily exhibit the behavior, in order to “Influence Public Behavior” for a common goal of improving water quality.

## **What do you envision doing (broadly) to try to resolve your major issues?**

Many people don't understand that many of their culturally driven landscaping practices are not sustainable and cause significant damage to ecosystems. Some people don't care; while others simply don't know the issues or where to begin in implementing sustainable landscaping practices as solutions. People also lack know-how, for example, many individuals are hesitant to install a rain garden for fear of "not doing it right" and unnecessarily imagine they need to “size them just so” or incorporate complex engineering to handle excess water.

An essential first step to develop and implement the social marketing campaign is to recruit strategic partners for the Rainscaping Campaign Partners. Thus far, the following organizations have agreed to participate:

Government: Anne Arundel County, City of Annapolis, Maryland Department of Natural Resources (3 programs), U.S. EPA—Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program.

NGOs: Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Arlington Echo—Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council, Chesapeake Ecology Center (CEC), Educators Connecting Research to the K-16 Classroom, Lower Western Shore Tributary Team, Maryland Master Gardener Program, Severn River Association, Spa Creek Conservancy, University of Maryland Cooperative Extension—Bay-Wise Program, and Volunteer Center For Anne Arundel County.

Letters of support for the Rainscaping Campaign have been received from: Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Anne Arundel County, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, City of Annapolis, Lower Western Shore Tributary Team, Maryland Department of Natural Resources (3), Severn River Association, and University of Maryland Cooperative Extension—Bay-Wise Program.

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## **Goal 1 and Tactics**

The goal of implementing the Rainscaping Campaign will be achieved through:

- Pre-Production: Rainscaping Campaign Work Group conducts surveys, focus group testing, literature review of market research, and related campaign material review.
- Production: develop “RainscapingCampaign.org” website; develop multi-media marketing materials, brochure, promotional calendar, low-cost rain garden signs; design Google Analytics tracking. Install Demonstration Rainscaping Stations as examples of best rainscaping practices.
- Distribution via: promotional activities, websites, mass media, and live venues with help of train-the-trainer program participants.

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## **Goal 2 and Tactics**

We will evaluate all aspects of the Rainscaping Campaign. We will: obtain feedback from site visits and website tracking; evaluate effectiveness of campaign material, methods used, and campaign results; and compare results to examples from other campaigns.

The projected project outcome is that the Rainscaping Campaign is highly successful with messages reaching 50 percent of Anne Arundel County residents, and 1,095 test Annapolis homeowners and businesses install rainscapes (with numbers extrapolated for the County). The projected post-project outcome is that extensive evaluation results are very useful for future campaigns, and the model developed is used by others.

EPA can assist by promoting Rainscaping and assist with grant funding.