

Improving Urban Waters: Engaging the Hispanic Community in Reducing Stormwater Pollution in Nampa, Idaho

The City of Nampa Reached Out to Engage the Hispanic Community in Stormwater Improvements

The City of Nampa, Idaho, has developed a stormwater program aimed at reducing the amount of pollution entering storm drains and ultimately water bodies, including Indian Creek where stormwater has been identified as a major contributor of pollution. The City is trying to reduce stormwater pollution, in part, by targeting behavior changes through public education and outreach. The City of Nampa recognized that a successful stormwater improvement program would need to include the entire community. Approximately 22.9 percent of Nampa's 81,557 residents are of Hispanic origin.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the City of Nampa began a partnership in 2011 to reach out to Hispanic residents in Nampa. The partnership was funded by the EPA's Urban Waters and Environmental Justice programs.



Indian Creek in the City of Nampa, Idaho

Indian Creek originates in Elmore County in Southwest Idaho, and is a tributary of the Boise River. The Boise River flows into the Snake River which eventually meets the Columbia River.

EPA Urban Waters Program

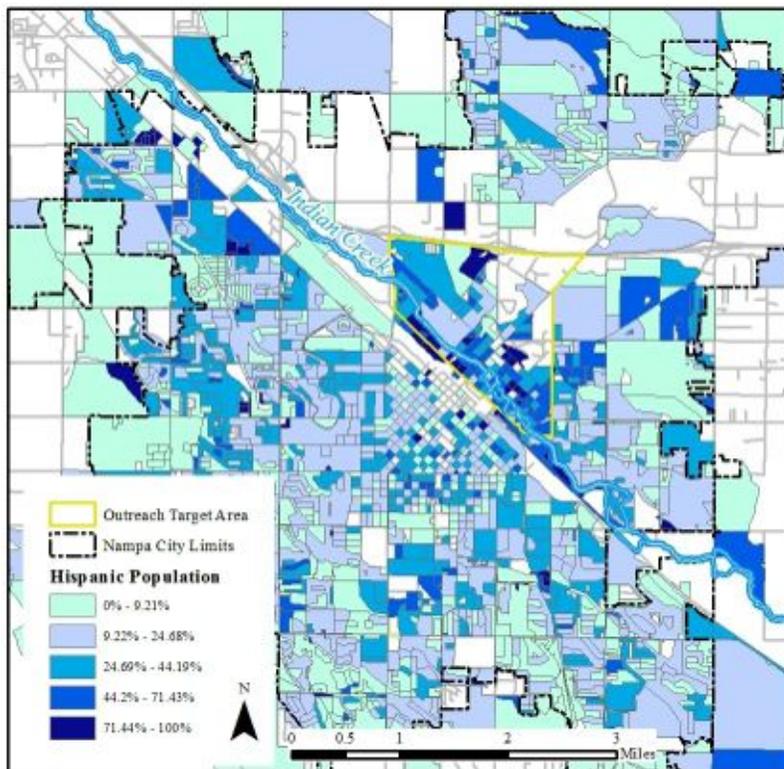
EPA's Urban Waters Program supports the goals and principles of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, a partnership of 12 federal agencies working to reconnect urban communities with their waterways. In Region 10, which serves Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington and Tribal Nations, EPA is working collaboratively with community organizations, tribal, state, federal and local agencies.

EPA’s goal is to integrate and leverage existing programs to foster increased understanding and a sense of engagement, connection and ownership of waters and surrounding land in communities across the country. This is especially important as urban waters impact large populations and can influence far-reaching land-use decisions.

Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

The City of Nampa has a significant Hispanic and Latino population. The neighborhoods around Indian Creek have some of the largest Hispanic and Latino populations in the entire city. These neighborhoods include people with Limited English Proficiency. The health of Indian Creek is impacted by the surrounding neighborhoods in Nampa and in turn the health of the community is impacted by Indian Creek through recreational activities. Because clean water is important to all Nampa community members, effective outreach and education to Nampa’s Hispanic and Latino population is essential.



Hispanic or Latino Population of Nampa, Idaho by 2010 Census Block

27% of individuals living in the southern half of the outreach target area have a Limited English Proficiency.
- 2005-2009 American Community Survey

Planning

Early in the process, the City of Nampa reached out to a local public involvement firm, RBCI that specializes in community outreach. City stormwater manager Cheryl Jenkins and Rosemary Curtin of RBCI formed a team that designed and is carrying out a plan for engaging the Hispanic Community in Nampa's stormwater program.

The team assembled a special advisory group of Hispanic community groups and leadership. The advisory group gave several recommendations that helped shape the program. Based on the recommendations, the team realized additional research and information about the Hispanic community in Nampa was needed for a successful outreach and public education program.

The team approached Jocabed Veloz of Health Fit Designs, a local Hispanic community leader and health educator, to author a demographic profile of Hispanics in the Indian Creek Watershed. Veloz also developed a directory of Nampa Hispanic leaders, media, businesses and organizations. The information helped the City establish contacts with Hispanic organizations and successfully target outreach efforts. For example, the City learned which businesses employed a high percentage of Hispanic workers or owners; important community events and publications; and the ages, locations and education levels of Hispanic residents.

The robust planning efforts and the partnership between Cheryl Jenkins, EPA, Rosemary Curtin and Jocabed Veloz resulted in a clear, effective outreach plan and several initial communication materials, including a Spanish-language display board and fact sheets.



Labor Appreciation Day

Community Outreach

As outreach efforts increased, EPA continued its partnership with the City of Nampa. The next phase of outreach began with a coordinating workshop with EPA, the City's team, and the Nampa School District. This phase of outreach included producing and translating stormwater educational materials into Spanish and forming relationships with local Hispanic organizations.

With the focus on encouraging community members to change their everyday behaviors to help prevent polluted stormwater, the City produced a series of bilingual "tip sheets." The purpose of the tip sheets is to educate residents about small behavior changes that impact stormwater pollution – for example, car maintenance, lawn and garden care, and reporting spills.

The stormwater tip sheets combined with a mobile stormwater educational display board system has been extensively used during events such as Labor Appreciation Day, Day of the Child, health fairs and other community events with a large Hispanic presence.

Meanwhile, City stormwater staff and Veloz have met with the Mexican consulate, the Mayor's Hispanic Business Professionals Committee, Latino health and political associations, the Hispanic women's professional association and several other Hispanic groups. Each group has helped the City distribute stormwater tip sheets, helpful information and event invitations to its members. Veloz has also assisted the City with interviews in the Hispanic media.

Hispanic attendance and interest in stormwater events continues to grow. The annual community clean-up day was scheduled in an area with a large Hispanic presence. The bilingual stormwater website (www.stormwater.cityofnampa.us) won first place in the 2013 Idaho Press Club competition, which recognizes outstanding media and public outreach efforts.

Ongoing and Lasting Community Contribution

Additional funding from EPA is supporting Nampa's ongoing efforts to educate and involve the Hispanic community in the City's stormwater program.



Nampa Stormwater Advisory Group Field Trip

EPA support for Hispanic outreach efforts have given the City the opportunity to develop a program that is inclusive of everyone. The City placed a "call to action" and a Nampa Stormwater Advisory Group was formed to provide ongoing guidance to the City's stormwater program with an emphasis on inclusion and outreach to the Hispanic community. The first order of business for the group is to help determine the location, design and messages for the development of bilingual interpretive signage to be placed at a location along Indian Creek. The group has met several times and is assisting the City with determining the location, design and educational content for the signage. The City will install the sign structures during the annual community clean-up day. Group members have committed to ongoing involvement in the public outreach program.

The City will continue working with its advisory group and local Hispanic community organizations as the program progresses. By partnering with EPA, the City of Nampa gained the momentum that will carry the Hispanic outreach program forward in future years.



Highlights

- Stormwater was identified as a major contributor to pollution in Indian Creek. The City wanted to reach out to the Hispanic community in Nampa and include Hispanic residents in the City's stormwater program efforts.
- The City invested time and grant money into the research and planning before launching the full outreach campaign. The City's strong planning efforts have led to long-term partnerships with other groups that will help sustain the program in future years.
- The program gained rapid momentum due to a partnership with EPA, a public involvement consultant and a Spanish-language translator who acted as a community liaison.
- The EPA contributed funding support from the EPA Urban Waters Program and the EPA Environmental Justice Program.

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