



Marion County Office of the County Engineer
Stormwater Management Program

Stormwater Education Plan

2025/2026

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Stormwater Public Education Overview

Mission: The Stormwater Management Program of the Marion County Office of the County Engineer is dedicated to protecting local water resources by addressing stormwater runoff and its impact on waterways and the aquifer, as well as educating citizens on best practices for pollution prevention.

Background: Stormwater staff are responsible for stormwater management related to the County transportation network, including oversight of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s), watershed management program, stormwater design and engineering services for maintenance and stormwater retrofit projects, maintenance contract management, construction management and inspection services, and development review. Two key components of the NPDES permit are centered around public education and participation. The education effort is promoted through programs of public outreach and public participation is encouraged through involvement.

Public education topics: 1) Water resources county-wide and Stormwater's role in protecting them; 2) Personal/nonpoint source pollution (including sinkholes/karst soils, fertilizer use and other residential activities, and recreational activities such as boating); 3) construction runoff; 4) illicit discharges; and 5) municipal operations.

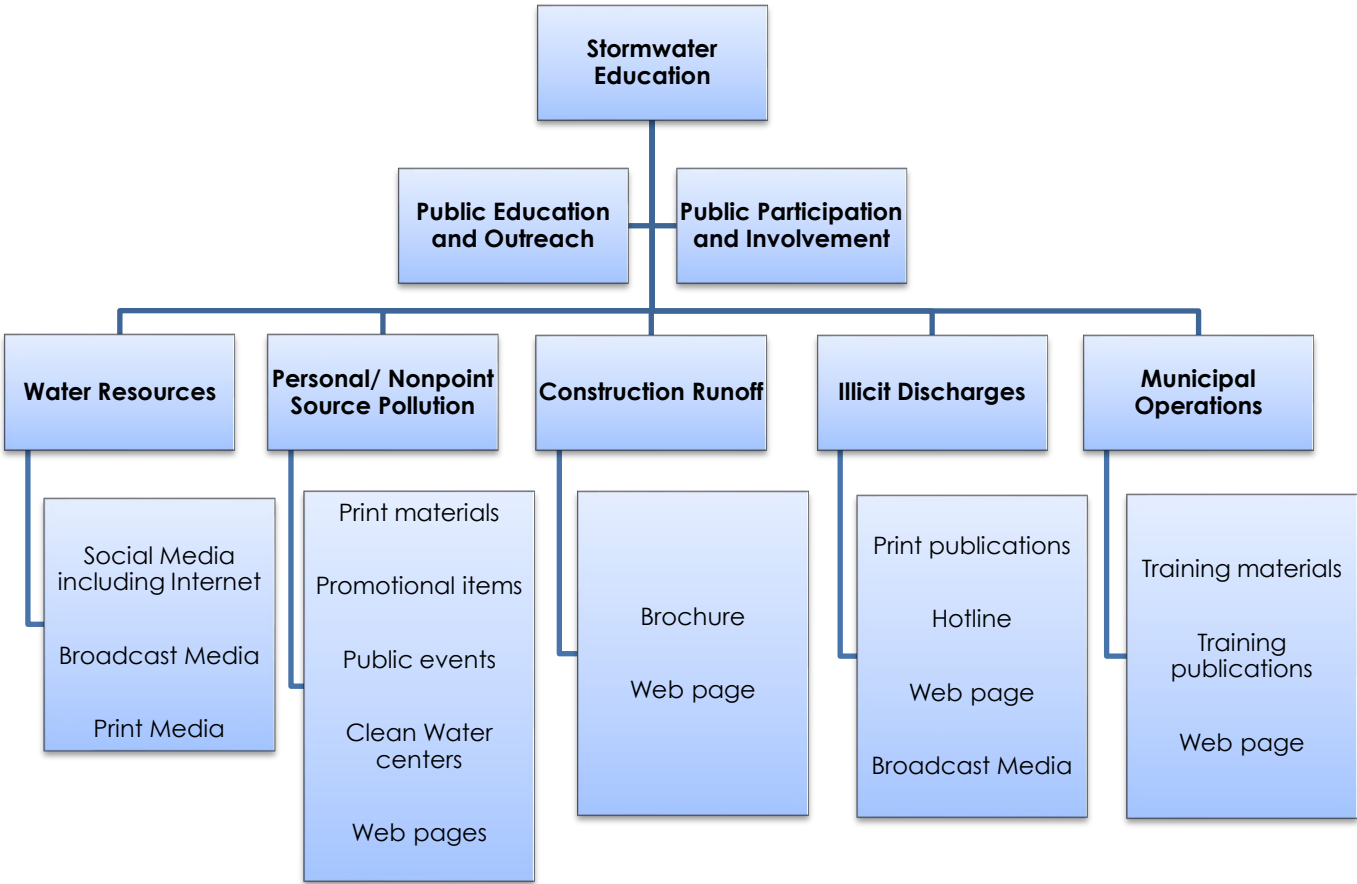
Target audience: General population; homeowners; lawncare/landscaping professionals; construction industry professionals; County operations; commercial/businesses with potential to discharge pollutants; and children/youth.

Partnerships: Marion County departments, including: Utilities, Extension Services, Public Library System, Solid Waste, Public Relations, and Parks & Recreation.

Public Education Budget for Fiscal Year 2025/2026: \$49,465

Ongoing Activities

Figure 1.1



Goals and Objectives for Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Goal 1: Increase awareness of stormwater pollution and the public's role in resource protection.

Objective 1: Create and maintain a “H2OMG” webpage and continue work on youth-oriented outreach addressing Marion County’s water resources.

Over the past 17 years, Marion County Stormwater sponsored the Newspapers In Education program for schools in partnership with the Ocala Star-Banner, delivering more than 66,500 copies of stormwater pollution prevention and water resource publications to elementary school students. Starting in 2020, the NIE tabloid was distributed digitally to students K-12 in Marion County schools.

Since 2013, the NIE tabloids were created by County staff to specifically discuss Marion County’s water resources and cover topics ranging from karst topography and the formation of springs to how to prevent stormwater pollution. Local art work from Marion County students was displayed throughout the tab to reflect how they have been inspired by the County’s water resources. Activities were included throughout the NIE tab to teach and reinforce new knowledge learned within the articles. The NIE tab was reviewed and updated each year to ensure it met Sunshine State Standards.

In an effort to better connect with today’s youth, the NIE tabloid was converted to a H2OMG webpage in 2024. This allows for the NIE to continue to reach students through more familiar media, while allowing for greater reach to all students in Marion County. The H2OMG webpage is designed and produced by the Marion County Office of the County Engineer and the Office of Public Information in collaboration with Marion County Utilities, Marion County Parks and Recreation, Marion County UF/IFAS Extension Service, and Marion County Public Schools.

Future youth outreach will continue to focus on Marion County water resources.

Actions:

- Convene project committee for 2026.
- Establish production timeline.
- Create content and graphic design plan.
- Host art contest.
- Design and edit webpage.
- Coordinate promotion of webpage at area schools.

Measurability: Completion of actions by set date.
Number of webpage visits.

Impressions: Number of Impressions/Year: 10,000+

<i>Timeline:</i>	<u>2026 Webpage</u>
	Oct-Nov 2025: Convene committee and establish timeline.
	Nov-Dec 2025: Plan content and graphic design and hold student art contest.
	Dec-Jan 2026: Revise content and graphic design requirements as necessary.
	Feb 2026: Select and announce art contest winner.
	Feb-March 2026: Hold first round of edits.
	Mar - Apr 2026: Review and complete final design.
	Apr 2026: Promote in schools during Earth Week.

Objective 2: Print and distribute 2026 and 2027 Stormwater annual calendar.

Actions: Distribute 2026 Stormwater calendar. Design and print 2027 Stormwater calendar. Stormwater pollution prevention tips, water resources facts, and water themed quotes are incorporated into the calendar for each month and target an appropriate message for that month.

Measurability: Completion of actions by set date.
Number of calendars distributed.

Impressions: Number of Impressions/Year: 10,560
Cost per Impression: \$0.56
[Based on 4,400 calendars per average household of 2.4.]

<i>Timeline:</i>	<u>2026 Stormwater Annual Calendar</u>
	August 2025: Print publication.
	Oct – Mar 2026: Distribute publication.
	<u>2027 Stormwater Annual Calendar</u>
	May 2026: Select and announce calendar theme.
	May 2026: Distribute email reminder of upcoming contest.
	June 2026: Conduct photo contest.
	June - July 2026: Design calendar.
	Aug 2026: Print publication.

Objective 3: Host the annual “Run for the Springs” 5K.

The 2025 event had 122 registered runners and posted a profit of \$13,471.13.

Actions: Seek to increase the number of runners.
Establish planning committee and develop marketing plan.
Seek community sponsorships and participant groups.

Measurability: Completion of actions by set dates.
Number of registered participants.

Impressions: Number of Impressions/Year: Estimated 200 – Goal: 200 Runners
Cost per Impression: \$0

Timeline:

Oct 2025:	Contract services; establish planning committee. Develop marketing plan. Determine beneficiaries.
Nov – Feb 2026:	Seek sponsorships and participation.
Nov – Feb 2026:	Disseminate media releases and other marketing materials.
Feb 2026:	Host run and perform follow up survey.

Objective 4: Utilization of Billboards and Radio for the pollution prevention education program.

Billboards

Actions Utilization of digital billboards for targeted messages on fertilizer and springs protection.

Event/Message	Start Date	End Date	Proposed location
Run for The Springs Promo	1/5/26	1/18/26	Clear Channel: Ocala and immediately surrounding areas
Run for The Springs Promo	2/2/26	3/1/26	Clear Channel: Ocala and immediately surrounding areas
Protect Our Springs	3/2/26	3/22/26	Clear Channel: Ocala and immediately surrounding areas
Be Wise When You Fertilize	3/30/26	4/26/26	Clear Channel: Ocala and immediately surrounding areas
Down the Drain	5/25/26	5/31/26	Clear Channel: Ocala and immediately surrounding areas

Measurability: Number of billboards.

Impressions: Number of Estimated Impressions/Year: 2,750,000
Cost per Impression: < \$0.01

Timeline:

Oct-Dec 2025:	Coordination of the digital billboard schedule and agreements.
Jan-Feb 2026:	Display Run for The Springs promotional messaging followed by Thank You message to all sponsors
Mar 2026:	Display of springs protection messaging
April 2026:	Display Be Wise When You Fertilize messaging
May 2026:	Display stormwater runoff messaging

Radio

Actions: Utilization of 30-second public service announcements (PSAs) on radio promoting stormwater pollution prevention including targeted messages on illicit discharges.

Measurability: Number of broadcasts advertised during prime periods throughout each day

Impressions: Number of Impressions/Year: 159,100
Cost per Impression: \$0.11

Timeline: Mar-May 2026: Develop messaging for PSAs for Summer.
May 2026: Record PSAs for Summer.
June-August 2026: Implement advertisement of PSAs for Summer.

Objective 5: Promote stormwater pollution prevention at events and on County website.

Actions: Attend all major local public events throughout the year to educate citizens and distribute stormwater education materials. Potential events include:

- Parks & Recreation Fall Carnival (October)
- Villages Government Day (November)
- Run for the Springs (February)
- Parade of Senior Services (March)
- Florida Springsfest or Habitat Ocala Strawberry Festival (March)
- Master Gardeners Spring Festival (March)
- Marion County Day (March)
- Citizen's Academy (April)
- Earthfest at Tusawilla Park (April)

Measurability/impressions: Number of educational items distributed and event attendees

Timeline: Ongoing, with yearly measurement of materials distributed and audiences reached.

Objective 6: Coordinate stormwater public education presentations at homeowner association (HOA) meetings.

Actions: Coordinate two to four presentations throughout the year to educate HOAs on impervious area requirements and stormwater pollution prevention along with distributing educational materials.

Measurability: Number of events, participants and educational items distributed.

Impressions: Number of Impressions/Year: Varies

Cost per Impression: Varies

Timeline: Ongoing, with yearly measurement of materials distributed and audiences reached.

Goal 2: Increase public participation and involvement

Objective 1: Offer stormwater water quality grants for unincorporated Marion County residents and businesses.

Actions: Promote Run for the Springs Septic Tank Maintenance Grant and Stormwater Education Grant programs in coordination with Department of Health and Marion County School Board.

Measurability: Media release and promotion county-wide.
Number of applications received and number of grants awarded.

Timeline: Oct 2025: Issue media release and promote grants program via web and Facebook.
Ongoing: Implement program and award grants.

Marion County FY 2025/2026 Stormwater Education Program Budget Summary

Project	Description	Total Budget (FY 2025/2026)
Stormwater annual calendar	Print and distribute 12-month calendar with pollution prevention tips.	\$6,000
Community Events (Run for the Springs, etc.)	Promote water quality improvements through community-based events	\$10,000
Billboard campaign	Broadcast on digital billboard stormwater pollution prevention messages on topics such as fertilizer use. Under lease agreement with Clear Channel, produce and post billboard messages for the Be Wise campaign and Run for the Springs campaigns.	\$7,375
Pollution prevention radio campaign	Broadcast 30-second public service announcements promoting pollution prevention including fertilizer messages	\$21,090
Educational material printing	Print and distribute pollution prevention materials.	\$2,500
Pollution prevention public education items	Purchase and distribute promotional items that support pollution prevention.	\$2,500
Public Education Total		\$49,465