

Hoboken Green Team

Storm Drain Mural Project



OVERVIEW

Project Description

The Hoboken Green Team has developed a plan for a series of murals to be painted around storm drain inlets near some of the schools around the area. Your students have the opportunity to design and paint environmentally themed murals around storm drains, utilizing the asphalt and/or sidewalk surrounding the drain as a canvas. Each mural will be designed to educate students and local citizens about the causes of water pollution, and the effects of storm drain contamination. The artwork will be painted in prominent locations where the murals will be noticeable to the public. **(Please see the attached document for a list of storm drain locations and the schools to which they've been assigned).**

Specific Goals

By turning storm drains into attention-grabbing pieces of artwork, the Hoboken Green Team aims to raise awareness of the harmful effects of litter, gasoline, oil, grass clippings, road salt, and other types of pollution on our waterways. It is important that local citizens realize these pollutants are generated by everyday human activities, and can be carried by rain and snowmelt to storm drains.

These murals would also inform kids and adults that storm drains collect water and carry it to local streams, lakes, and rivers, correcting the misconception that storm drains always lead to wastewater treatment plants. By educating Hoboken residents about this connection, we hope to reduce pollution and improve water quality in Hoboken. Overall, we aim to increase environmental awareness, promote water pollution prevention activities, and encourage environmental and watershed stewardship.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Problem

Many people do not realize that the litter, animal waste, fertilizer, gasoline, oil, and other pollutants covering our land eventually end up in our waterways. As water flows over the land, it picks up pollutants and carries them to a common body of water like streams, rivers, lakes, or oceans.

Urban areas often exacerbate this problem due to the prevalence of impervious surfaces like parking lots, streets, concrete pavers, and roofs. These types of infrastructure prevent rainfall

and snow melt from soaking into the ground, and increase the amount of water running off the land. This precipitation, which is called storm water runoff, is diverted to storm drains and pipes that transport the water to local waterways. It is a common misconception that water entering storm drains is treated at the wastewater treatment plant. In most cases, storm drains lead directly to streams and rivers, unless one resides in a community where drains are connected to the sanitary sewer system. Since the water carries all litter, animal waste, chemicals, and much more, all of these pollutants also go directly to the stream.

At one point we have all walked by a storm drain filled with trash, or have heard the story about an uninformed citizen dumping chemicals down storm drains. One solution to these problems is to inform citizens about the consequences of storm water runoff and pollution, and the negative effects on water quality, wildlife, and humans.

Proposed Solution

Storm drain murals are a unique and inexpensive solution to this problem. The murals that you create with your students around the existing storm drain are a wonderful way to incorporate earth science, environmentalism, activism, and visual arts into one project. Ultimately, your designs must aim to indicate that all drains empty to waterways.

Such murals are proven to reduce the amount of litter, chemicals, and debris entering storm drains by reminding would-be-dumpers that storm drains empty to local streams, and that storm water is not treated. Murals have the potential to educate pedestrians in a similar way, but the larger space provides a canvas to showcase the effects of pollution, or reasons why not to pollute our waters. Most storm drains are marked as draining to waterways, but not everyone notices or understands what this means. Murals have the ability to fill this knowledge gap, while drawing more attention from local citizens, especially students who would benefit from constantly looking at the artwork because of the proximity of the murals to their schools.

Anticipated Benefits

These murals would be a positive catalyst of change, generating interest in environmental issues and promoting environmental stewardship. Storm drain murals will serve as reminders to passing pedestrians of the connection between storm drains and our waterways, while emphasizing the idea of only rain down the storm drain! By heightening the awareness of this issue, fewer pollutants will enter the Hudson River, resulting in improved water quality. Painting a series of murals will also help showcase artistic talents, and promote the local art scene. Lastly, storm drain murals will enhance the natural beauty of Hoboken, covering impervious surfaces with art and improving the quality of public spaces.

Sample Designs

Similar storm drain mural projects have been painted around the country, and a few are shown below to represent the various possibilities. Each mural around the storm drains would

incorporate a relevant statement, such as “Only rain down the storm drain!” or “Drains to the Hudson River.” In addition, any plants or animals incorporated into the murals would be native to NJ.



Springdale, AR



Malibu, FL



Fayetteville, Arkansas



Springdale, AR



Coos Bay, Charleston Oregon



Springfield, Missouri

Project Details

Each school will design and create a mural for two storm drains in the vicinity of their school. In addition to generating their murals, each school must also demonstrate what they have learned by creating a poster that highlights the school creating the mural, the significance / symbolism of their mural, and the importance of storm drain awareness. These posters will then be displayed prominently in City Hall in order raise even more awareness within the Hoboken community.

Below you will find a list of locations alongside a school. Each school will have the privilege of decorating two storm drains. Please do not decorate any drain other than those you've been assigned.

Each school is responsible for providing its own materials and supplies. You are expected to utilize paints that are ecofriendly and capable of enduring forces of nature such as snow and rain.

Any Questions about the program should be directed to:

Elizabeth Balladares, AmeriCorps NJ Watershed Ambassador:
ambassador@hackensackriverkeeper.org

OR

Jeffrey Train, Hoboken Green Team Member: jeffreytrain91@gmail.com

Important Dates

Friday 2/5: You must e-mail Elizabeth Balladares (ambassador@hackensackriverkeeper.org) and confirm that your school is participating in the mural program.

Friday 4/15: All murals must be complete & posters must be waiting in their respective main offices so that a Green Team member can pick them up.

Friday 4/22: Murals will be publicized, introduced, and photographed.