

## INFORMATION AND EDUCATION: COLORADO WATER PROTECTION PROGRAM

Conducted by: League of Women Voters of Colorado Education Fund  
 On the Web: [www.ourwater.org](http://www.ourwater.org)  
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This pamphlet was distributed in both English and Spanish.

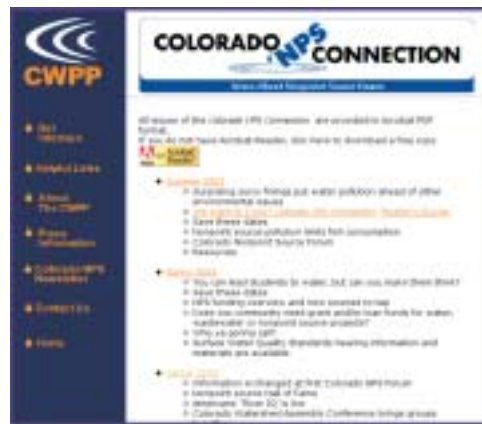
Recognizing the problem of household-generated polluted runoff, the League of Women Voters of Colorado Education Fund created an information and education program to increase awareness of the issues among urban and suburban adults in Colorado. This program, the Colorado Water Protection Project (CWPP), has received two NPS grants.

Phase one began with a telephone survey to determine a baseline of awareness and the best methods to reach the target audience. Many survey respondents indicated that they didn't think the issue was significant in their neighborhood nor a substantial contributor to the general level of pollution. It also became apparent that the most effective media to reach the audience were television and local newspapers.

The subsequent media campaign, "It's our water, Colorado. Let's be careful what we put in it," focused on educating the public about the contribution of household and garden chemicals to water pollution. The campaign also emphasized the negative impacts of pet waste and automobile products on wildlife populations.

During the one-and-a-half week television campaign, it was estimated that 85 to 91 percent of the target audience saw at least one commercial, and, on average, targeted viewers saw it 3.4 times.

In addition to television, the CWPP campaign included RTD bus signs. Approximately 500,000 Denver-metro area residents saw these signs daily during a one month period.



[www.ourwater.org](http://www.ourwater.org)

To complement the paid advertising campaign, the League developed an extensive public relations campaign, which included:

- A proclamation of Polluted Runoff Prevention Week by Colorado Governor Bill Owens
- Television coverage in Denver, Pueblo and Grand Junction
- Cable television interviews
- Creation and distribution of flyers in both English and Spanish
- Submittal of articles to local newspapers and newsletters

- A guest editorial column in both the Denver Rocky Mountain News and the Denver Post
- Discussion of the topic on a Denver gardening radio show
- Volunteers from 13 local Leagues supported the media and public relations campaign. A speaker's bureau was formed and a series of gardening workshops conducted.

A poster contest was organized, and information was distributed at a county fair and in local utility bills.

The League also developed an information clearinghouse with a toll-free phone number and database of nonpoint source resources, publications and contacts. A web site, [www.ourwater.org](http://www.ourwater.org), was created to support the clearinghouse activities.

An employee outreach program involved more than 20 companies across the state. Companies distributed flyers to employees and published related articles in their newsletters.

A second telephone survey demonstrated that the League was successful in increasing



Denver RTD Bus Signs



Pollution Prevention Tool Kit

awareness of nonpoint source issues and the impacts individuals could have on reducing pollution. The project was less successful in increasing the awareness of how pollution reached streams, rivers and lakes.

Building on the success of phase one and reviews by project managers, the League launched a second media and public relations campaign. Using the same approach and ads, the League was able to create approximately 4.2 million adult television impressions in the Denver, Colorado Springs and Grand Junction media markets. Additionally, 500,000 people saw the bus signs daily for a six-week period.

New aspects of the project in phase two included the development of the "Colorado Water Protection Kit" which emphasized strategies for preventing polluted runoff as well as other water quality protection tips. A 2001 calendar focusing on the same themes was developed and distributed.

More than 16,000 bookmarks were produced and distributed at locations including



CWPP Newsletter

libraries, bookstores and nurseries. CWPP staff also were present at a number of public activities including the Colorado State Fair, Ocean Journey, Earth Fair and People's Fair.

Phase two saw the increased value of Internet communications and the cost-benefits of public relations efforts compared to paid advertising. Phase three will continue this focus on public relations including efforts to partner with local and regional entities to distribute information about nonpoint source issues.