



2021 MWMC  
COMMUNICATIONS  
PLAN



# The MWMC Communications Plan

## 2021

### I. Introduction

For over 40 years, the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission (MWMC) has been providing essential and sustainable wastewater treatment services for our growing community, while protecting the local environment. However, the 2015 baseline survey efforts confirmed: there was a low level of awareness about the MWMC and its well-managed wastewater services amongst its customers. While the 2019 survey efforts showed awareness remains flat, it also indicated an increase in the significant level of importance community members place on the environment and the need to protect it.

This Communications Plan includes goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics to further support the MWMC's Mission, Vision, and Values Statements, and for increasing awareness of the MWMC and its role in the health of our community and environment, specifically the positive impact the MWMC has on the water quality of the Willamette River. Stated measurable objectives in this plan are tied directly to both community survey results. Future community survey efforts will continue to help determine the success of this plan's implemented strategies and tactics.

This plan will be adaptive to the needs of the MWMC and the community it serves. It will be used to help shape Key Outcomes and will be updated periodically following community survey efforts. This plan was developed with the MWMC Communication Team's guiding principles that information provided by the MWMC is accurate, effective, consistent, cost-efficient, engaging, and fun.

**II. Goal:** Increase awareness of the MWMC and its role in the health and vitality of our community and environment.

### III. Objectives

- **Increase community awareness so that more than 25 percent of those surveyed are able to identify the MWMC; up from an average of 17.5 percent.**
- **Increase initial favorable response regarding the MWMC to 20 percent; up from an average of 13 percent.**
- **Improve community opinion regarding the MWMC's performance by 10 percent with overall performance of 50 percent or better on all metrics; up from an average of 43.5 percent.**

In sections VI and VII, this plan identifies strategies and tactics to reach these stated objectives that were developed based on the FY15 and FY19 Community Survey findings, and the results of Strategic Communication Planning Phase 2. Strategies define how to achieve overall objectives by answering “what” will be done. The strategies outlined in this plan address stated objectives and additionally will help improve internal communications. The tactics identified are the specific activities that will be implemented to further strategies and overall objectives.

## IV. Core Messages

**Message 1:** We clean water.

**Message 2:** The MWMC is committed to clean water, community health, and the environment.

**Message 3:** Everyone has a role in keeping our water clean and the environment healthy. Every day actions make a difference.

**Message 4:** The MWMC is a leader in effective and sustainable wastewater treatment practices.

**Message 5:** Having clean water is vital now and in the future. The MWMC cleans our community's water 24/7 using both proven and innovative processes.

## V. Audience

The MWMC has an extensive audience. From those we serve, to those we collaborate with, the broader region depends on the work we provide for a healthy environment and growing community. The strategies and tactics of this plan will be implemented to reach and communicate with the primary target audience of the MWMC's ratepayers and meet plan objectives; additional audiences are recognized as important to reach plan objectives. Audiences will be communicated with using the most-effective communication channels available and provided information that aligns with communications guiding principles.

Ratepayers	Stakeholders/Partners	Broader Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residents of Eugene and Springfield</li> <li>- Private business/ industry</li> <li>- Property owners/ managers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional Wastewater Program staff</li> <li>- Eugene City Council/ Springfield City Council/ Lane County Board of Commissioners</li> <li>- Congressional delegation and staff</li> <li>- Local, state, and national regulators</li> <li>- Pollution Prevention Coalition</li> <li>- Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies (ACWA)</li> <li>- School districts</li> <li>- Local utilities including Eugene Water &amp; Electric Board (EWEB) and Springfield Utility Board (SUB)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Business leaders</li> <li>- Development community</li> <li>- Media</li> <li>- Opinion leaders</li> <li>- Environmental interest groups</li> <li>- Community organizations</li> <li>- Universities/ community colleges</li> <li>- Industry peers</li> <li>- Water Environment Federation (WEF)</li> <li>- Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association (PNCWA)</li> <li>- National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA)</li> </ul>

## VI. Strategies

1. Increase community understanding of the connection between well-managed wastewater services and a healthy local environment.
2. Raise awareness of the MWMC as a leader in water resources management, specifically in wastewater treatment practices and expertise.
3. Increase community members' understanding of how their behavior and practices affect the health of local waterways and what they can do to help protect our environment.
4. Strengthen communications by evaluating the effectiveness of strategies/tactics implemented.
5. Increase awareness of the importance of having clean water now and in the future, and the steps it takes to clean water.

## VII. Tactics

Tactic	Description	Key Staff
Branding	Phase 3 – Create shareable content in the form of a blog or podcast to help build the MWMC brand as a leader in the wastewater industry.	General Manager, Communications Team
Sponsorships	Continue to build awareness within the community; align and support events or organizations with a direct connection to MWMC and similar values. Currently, there are 5 per year.	Communications Team
Social Media	Continue to grow social media presence with Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube using video clips, photos, graphics, etc. for weekly posts. Additionally, contests aligned with sponsorships, pollution prevention, etc. Plus, digital advertising through boosted ads or specific advertising campaigns. See MWMC Social Media Plan for additional details.	Communications Team
Media Relations	Increase engagement with media outlets to share the MWMC's story, including media opportunities to tour MWMC facilities; meet with City of Eugene staff to coordinate media relations 2 to 4 times annually or as needed.	Communications Team, Eugene Public Works Public Affairs
Annual Report	Report out and highlight past year accomplishments, upcoming initiatives, and financials to partner agencies, community groups and others that have an interest in MWMC. Sent out in digital format only each February.	Communications Team
E-Newsletter	E-news sent out monthly regarding MWMC news and updates (e.g. construction projects); continue to increase the number of subscribers.	Communications Team
Project Profiles	Create a handout that describes a specific project with frequently asked questions. As needed.	MWMC Experts, Communications Team

Tactic	Description	Key Staff
Professional Images and Graphics	Continue to build an archive of images. Additionally, create a suite of illustrations, infographics, and maps that help tell the MWMC story and engage community members in our story; can be used in presentations, social media posts, website, handouts, etc.	Communications Team
Speakers Bureau	Continue presenting to outside organizations for increased awareness and understanding. Update presentation as needed. Aim for 2 to 4 per year.	MWMC Experts, Communications Team
Videos	Create a new video with a focus on the importance of clean water and how the community is connected to water while touching on the MWMC's successes, why it continues to be a strong partnership, and the overarching purpose.	Communications Team
Website	Regularly provide resources and information updates on MWMC website as needed, plus improvements such as news room and other timely content.	Communications Team, Administration
Pollution Prevention Outreach	Continue education/marketing campaigns to inform community members of preferred practices that help reduce pollution in wastewater (e.g. drug take back boxes).	Communications Team
Water Industry Collaboration	Work with industry partners (e.g. ACWA) to build overall public awareness of the wastewater industry.	All
Clean Water University	2-hour field trip to the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant; session currently held in the fall. Consider adding a spring session if additional volunteers can be secured to help put on the event.	Communications Team, Environmental Technicians, Volunteers
Facility Tours	Meet or exceed 1,000 participants annually in tours, including students and community groups.	Communications Team, Regional Wastewater Staff
Recognition Opportunities	Participate in industry-wide recognition opportunities as identified (e.g. Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association's photo calendar contest). As applicable.	All
Utility Bill Insert	Develop informational brochure including rate changes, sent in July to roughly 33,000 SUB customers. Per agreement, the City of Springfield is allowed two SUB inserts per year; one is the local wastewater and stormwater rate brochure mentioned, and the other covers stormwater issues.	Communications Team, Administration
Promotional Giveaway Items	Branded items to be given away at community events or meetings that help build awareness of the MWMC, promote the website and social media sites, and support pollution prevention practices. Annually or as needed.	Communications Team

<b>Tactic</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Key Staff</b>
MWMC Handouts	Develop informational handout materials (e.g. importance of water, the three local water systems, etc.) for use at community events and on website. Update the general MWMC brochure.	Communications Team
Public Information Updates & Analytics	Update Commission annually with progress made on communication tactics.	Communications Team