

Sustainable Maryland Re-certification

Environment and Sustainability Newsletter

Innovative Demonstration Project - Community Action

As part of its Sustainable Maryland Community Action plan, Rockville has developed and distributed the Environment and Sustainability (E&S) Newsletter. The Newsletter serves the public of Rockville with environmental news, volunteer opportunities, events, programs updates, and tips and resources to promote environmental action. The E&S Newsletter has been integrated into the City's overall outreach program and is one of several City newsletters serving the public. The current E&S Newsletter subscription list consists of 1,807 people, and the averages 510 opens per edition.

The Newsletter is distributed by email via Mail Chimp, and the subscription form is available on the City of Rockville Environment and Sustainability website at www.rockvillemd.gov/environment or by direct link at <http://eepurl.com/dtJySD>. A valid email address is the only requirement for subscription and the newsletter is provided free of charge. The E&S Newsletter is [archived](#) at a public site.

The Newsletter is publicized via the City website, within Staff email signatures, other City newsletters such as Rockville Reports (<https://rockvillereports.com/>), and is cross promoted with other environmental programs using sign up options on online forms, paper inserts in mailings, and signup sheets at in-person volunteer events. Additionally, members of the Rockville Environment Commission and its three Committees conduct outreach about the Newsletter during community events.

The first issue of the E&S Newsletter was published in September 2018 and 20 issues have been released as of June 2021. Issues are sent out seasonally, with special editions released for holidays, Earth Month, Pollinator Month and special program or event announcements. Each newsletter is drafted by the City's Environmental Management Division and proofed by the City's Public Information Office. Example content includes promotion of the environment programs, environmental volunteer opportunities, seed and tree giveaways, rebate and grant programs, volunteer appreciation, surveys, and pollution prevention tips. For example, the spring 2021 issue (attached) promoted the Rockville Solar Coop, nature activity booklets from Croydon Creek Nature Center, home drainage and mosquito tips and a 'Thank You' to Rockville's Environmental volunteers.

The budget associated with production and distribution of the E&S Newsletter is nominal compared to its impact. By partnering with the City's Public Information Office and utilizing the City's existing subscription to MailChimp, staff was able to leverage the cost of a platform to host and send the E&S newsletter. The primary budget impact of the newsletter is the staff time needed to prepare the newsletter. Staff is constantly evaluating current programs and identify new avenues for reaching the public and fostering behavior change. Based on these evaluations, approximately 1/5 of the Environment Outreach Specialist's staff time was shifted to writing, designing, and promoting the newsletter as well as maintaining the subscription list.

The E&S Newsletter is part of Rockville's enduring commitment to environmental stewardship and is a key component of E&S outreach.



ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY NEWS



Free Nature Activity Booklet



Sign up for a FREE Saving Nature Now Green Team booklet! Each booklet contains 10 conservation activities perfect for preschool- and elementary-age children. Complete as many activities as you're able and proudly display the Green Team patch to show off your accomplishments. Together, we can help our Earth stay green!

Join the Solar Co-op



Join the Capital Area Solar Co-op to learn about rooftop solar and electric vehicle chargers for your home or small business. By working with a local nonprofit and community partners, the solar co-op helps residents better understand the process of going solar and leverages group buying power to get a discount off the installations.

Rockville will host free virtual information sessions on **Thursday, May 13** and **Thursday, July 15**. Can't make it? **[Find more sessions here.](#)**

Community Solar

Community, or shared, solar makes it possible for anyone with an electric bill to access solar energy, even if they can't install panels on their home or apartment. **[Find community solar opportunities in the Pepco service area.](#)**

Home Drainage Tips



If your yard dries out within a day or two after a rainstorm, that is considered normal, but puddles or soggy areas that persist for several days after storms may need to be addressed.

- **For small wet areas, plant native species that like wet feet.** To eliminate the soggy depression, fill or regrade the area to redirect the water to a suitable location away from your home's foundation.
- **For widespread wetness, capture or redirect stormwater** using rain gardens, rain barrels, swales, cisterns, dry wells or French drains.
- **Read the "Homeowner's Guide to Sustainable Home Drainage"** for guidance on capturing and storing stormwater around your home.
- **Work with your neighbors.** Wet conditions or erosion problems often occur throughout a neighborhood. Coordinating with neighbors and addressing problems at the source can save everyone time and money.
- **Consult a contractor trained in RainScapes or a Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional** before tackling any of the projects above, especially if you have severe erosion or heavy flows of stormwater.

Reduce Mosquitoes in Your Yard

Mosquitoes only need a capful of water to breed. Removing standing water around your home will help reduce the number of mosquitoes. Here's how:

- **Clean gutters** and make sure they drain well.
- **Replace corrugated drain pipe** with smooth drain pipe, or cover the open end of a corrugated drain pipe with a piece of pantyhose secured with a rubber band.
- **Check and remove standing water twice a week** in trash and recycling cans, flower pot saucers, toys, wading pools, tires, tarps or plastic sheeting.
- **Clean and add fresh water** every three days to bird baths, pet dishes and pollinator water dishes.
- **Use Mosquito Dunks** in fish ponds and rain barrels.
- **Be kind to wildlife.** Fish, spiders, beneficial insects, bats and birds all feed on mosquitoes and provide some natural control.
- **Use fans to keep air circulating** when sitting outside on a porch, deck or patio.

[Find more mosquito resources from Montgomery County.](#)

Thank You to Rockville's Green Volunteers

Rockville's Mayor and Council have proclaimed April 18-24 as National Volunteer Week. City staff would like to take this opportunity to send a special thank you to the dedicated volunteers who help protect and restore Rockville's environment.

Interested in volunteering? Learn how you can **[clean up Rockville streams](#)**, attend a **[Weed Warrior Workday](#)**, **[take the Plog Rockville Pledge](#)**, or **[join a committee of the Rockville Environment Commission](#)**.



Volunteers prepare to remove non-native, invasives plants during a Week Warrior Workday in Twinbrook Park in August.

Visit us at www.rockvillemd.gov/environment.

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