

**HAMPTON ROADS  
WATER EFFICIENCY TEAM**

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**MID-YEAR REPORT**

**First Half Fiscal Year 2009  
July 1, 2008-December 31, 2008**

# HR WET

## HAMPTON ROADS WATER EFFICIENCY TEAM WATER CONSERVATION EDUCATION INITIATIVES

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Hampton Roads Water Efficiency Team (HR WET), an education committee of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC), is comprised of local government staff members who are committed to regional water efficiency education. Through the Team's focus and dedication, along with assistance and contributions from the HRPDC staff, successful programs promoting efficient water use continue throughout the region.

The mission of HR WET is to develop and implement a regional approach to promoting efficient water use throughout Hampton Roads. HR WET established the following goals:

- ❖ Raise public awareness of the region's water supplies.
- ❖ Reduce per capita water consumption by increasing the number of people using water more wisely.

To achieve these goals, HR WET conducts a comprehensive education program involving media relations, advertising, demonstrations and exhibits at festivals, and educational resources, which include video, brochures and an informative website. Media contracts with WVEC Channel-13, CW Channel-27, Metro Networks, and Cox Media were secured for fiscal year 2009.

HR WET was invited to participate in many regional events. During the first half of FY 2009, members were scheduled to attend six events. Through these events, Team members were able to distribute educational materials and speak directly with 2,300 members of the public on issues regarding water efficiency and conservation.

HR WET continues to be a regional partner in joint environmental education programming with members of HR CLEAN, HR FOG (Hampton Roads Fats, Oils, and Grease) and HR STORM, also referred to as HR Green. Prior to HR FOG's creation, the group was known as HR<sup>3</sup>. HR STORM promotes stormwater management and pollution prevention. HR CLEAN promotes litter prevention and beautification throughout Hampton Roads. The HR FOG regional committee works to prevent sanitary sewer overflows and backups caused by fats, oils, and grease improperly entering the sanitary sewer system through drains and grease traps.

Through participation in the HR Green Mini-Grant program, the committee reaches its goal of educating and raising awareness of the importance of water conservation and water supply among the youth of Hampton Roads. HR Green awarded a combined \$1,441 to schools and youth groups

working on projects related to the missions and goals of HR CLEAN, HR STORM and HR WET. Through participation in the mini-grant program, over 1700 Hampton Roads youth will be reached.

The one-page tip and information sheet developed by HR<sup>3</sup> was published in the WVEC Channel-13 *2008 Hurricane Watch*. Seventy-thousand guides were distributed to the public at local Dollar Tree stores, through representatives of HR<sup>3</sup>, and through WVEC Channel-13. WVEC sent out an email blast to 65,000 email addresses encouraging Hampton Roads residents to download the guide. The *2008 Hurricane Watch* was also available on WVEC.com, HRCLEAN.org, HRSTORM.org and HRWET.org.

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#### FAST POINTS

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- **Television, cable, and radio spot contracts were secured for Fiscal Year 2009.**
- ***Water - Use it Wisely* Landscaping Guide continues to be a success with 4,204 downloads and 3,405 distributed.**
- **HR WET begins using free social networking tools under the umbrella of HR Green to spread HR WET's messages to more individuals in Hampton Roads.**
- **The website remains active and items are downloaded frequently.**
- **The HR WET trailer visits regional events.**

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#### MEDIA

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The HRPDC, on behalf of HR WET, continues to contract WVEC, WGNT, and Metro Traffic. Channel-13 will air the HR WET spots during peak viewing times of shows such as *The View*, *Oprah* and *Jeopardy*.

Through the various stations in Hampton Roads airing Metro Traffic announcements, HR WET sponsored spots gaining the attention of the listening audience. The messages of HR WET continue to be aired during peak drive times throughout Hampton Roads. The simple messages remind citizens about the need for water efficiency and conservation. In FY 2009 the stations of Metro Networks were as follows:

WAFX – FM	WNOR – FM	WXEZ – FM
WGH – FM	WNVZ – FM	WXMM – FM
WGH – AM	WPTE – FM	WXTG – FM
WHRO – FM	WVBW – FM	WXTG – AM
WHRV – FM	WVKL – FM	
WJOI – AM	WWDE – FM	

Using a mix of targeted television, radio, and print advertising, as well as updated website materials, HR WET continues to provide the region with quality water conservation information. The goal for this campaign is to reach 72% of the Hampton Roads 25-54 population with a frequency of three.

**FY 2009 Media Breakdown:**

<b>MEDIA</b>	<b>CONTRACT</b>
WVEC Channel-13	\$ 25,000
COX Media	\$ 10,000
The CW Channel- 27	\$ 5,000
Metro Networks	\$ 20,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 60,000</b>

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**WEBSITE: WWW.HRWET.ORG**

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The HR WET website is enhanced and updated frequently with information received from members and gathered by staff. From the website, users are able to download the new landscape guide, apply for an HR<sup>3</sup> Mini-Grant, email local representatives, and learn water conservation techniques. The HRPDC uses the program Webtrends to track website activity. The following information was gathered for the first half of FY 2009:

**Webtrends for July 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008:**

- ❖ Number of Visits – 7,803
- ❖ Average Number of Visits Per Day – 43
- ❖ Direct Traffic – 96%
- ❖ Visitors from USA – 88%

**Most frequently viewed pages:**

1. HR WET Homepage
2. Contact Information
3. Sitemap
4. Mini-Grant Overview
5. *Water Wise Guide* – Kitchens and Bathrooms



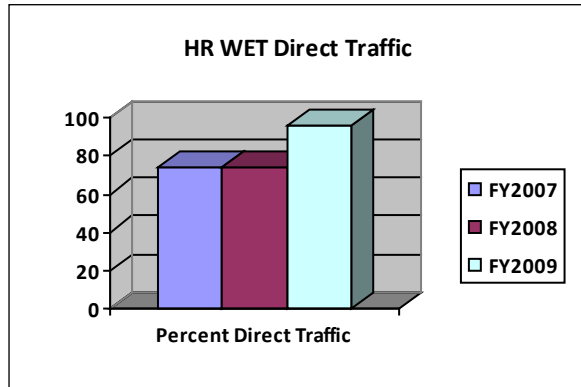
**Most frequently downloaded pages:**

1. *Water Wise Watering and Landscaping Guide* (4,204)
2. Annual Reports (529)
3. *We All Live on the Water* NIE (632)

4. Mini-Grant Application (206)
5. *Hurricane Watch* (195)

The **number of visits** represents the number of times the site was visited by individual users. If an individual visited six times in the fiscal year, and clicked on ten pages each time, the number of visits counted would be six. Visits by non-humans (spiders, web crawlers, bots, etc.) were removed from the total number of visits.

The **direct traffic** represents traffic to the website in which the visitor typed the domain name directly into their browser, or the visitor bookmarked the site. The percentage of direct traffic has



steadily increased over the past three years indicating that a greater percentage of visitors know the HR WET web address. That seems to indicate that education and marketing efforts have been effective since the number of new visitors also increased significantly in FY 2008. The percentage of direct traffic increased dramatically during the last half of 2008, from 74% in July 1 to December 31, 2007 to 96% in 2008. That is an indication that fewer individuals are finding the HR WET site through search engines such as Google and Yahoo.

The Committee will evaluate key terms used in the site to improve search engine optimization and help more users find the HR WET site.

Each of the downloaded documents received a spike in downloads near the time a link to the document was posted on Twitter, demonstrating that Twitter users are interested in receiving information from HR WET and will download additional information. The Committee will continue utilizing Web 2.0 social media sites like YouTube and Twitter to draw more traffic to the site.

The HR WET *Waterwise Landscape & Watering Guide* continues to be the most frequently downloaded item. In the first half of FY 2009 it was downloaded 4,204 times. Since it was posted, it has been **downloaded 23,677 times**.

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## Social Networking

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In July 2008, HR WET began using social networking tools to reach a wider range of Hampton Roads residents year-round. To supplement the existing media campaign, the HR Green committees began posting items to sites such as Delicious, Digg, Twitter, and YouTube.

### YouTube

HR WET posted video to YouTube at [www.YouTube.com/HRGreenVA](http://www.YouTube.com/HRGreenVA) and [www.YouTube.com/HRPDC](http://www.YouTube.com/HRPDC). HR WET's public service announcements draw traffic from YouTube

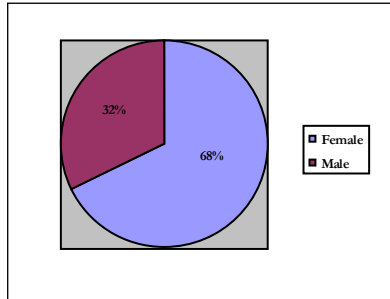
searches, embedded video players on other sites, and other sources. From July 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008, HR WET videos on YouTube were viewed over 500 times.

**Demographics:**

Gender:

Female – 68%

Male – 32%



Age:

13-17 – 15%

18-24 – 11%

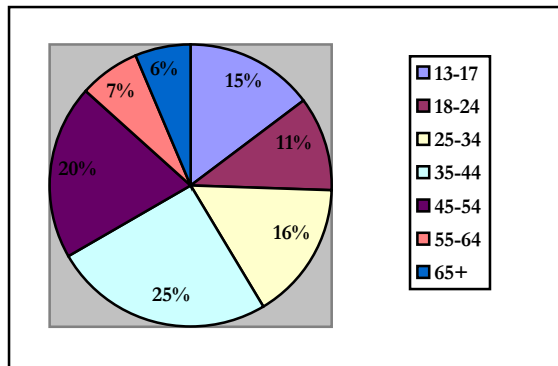
25-34 – 16%

35-44 – 25%

45-54 – 20%

55-64 – 7%

64+ – 6%



The demographic of those who view the HRGreenVA and HRPDC channels are spread throughout the age ranges. The videos are most popular with women and those in the 35-54 age range. YouTube is a free service that allows the committees to provide a visual message to those in Hampton Roads, year-round.

## Twitter

Twitter is a micro-blogging site that allows users to post short messages to followers. Messages can be sent or received using the Internet, the computer desktop, or a cell phone. Individual users choose which micro-bloggers to “follow”, so those receiving the “tweets” have requested to receive messages. HR Green set up an account at [www.twitter.com/HRGreen](http://www.twitter.com/HRGreen) or @HRGreen. Regular messages updating followers about programs, tips, events, and website content are distributed to users. Twitter users are technology savvy, so they regularly follow links in Twitter posts directly to HRPDC sites. Since August 2008, @HRGreen has gained 185 followers. Many of the followers are from the Hampton Roads area. Other local government Twitter accounts also follow @HRGreen, including: @CityofVaBeach (City of Virginia Beach Media and Communications Group), @CVB (City of Virginia Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau) and @NorfolkKNB (Keep Norfolk Beautiful). Twitter users have contacted @HRGreen through the medium to find information on mini-grant programs and to encourage the group to keep up the good work.

From @Finndandi (Virginia Beach): Love this site. Great concept! I am sending you to my daughter’s high school as a referral... [referring to mini-grant tweet]

Through Twitter, HRGreen’s nearly 200 followers receive approximately five messages a week – messages they requested to receive, unlike advertisements on television or in newspaper ads. @HRGreen has sent out 107 trackable messages resulting in 1533 click-throughs from Twitter to a site link provided. Each post receives an average of 14 click-throughs, directly increasing site traffic to the HR Green websites and the YouTube account. Of those, 345 click-throughs went to HR WET content and 225 went to HR Green messages.

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## TOPICAL CAMPAIGNS

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HR WET educates local citizens on the need for water efficiency using a variety of topical campaigns.

### Promotional Items

HR WET continued to distribute promotional items including the popular shower timers, water-drop shaped sponges, magnets, and more. The *Water-Wise Landscaping and Watering Guide* continued to be very popular.

Along with the member communities’ individual events, HRPDC staff also provides information to those who call directly. Staff distributed materials such as the HR WET brochures and rain gauges to representatives from the Elizabeth River Project, the Virginia Beach Flower and Garden Symposium, Lynnhaven River Now, Bank of America, Hampton Roads schools, and Virginia Tech training seminars. The following chart displays a breakdown of the number of each item distributed by the HRPDC staff. Items distributed through the HR WET trailer are not included.

HR WET ITEMS DISTRIBUTED July 1 through December 31		
ITEM	FY 2008	FY 2009
Bags	545	684
Dye Tabs	0	500
FAB	1200	1253
Hose Nozzles*	0	0
Hurricane Guides	0	580
Mini-Grant Bucks	0	430
NIE – We All Live on the Water	0	493
Protect Water Brochure	0	50
Rain Gauges	400	435
Shower Timers	200	295
This Kid Saves Water Stickers	611	1000
Toothbrushes	250	175
Toothpaste Rollers*	0	0
WUIW Brochures	300	365
WUIW Clings	12	120
WUIW Landscape Guide	798	3405
WUIW Magnets	0	455
WUIW Memo Boards**	500	0
WUIW Notepads	0	385
WUIW Pencils	345	250
WUIW Rulers***	0	835
WUIW Sponges	350	1295
WUIW Stickers	750	500
WUIW Tattoos	0	350
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,261</b>	<b>13,855</b>
*Distributed through the HR WET Trailer **The Team decided not to reorder memo boards ***Rulers were not available in the first half of FY 2008		

## Event Participation

The HR WET trailer was scheduled to attend five events in the fall of 2008. The Team attended the Girl Scouts Jamboree in Norfolk for the first time this fall. The event was a huge success with 2,300 Girl Scouts and their leaders attending. Girl Scouts waited in lines for their opportunity to speak with members of HR WET. Michael Minnor of Mike’s Rain Barrels provided a rain barrel building demonstration as part of the HR WET display. In the event evaluation, the HR WET trailer was listed as one of the activities the girls enjoyed most. “The water conservation trailer was great.” HR WET also attended Estuaries Day at York River State Park and Community Recycle Day at the Virginia Beach Farmer’s Market. Unfortunately,

Hampton Bay Days and the Virginia Fall Classic were canceled because of weather. The trailer is being hosted by Harwood's Mill Water Treatment Facility until Chesapeake Public Utilities assumes responsibility in July 2009.

Nancy McPhail of Newport News Waterworks attended the Newport News Master Gardeners Association "Go Green – Save Green" event at the Virginia Living Museum. She used the HR WET tabletop display to interact with the attendees. The event was successful and HR WET has requested to be included in the next event.

Below is a list of events scheduled on behalf of HR WET:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
Sept. 4-8, 2008	Hampton Bay Days - Canceled	Hampton
Sept. 20, 2008	Estuaries Day 2008	York River State Park
Sept. 20, 2008	NN Master Gardener's "Go Green – Live Green" Event	Newport News
Oct. 4, 2008	Girl Scout Jamboree	Norfolk
Oct. 25, 2008	Virginia Fall Classic – Canceled	Newport News
Nov. 8, 2008	Community Recycle Day	Virginia Beach

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#### HR GREEN PARTNERSHIPS

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HR WET continues to be an active partner with HR CLEAN, HR FOG and HR STORM, the three additional environmental education committees of the HRPDC. Combined, these four form what is referred to as HR Green. By combining messages, the groups are able to save resources by pooling funding for a larger media impact.

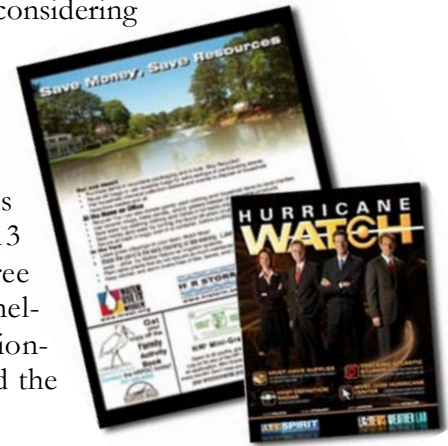
#### **Newspapers in Education (NIE)**

NIE is a nationally recognized educational program that brings the newspaper into the classroom. The local newspapers work with various Hampton Roads school systems in the distribution of a tabloid-style newsprint document. While many pre-developed pieces are available to the schools, HR Green sought this opportunity to educate the region's 3rd graders on a local level. The HR Green piece entitled *We All Live on the Water* was distributed in the spring of 2008 to all public school 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes. The committees used this initiative to incorporate the watershed and water quality SOL requirements developed by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) along with region specific information. A teacher guide was also developed and distributed. The FY 2008 tab, *We All Live on the Water*, was partially funded through a grant by the Chesapeake Bay License Plate Fund and matched with local government contributions and HRPDC staff time. HR Green continued to distribute overruns of the tab until they were depleted. Since July 1, 2008, 3,000 copies were downloaded from HR Green websites. HR STORM and HR WET would like to reprint the piece

and redistribute it in August 2009. HR FOG and HR CLEAN are considering participating in the project.

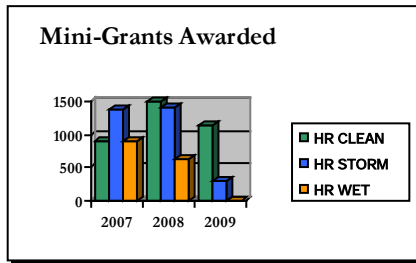
**Print Ads**

A one-page tip sheet, which combines the messages of the committees, is used in a variety of regional publications such as the WVEC Channel-13 “Hurricane Watch,” which was distributed to the public at local Dollar Tree stores, through representatives of HR Green, and through the WVEC Channel-13 website. WVEC distributed 70,000 copies and sent out 65,000 permission-based emails throughout Hampton Roads encouraging residents to download the guide. HR FOG did not participate in this initiative.



**Mini-Grants**

Every year, HR<sup>3</sup> also offers the region joint programs such as funding through the popular mini-grant program and educational print pieces. With the HR<sup>3</sup> Mini-Grant Program, schools and youth groups are eligible to receive up to \$500 toward environmental projects that meet the goals of HR CLEAN, HR STORM, and HR WET.



In the second half of 2008, HR<sup>3</sup> awarded a combined \$1,441 to six different school groups working on projects related to the missions and goals of HR CLEAN, HR STORM and HR WET. Through participation in the HR<sup>3</sup> Mini-Grant program, over 1,700 Hampton Roads youth will be reached. HR WET did not receive any applications during this time period.

**HRAEE (Hampton Roads Alliance for Environmental Education)**

Members continue to participate in HRAEE events and networking opportunities. The 2008 HRAEE conference was held at the Virginia Aquarium during the month of September. The Mini-Grant **Project of the Year Awards** were distributed at the luncheon ceremony. The 2008 Mini-Grant Project of the Year was awarded to Thalia Elementary School for the Fifth Grade Oyster Gardeners Project. Patricia Sare coordinated the project and applied for the mini-grant. The project was funded by HR STORM. The students were able to raise and plant nearly 1,400 oysters in the Lynnhaven River. Boy Scout, Tim Costello, built steps to the stream to allow the students safe access. The project helped him earn the ranking of Eagle Scout along with three of his friends. The Eagle Scouts were the cover story on the June 1, 2008 edition of the *Beacon*. An outdoor teaching area was also built.

The **Honorable Mention** was awarded to Jane H. Bryan Elementary School for the First Grade Butterfly Garden Project. HR CLEAN funded this beautification project. Ms. Christine LaPointe coordinated the project and applied for the mini-grant. She said of her first grade students, “The children loved being able to dig in the dirt. Many of them had never done that before or even seen a worm! . . . They could not believe there were worms in the dirt!”



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### CONCLUSION

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The members of HR WET remain committed to reaching its goals. HR WET is focused on the education of all local citizens, including youth and businesses, on the need for water efficiency and conservation. HR WET continues to develop and provide the region of Hampton Roads with programs promoting efficient water use and ways to reduce the per capita water consumption by teaching people how to use water more wisely.

