

Minimum Control Measure #1:
Public Education & Outreach
REGIONAL STORMWATER EDUCATION PROGRAM
RETHINK RUNOFF

JANUARY–DECEMBER 2021
ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by:

Pluck

Introduction

Since 2003, Chittenden County's twelve MS4s have worked to pool resources to professionally engage the public in a one message, one outreach effort known as the Regional Stormwater Education Program. Through regular spring and summer advertisements to drive people to the program's website, www.smartwaterways.org, this cooperative approach to fulfilling its NPDES Permit Minimum Control Measure #1 (Public Education & Outreach) requirements has built a regional awareness among the public of the need for individual action to assist in fighting stormwater problems.

In the summer of 2016, the MS4s contracted with Tally Ho through their Lead Agency, the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, to rebrand the Smart Waterways campaign into a combined effort with the MS4's Minimum Measure #2 regional effort known as the Chittenden County Stream Team. The goal was to create one cohesive organization and outreach effort to both educate the public about stormwater and boost public participation in implementation of projects to combat the negative impacts of stormwater. In spring of 2017, Rethink Runoff was publicly launched, including a new website and revised creative by Pluck (previously Tally Ho Design).

Pluck has been responsible for the creative, administration, and management of Rethink Runoff since late 2017.

This 2021 calendar year report recaps the work done primarily related to Minimum Control Measure #1. As in prior years, this work was developed through coordination with CCRPC and its MS4 subcommittee of the Clean Water Advisory Committee.

2021 Initiatives

In 2021, Pluck maintained existing creative for advertising, while introducing certain web initiatives and introducing social media in the 2021-2022 fiscal year, all for the purpose of continuing to drive residents to visit the program website, www.rethinkrunoff.org. We continued our Ms. Drop's Tip of the Month promoted animation as a way of providing monthly and seasonal topics related to stormwater runoff (*A on page 3.*)

We introduced HTML5 animations onto our What You Can Do interior pages on the website (*F on page 4*). These short, repeatable animations are based on our existing visual language and provide on-screen movement to web visitors.

We set up tracking onto the websites for conversions (or actions our visitors take while visiting the website). Our first conversion to be tracked was a downloadable pdf with instructions on How to Build a Rain Barrel. Rain Barrel workshops often book to capacity and are also restricted to residents by the host city or town, so including a downloadable pdf on the site allows us to measure of interest in visitors doing DIY stormwater-related projects.


During 2020-2021, we discussed our approach to rain gardens with the subcommittee. Rain gardens are inherently expensive to install, when compared with other initiatives, like installing rain barrels. With that in mind, we created a new downloadable pdf (*B on page 3*) identifying plants used in rain gardens that homeowners could use in their gardens, to help alleviate stormwater runoff. The overall strategy was to identify and include a low-cost options for homeowners, allowing them to take action to reduce stormwater runoff, thereby raising awareness.

In Fall 2021, we introduced Google Search ads to complement our Google Display ads and YouTube ads (*E on page 4*). Whereas Google Display ads are graphic-based ads served on websites based on content (i.e. fertilizer-related ads on a site about lawn care), Google Search ads are text-based ads shown in response to users' searches. In this way, we're able to provide a presence and a direct call to action. For example, we created a series of Search ads offering non-fertilizer-based lawn care ads designed to be seen when users searched for "fall lawn care tips" or related topics.

Starting in the fall of 2021, we also began to strengthen social media development as well as implementation of social media content. Our social media strategy focuses on Facebook and Instagram, our existing social media channels. Our work here complements the outreach efforts of MCM #2 effort, the Rethink Runoff Stream Team, administered by the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District. Our overall strategy includes posting brand-related content, Lake Champlain news, general water pollution/clean water news (*C on page 3*), and Instagram-based engagement from Vermont residents (i.e. reposting Lake Champlain and Vermont waterways photography). In some cases, social media posts are promoted via ads, based on target MS4 audiences (*D on page 3*).


2021 Creative

A. SOCIAL MEDIA ANIMATIONS: SAMPLE VIDEOS




Ms. Drop's Tip for June: Pick Up Your Dog Poop!
Now that the warm weather is back, please pick up your dog poop whenever you're with your four-legged friends.

19 comments • 6.7K views



Ms. Drop's Tip for July: Algae Blooms and Lake Champlain
Algae blooms, or cyanobacteria, appear in Lake Champlain each summer. Certain environmental conditions, like elevated levels of nutrients from...


2 • 0 comments • 7.7K views



Ms. Drop's Tip for August: Redirect Your Downspouts
Looking for one more summer project before the fall?


Redirecting your downspouts is a great way to reduce stormwater runoff...

1 • 0 comments • 7.4K views



Ms. Drop's Tip for September: Fall Gardening
Fall is an often overlooked time to garden. Bulbs and perennials are best planted in the fall. Take the time to plan your garden out now and save yourself the headache next mud season!


1 • 0 comments • 7.7K views



Ms. Drop's Tip for October: Mulch Your Leaves Instead of Raking Them!
We're not done with our fall lawn care tips quite yet!

Instead of raking your leaves this year, use your mower to chop them up...

1 • 0 comments • 6.3K views



Ms. Drop's Tip for November: Avoid Using Rock Salt
This winter, try to avoid using rock salt on your walkways and driveway.

The salt can wash into our storm drains leading to increased water...

1 • 0 comments • 6.5K views

B. RAIN GARDEN PLANTS PDF

RETHINK RUNOFF

WHAT YOU CAN DO AROUND YOUR HOUSE

GUIDE TO RAIN GARDEN PLANTS

Rain gardens are a great way to reduce stormwater runoff around your home, but you can also make smaller changes around your garden that will help reduce stormwater. Just by including certain plants in your garden.

Below is a list of rain garden plants that you can use in your garden to help reduce stormwater runoff. All of these plants are native to Vermont. In addition, we've noted their mature height, sun exposure and when they bloom.

SALT TOLERANT PLANTS

These plants are salt-tolerant, so you can plant them near walkways, driveways or other places to get salted during the winter.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	TYPE	HEIGHT	DESCRIPTION	EXPOSURE	BLOOM
Columbine	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Perennial	1-2'	Ornamental	Full Sun	Fall
New England Aster	<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	Perennial	2-6'	Ornamental	Full Sun	Summer
Daylilies	<i>Hemerocallis</i> spp.	Perennial	2.5-3.5'	Flowers	Full Sun/Partial Shade	Summer
Blue Flag Iris	<i>Iris versicolor</i>	Perennial	2-3'	Flowers	Full Sun/Partial Shade	Summer
Cardinal Flower	<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Perennial	2-4'	Flowers	Full Sun/Partial Shade	Summer
Black Eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Perennial	1'	Ornamental	Full Sun	Summer

Check out the other side for our list of salt intolerant plants.

[Learn more at RETHINKRUNOFF.ORG](#)

RETHINK RUNOFF

SALT INTOLERANT PLANTS

These plants are not salt-tolerant, so you want to avoid placing them in areas away from where you salt in the winter.


COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	TYPE	HEIGHT	DESCRIPTION	EXPOSURE	BLOOM
Big Bluestem	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Grass	3-7'	Blade grass for erosion prevention due to large root system	Full Sun	Fall
Milkweed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Perennial	1-2.5'	Orange flower	Full Sun	Summer
Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i> spp.	Perennial	1-2'	Vareties include purple and white flowers	Full Sun/Partial Shade	Summer
Burnsnet	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	Perennial	4-6'	Flat-topped clusters of small, fluffy white flowers	Full Sun/Partial Shade	Summer
Bee Balm	<i>Monarda didyma</i>	Perennial	2'	Red, pink, salmon colored flowers	Full Sun/Partial Shade	Summer
Bloodroot	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>	Perennial	6-10"	White flower, toxic	Partial Shade	Spring
Red Deer Dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	Shrub	6-12'	White flowers, red stems in winter provides food and cover	Full Sun	Spring/Summer

[Learn more at RETHINKRUNOFF.ORG](#)

C. SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS: NEWS

Rethink Runoff Stream Team


Since 2005, Lake Champlain has seen a decline in the quality of the water. In the past decade, the lake has only been frozen three or four times because of rising water temperatures, climate change, and unpredictable weather patterns. What's in store for this winter?



Lake Champlain water temperatures dip toward freezing — but will it freeze over?

Rethink Runoff Stream Team


Have information about the lake? See the private photo could impact Vermont, learn about the good and bad, and increase levels of lake green algae.



Vermont Climate Study Says Sweeping Change is Happening — and More Looms

Rethink Runoff Stream Team


Lake Champlain is the only Vermont lake to be consistently over the long-term phosphorus levels. A plan for potentially do the same for Lake Champlain and check for following health in the works.



An action plan for Lake Champlain's faltering health

Rethink Runoff Stream Team

Good news for Lake Champlain. The state will be drinking from lake trout. Biologists say it's a sign of a healthy population and a healthy lake.



Healthy Water: Biologists see improved health in Lake Champlain trout

D. SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS: CONTENT

Rethink Runoff Stream Team

Here's a great fall tip for your lawn!

Mowing is a great way to maintain a healthy lawn. It reduces soil compaction and is a better alternative to using a weed and herbicide.

By following our natural lawn care techniques, you can avoid using herbicides that end up in our lakes, lakes and streams.



Rethink Runoff Stream Team

Rethink Runoff Stream Team

Don't put away that mower just yet. Many people think once school starts it's time to back-runner lawn care until next spring. If you keep your grass too long before the first frost, your lawn can develop a moldy fungus. Try to keep it at 3-2.5 inches before the first frost.



Rethink Runoff Stream Team

Rethink Runoff Stream Team

Great rainy leaves each fall!

At the best mower and chow plant just wrong attachment and the chopped leaves will roll to your lawn as they break down over the winter... See



Rethink Runoff Stream Team

2021 Creative

E. SEARCH ADS: SAMPLE COPY AND VARIABLE HEADLINES

● **Winterize Your Lawn This Fall | Prep Now for Green Grass Later | 5 Tips to Winterize Your...**
www.rethinkrunoff.org
 Try these five fertilizer-free lawn care tips for green grass next summer. Avoid fertilizers wit...
[View assets details](#)

● **Rain Gardens Reduce Runoff | Choose Plants to Reduce Runoff | Can Plants Reduce Runoff? ...**
www.rethinkrunoff.org
 By choosing certain plants, you can reduce stormwater runoff & keep Lake Champlain...
[View assets details](#)

● **Build a Rain Barrel This Fall | Rain Barrels Reduce Runoff | DIY Rain Barrel Instructions...**
www.rethinkrunoff.org
 Build a rain barrel to help reduce stormwater runoff around your house. Keep rainwater aw...
[View assets details](#)

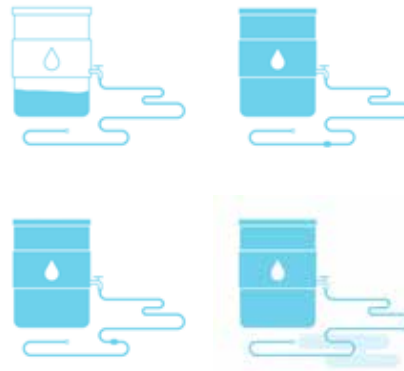
- Plan Your Garden This Fall
- Choose Plants to Reduce Runoff
- Can Plants Reduce Runoff?
- Rain Gardens Reduce Runoff
- By choosing certain plants, you can reduce stormwater runoff & keep Lake Champlain clean.
- Fall is the best time to plan out your gardens. Choose plants that will reduce runoff.
- Find out what plants can help reduce rainwater around your home.
- Choose plants that reduce rainwater runoff with our handy guide.

- Rain Barrels Reduce Runoff
- DIY Rain Barrel Instructions
- Reduce Your Water Bill
- Rain Barrels Reduce Water Use
- Build a Rain Barrel This Fall
- Want to Build a Rain Barrel?
- One More DIY Fall Project
- Collect rainwater and use it on your garden and plants.
- Build a rain barrel to help reduce stormwater runoff around your house.
- Reduce stormwater runoff and keep Lake Champlain clean with a rain barrel.

- Prep Your Lawn for Next Spring
- Fall Lawn Care That Works
- Prep Now for Green Grass Later
- 5 Tips to Winterize Your Lawn
- Toss The Scotts For Lawn Care
- 5 Fertilizer-Free Lawn Tips
- Winterize Your Lawn This Fall
- Why Rake Leaves? Mow & Mulch
- Skip The Fertilizer & Do This
- Avoid fertilizers with these five key tips. Your lawn and Lake Champlain will thank you!

F HTML 5 ANIMATIONS

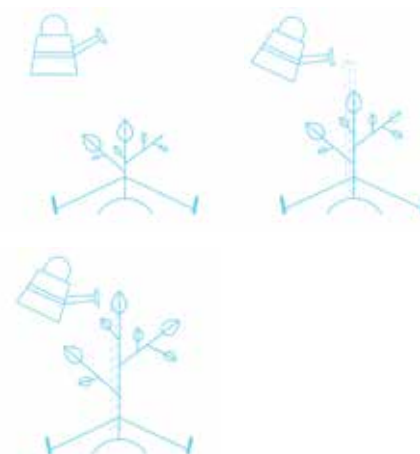
RAIN BARREL



PET WASTE



PLANTING A TREE



Media Buy Breakdown

Below is a cost breakdown of media buys, compared with previous years. We continued our Winter Campaign with a focus on both pet waste and reducing salt use. Similar to our past efforts to shift outreach year-round, our Winter Campaign ran in January and February, traditionally a quieter time from an advertising standpoint.

Digital media buys include Google ads, Facebook ads and WCAX. TV includes WCAX and Xfinity media buys.

Overall, our 2021 media buy strategy continued earlier efforts to create a more year-round approach. For 2021, we reduced our broadcast spend, pushing more into digital/digital video (Facebook, Google and YouTube).

In Fall 2021, we introduced Google Search ads, to complement Google Display ads and YouTube ads.

On the social media front, we also began promoting content-based posts that also offered a direct Call-To-Action leading to our website.

2016 – MEDIA BUY			
SOURCE	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL
RADIO	\$4,500	-	\$3,258
DIGITAL	\$7,500	-	\$4,985
TV	\$5,500	-	\$2,379
PRINT	\$2,500	-	
TOTAL	\$20,000	-	\$10,622

2017 – MEDIA BUY			
SOURCE	SPRING	SUMMER 05/28–08/02	FALL
RADIO	\$3,088	-	\$1,080
DIGITAL	\$3,600	\$3,826	\$4,582
TV	\$2,015	-	\$1,833
PRINT	\$1,755	\$585	\$1,170
TOTAL	\$13,191	\$4,235	\$8,666

2018 – MEDIA BUY			
SOURCE	SPRING	SUMMER 6/16–08/27	FALL
RADIO	\$2,675	-	\$1,044
DIGITAL	\$3,394	\$7,534	\$2,987
TV	\$3,710	-	\$2,472
PRINT	\$1,755	-	\$1,006
TOTAL	\$11,534	\$7,534	\$7,509

Media Buy Breakdown by Vendor

CAMPAIGN	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL
WCAX BROADCAST		X		X
XFINITY BROADCAST		X		
GOOGLE	X	X	X	X
YOUTUBE		X	X	X
VTDIGGER.ORG				
VPR RADIO	X			X
WVMT RADIO		X		X
SEVEN DAYS		X		X

2019 – MEDIA BUY				
SOURCE	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER* 5/27–09/2	FALL
RADIO	\$360	\$1,008		\$1,025
DIGITAL	\$1,800	\$2,320	\$5,830	\$3,000
TV		\$5,830		\$3,306
PRINT	\$503	\$2,012		\$1,006
TOTAL	\$2,663	\$11,170	\$5,830	\$7,509

2020 – MEDIA BUY				
SOURCE	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER 7/1–9/1	FALL
RADIO		\$375		\$375
DIGITAL	\$1,800	\$4,557.51	\$400	\$3,430.33
TV		\$5,788.75		\$2,063.83
PRINT		\$1,579.50		\$1,053
TOTAL	\$1,800	\$12,301	\$400	\$6,922

2021 – MEDIA BUY				
SOURCE	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER 7/1–9/1	FALL
RADIO	\$725.40	\$375		\$375
DIGITAL	\$2,640.00	\$7,380.00	\$3,429.45	\$4,195.54
TV		\$5,600.00		\$680
PRINT		\$1,455.00		\$1,053
TOTAL	\$3,365.40	\$14,810	\$3,429.45	\$6,922

Google Advertising Metric

CAMPAIGN	IMPRESSIONS	INTERACTIONS	COST
DISPLAY	3,405,317	3,287	\$4,755.87
VIDEO	571,872	339,690	\$5,704.81
SEARCH	20,488	419	\$768.16

Impressions are the number of times the ads are served to web users. For Display and Search, Interactions are the number of times a web user clicks on the ad.

Video ads are consider pre-roll or mid-roll, meaning they are shown either directly before, or in the middle of a video the web user is watching. These ads are typically skipable after the first five seconds. Interactions include web users who click on the ads, or watch the entire ad.

Facebook Advertising Metrics

CAMPAIGN	IMPRESSIONS	CLICKS	REACH	COST
MS. DROP	113,535	618	21,083	\$2,054.92
FALL 2021	571,872	87	42,513	\$680.23
WINTER 2021	10,432	139	2,258	\$200.70
PAGE LIKES	3,142	10	1,390	\$55.09

Impressions are the number of ads served to Facebook users. Clicks are the number of people who click on an ads. Reach is the number of individual Facebook users that see the ad.

Our increased focus on social media also provides us with age- and gender-related information about users who like our Facebook page (Likes) and individuals who follow our Instagram page (Followers).

In this case, reach refers to the overall unique users in each platform that have seen our posts, either through other users liking and sharing our content, users using the Explore features, or users who see promoted posts.

Facebook Likes Demographics

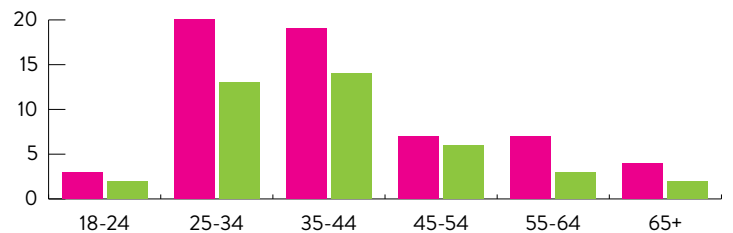
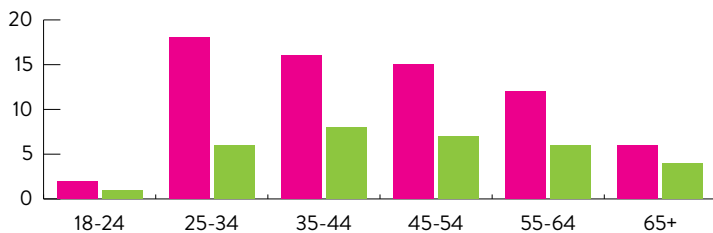
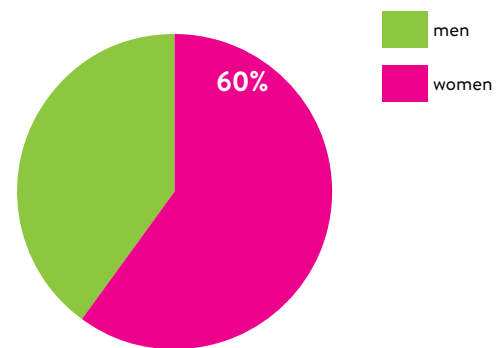
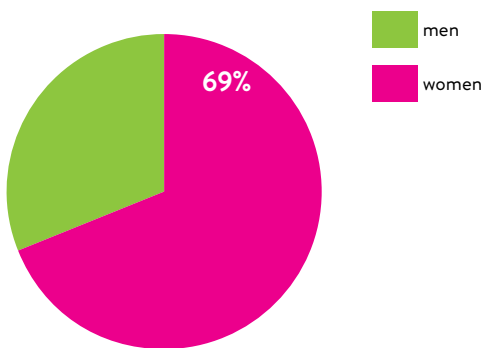
Facebook Reach: 60,998

Likes: 318

Instagram Follower Demographics

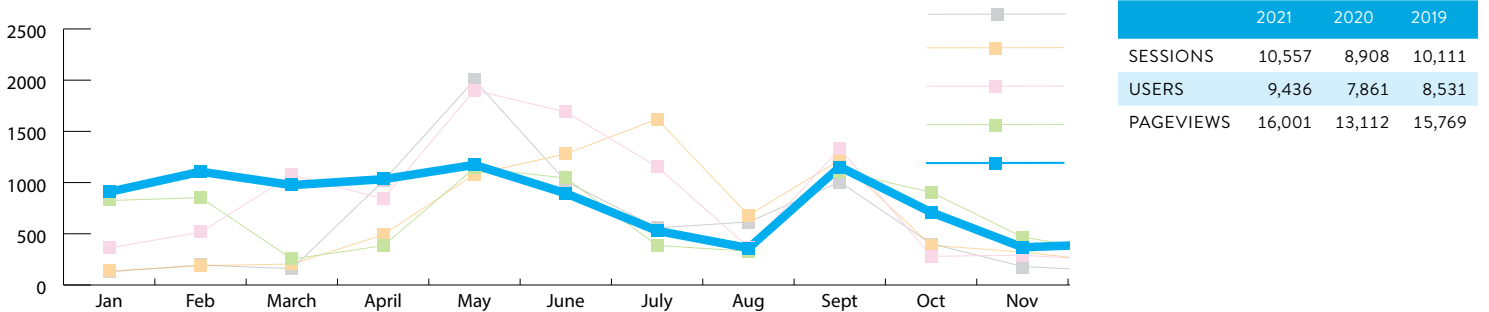
Instagram Reach: 19,384

Followers: 349



Website Metrics for 2016–2021

Our 2021 website metrics bounced back after a slower 2020 calendar year (due to COVID). Overall, our users, sessions and page views all increased by close to 20% when compared with 2020. In addition, when compared with 2019 (the last full pre-COVID year), our sessions (10,557 vs. 10,111), users (9,436 vs. 8,531), and pageviews (16,001 vs. 15,769) increased as well.



Total Sessions/Visits (1/1–12/31)

TOTAL	TIME PERIOD
10,557	2021
8,908	2020
10,111	2019
7,832	2018
7,407	2017
6,004	2016
4,659	2015
7,728	2014
3,541	2013
2,787	2012

Top Vermont Cities and Towns

TOTAL	USERS
BURLINGTON*	1,152
SOUTH BURLINGTON*	589
COLCHESTER*	539
ESSEX*	487
SHELBURNE*	196
STOWE*	65
JERICHO	58
WILLISTON	51
MIDDLEBURY	28
MONTPELIER	27

MILTON: 13
WINOOSKI 6

* SAME POSITION AS LAST YEAR

Website Visits by Device

DEVICE	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
DESKTOP	46.9%	51.25%	40.2%	50.1%	52.8%	65.7%
MOBILE	44.6%	41.28%	44%	40.6%	36.4%	24.5%
TABLET	8.5%	7.47%	15.8%	9.3%	10.8%	9.8%

Most Visited Pages

PAGE	TOTAL
HOMEPAGE	4,465 (27.90%)
/EDUCATIONAL-RESOURCES/PICK-UP-DOG-POOP/	1,239 (7.74%)
/WHAT-YOU-CAN-DO/	1,076 (6.72%)
/EDUCATIONAL-RESOURCES/REDUCE-ROAD-SALT/	702 (4.39%)
/THE-STREAM-TEAM/	551 (3.44%)
/WHAT-YOU-CAN-DO/REDUCE-FERTILIZER-USE/	551 (3.44%)
/WHAT-YOU-CAN-DO/PICK-UP-DOG-POOP/	528 (3.30%)
/WHAT-YOU-CAN-DO/PLANT-A-RAIN-GARDEN/	472 (2.95%)
/EDUCATIONAL-RESOURCES/FOR-KIDS/CREATE-YOUR-OWN-WATER-CYCLE/	460 (2.87%)
/EXPLORE-THE-LAKE-CHAMPLAIN-BASIN/	410 (2.56%)

Website Event Tracking

DEVICE	2021	2020
MAILCHIMP FORM	48	61
RAIN GARDEN PDF	56	N/A
RAIN BARREL PDF	17	8
SOIL TEST CTA	18	5
SCIENCE EXPERIMENT PDF	15	N/A