

# **Applying national lessons in non-point source outreach to achieve real gains in water quality: the process and potential of social marketing**

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**Abstract.** Solutions to nonpoint source water quality impairments often come with two components: a technical piece in which the science is typically well understood, and a social component focused on the implementation. The importance of the social element to improvement in nonpoint source pollution is acknowledged by the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) mandate that regulated stormwater communities must include public education and outreach in their overall stormwater programs. Thus far, success has been limited, largely due to the fact that most communities have used off the shelf brochures developed by US EPA that target all of the major nonpoint source pollutants across the country.

Social Marketing is an emerging science that systematically develops a social outreach program specific to the individual community and the desired behavior change for the environmental problem of concern. The four steps include: (1) identify the barriers and benefits to the desired behavior change, (2) develop a strategy that uses appropriate tools for the identified barriers/benefits, (3) pilot, and (4) implementation and evaluation. This process has been successfully administered on many public health and environmental problems, such as seat belt usage, highway litter, and recycling; however, it has had little application with water quality. This paper presents a brief summary of the social marketing process, the few cases where it has been employed in the water quality arena accompanied by followup monitoring, and a preliminary application in the City of Louisville, Ky. conducted by the author.

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