

One Barrel at a Time Co-op

Situation

A hand-painted rain barrel can be aesthetically pleasing to a home/business owner. The "One Barrel at a Time Co-op" program not only offers New Jersey artists an opportunity to showcase their talent, but provides the community an opportunity to bid on decorated rain barrels. In addition to bringing local art to a wider audience, it also can greatly contribute to the public's understanding of New Jersey's need for water conservation.

Action

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, and Lucid Graphics coordinated the "One Barrel at a Time Co-op" where artists beautify rain barrels to be auctioned off to the public. The goal of this program was to help the environment by having residents bid on beautiful rain barrels. The rain barrels help save potable water and reduce rainwater from entering the storm drain system.

If you are interested in implementing this program, you may want to consider the following:

- Create a contract between the sponsoring organization and the artist. This contract should include an established timeline that artists must abide by. For example, a deadline for the application, pick up and drop off time for the rain barrel, a timeline and the method of the bidding process, as well as a pick up time for winning bidders.
- Each artist will need to submit their designs and have them approved before painting. As the barrels are plastic, they must be primed prior to painting. Provide each artist with a 12 ounce can of Valspar plastic primer at the time of pick up.
- The contract should also require the artists to agree to have their completed barrels on display at local venues with brochures that explain the benefits of rain barrels, along with information about the artists and their design concept.



Rain Barrels on display at the United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 2 headquarters in NYC

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- In addition, the artist relinquishes ownership of his/her artwork upon delivery of the finished barrel to either of the drop off locations. The project partners are not liable for any damage to the barrel during its storage or display period. Once the barrel has been auctioned off, artwork on the barrel becomes the property of the purchaser.
- With regard to payment, once the barrel has been auctioned off to the highest bidder, the profit will be remitted to the artist.

Impact

This program greatly contributed to the public's understanding of New Jersey's need for water conservation while furthering the art community's creative reach. Thirty-five artists were solicited from around the state to design and paint rain barrels. The painted rain barrels were on display in public areas in Belmar, East Greenwich, Egg Harbor Township, Rahway and East Greenwich. Additionally, rain barrels were on display at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in Trenton, the United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 2 Offices in New York City, and at Rutgers Day on the G.H. Cook Campus. On Earth Day, all barrels were available for bid on eBay®. Funds raised through the auction offset the cost of offering the program with the profit going back to the artists. Since the program launched in March 2010, many smaller communities have initiated their own versions of the co-op.



Rain Barrels on display at the East Greenwich Township Building

New Jersey Water Savers Partnership

New Jersey Water Savers is a partnership between the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. This partnership was created to provide leadership to promote water conservation throughout New Jersey. For more information on our partnership efforts, visit us at www.water.rutgers.edu.