

CHAPTER 3 - PUBLIC EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Goals & Objectives

Develop a public education and outreach program to increase awareness of stormwater pollution impacts and to encourage changes in public behavior. An informed and knowledgeable community is important to the success of a stormwater program. An informed community has a better understanding of why stormwater management is important and what individual actions they can take to improve water quality within receiving waters.

The key to a successful public education and outreach program is to form partnerships, develop a strategy, and reach a diverse audience. A public education program should also target specific audiences that have a higher potential for stormwater pollution. For some audiences, particularly businesses, incentives may be needed to encourage behavior change. Potential incentives may include awards, rewards, public recognition, certifications, licenses, rebates, fees, and credit policies (stormwater utility fee).

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requires that a public education and outreach program include, at a minimum, address all eight topics below at least once during the permit term. Permittees that are a City, shall address a minimum of six topics each year. Topics may be repeated as necessary. Permittees shall select from the topic areas below:

Public Education and Outreach Topic Areas and Descriptions

1) Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination

Promote detection and elimination of illicit discharges and water quality impacts associated with such discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems.

2) Household Hazardous Waste Disposal/Pet Waste Management/Vehicle Washing

Inform and educate the public about the proper management of materials that may cause storm water pollution from sources including automobiles, pet waste, household hazardous waste and household practices.

3) Yard Waste Management/Pesticide and Fertilizer Application

Promote beneficial onsite reuse of leaves and grass clippings and proper use of lawn and garden fertilizers and pesticides.

4) Stream and Shoreline Management

Promote the management of streambanks and shorelines by riparian landowners to minimize erosion and restore and enhance the ecological value of waterways.

5) Residential Infiltration

Promote infiltration of residential storm water runoff from rooftop downspouts, driveways and sidewalks.

6) Construction Sites and PostConstruction Storm Water Management

Inform and educate those responsible for the design, installation, and maintenance of construction site erosion control practices and storm water management facilities on how to design, install and maintain the practices.

7) Pollution Prevention

Identify businesses and activities that may pose a storm water contamination concern, and educate those specific audiences on methods of storm water pollution prevention.

8) Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development

Promote environmentally sensitive land development designs by developers and designers, including green infrastructure and low impact development.

Program Development

The City joined the Northeast Wisconsin Stormwater Consortium (NEWSC) in 2005. NEWSC is a partnership of local municipalities, DNR, UW-Extension, engineers, and vendors. The group's mission is to facilitate efficient implementation of local stormwater programs by: fostering partnerships, sharing information, seeking administrative efficiencies, and pooling financial resources. NEWSC has developed educational materials, coordinated several public service announcements on WHBY radio, orchestrated an episode of "It's Your Environment" TV program, sponsored a Community-Based Social Marketing Workshop, and prepared a regional Information & Education (I&E) Plan. A copy of the NEWSC I&E Plan is provided in Appendix C. During October and November of 2005, NEWSC also conducted a telephone survey of 403 residents located within Northeast Wisconsin. According to the survey, 32% of survey respondents believe storm sewers carry runoff to a municipal sewage treatment plant. This statistic indicates more stormwater education is needed in Northeast Wisconsin.

The City created a Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) to assist with developing its public education and outreach program. The CAB met with City Staff and McMahon on May 17, 2007. During the meeting, McMahon provided the CAB with an overview of NR 216 stormwater regulations, identified available resources, facilitated the discussion, and summarized CAB comments. A copy of CAB comments is provided in Appendix C. During the meeting, CAB members were asked to rank the importance of each DNR topic based on their understanding of stormwater impacts and public behaviors in the City. The rankings provided the City with a method to prioritize its public education and outreach efforts. The CAB ranking for each stormwater topic is as follows ("1" means highest priority, "13" means lowest priority):

Stormwater Topic	Rank
Fertilizers & pesticides	1
Illicit discharges	2
Household hazardous waste	3
Leaves & grass clippings	4
Residential infiltration	5
Businesses & activities	6
Automobiles	7
Household practices	8
Stormwater management	9
Construction site erosion	10
Pet waste	11
Low impact development	12
Stream & shoreline erosion	13

CAB members were also asked to identify businesses and activities in the City that may pose a stormwater contamination concern. These businesses and activities are typically classified as stormwater 'hot spots'. As shown above, businesses and activities have a priority ranking of "6" as compared to the other twelve stormwater topics. The top five businesses and activities ranked by CAB members are as follows ("1" means highest priority, "5" means lowest priority):

Businesses & Activities	Rank
Auto Repair Shops	1
Waste Management	2
Thilmany	3
Foundry	4
Schuh Transport	5

The City has developed a dedicated funding source or stormwater utility fee to financially support the municipal stormwater program, including public education and outreach. A copy of the City's stormwater utility ordinance is provided in Appendix J.

The City developed various policies and procedures to assist with implementation of the public education and outreach program. The policies and procedures include the following:

1. The Public Works Director is responsible for implementation of the public education and outreach program.
2. The City intends to maintain its membership and partnership with the Northeast Wisconsin Stormwater Consortium (NEWSC). NEWSC plans to evaluate and update its regional Information & Education (I&E) Plan as necessary.

3. The City plans to reconvene the Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) every ±5 years to review the effectiveness of the local public education and outreach program.
4. The City plans to allocate its public education and outreach budget based on the Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) rankings and current trending topics.

Program Implementation

Each element of the public education and outreach program is described in the new Outreach and Education Plan In Appendix C. The spreadsheet developed by NEWSOC identifies Best Management Practices (BMP), measurable goals, and proposed implementation dates. The proposed BMPs and measurable goals were selected by the City after considering the needs of both the community and receiving waters. The purpose of the spreadsheet is to track program implementation and gauge effectiveness of the overall public education and outreach program.