

What's Going On Across The State?

Wisconsin MS4 Permittees



Keep Up With Your Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan This Summer

Summer brings a flurry of fun and activity, especially with construction and landscaping in full swing. As this can make Department of Public Works (DPW) yards and other municipally owned properties especially busy, having an up-to-date Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan is even more vital to help stay on top of housekeeping and identify adjustments where needed.

For example, if a community's DPW yard is receiving more construction fill material than usual, existing practices may be inadequate at preventing storm water pollution or may become overwhelmed and therefore not effective. Communities should consider additional or different best management practices such as increased sweeping, storing excess material in three-sided bays, tarping materials when not in use and/or relocating the storage area where the excess materials can be accommodated – especially if the current location is near storm water inlets or other areas that could impact waterways or wetlands. Lastly, the duration of storage must be considered. If stored materials do not have an end use, make a plan to move the extra materials off-site.

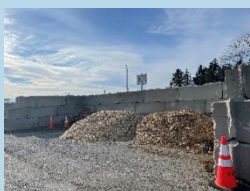


Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR



MS4 Permittee's at UW-Milwaukee's School of Freshwater Sciences in the McLellan Lab. / Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

MS4 Fecal Bacteria Workshop: Emerging Science And Opportunities For Fecal Bacteria Detection

In April 2025, the Menomonee River Watershed MS4 Permittees attended a fecal bacteria workshop focused on the latest research on detecting human fecal coliform through Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) programs. Identifying human sources of fecal bacteria at storm water outfalls is critical for locating and repairing leaks in failing infrastructure, a known contributor to fecal bacterial contamination.

The workshop, co-hosted by the [McLellan Lab](#) at the University of Wisconsin's School of Freshwater Sciences and [Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust, Inc.](#) (Sweet Water), a nonprofit that assists with MS4 permit compliance, presented findings from a recent study carried out by the McLellan Lab. The study revealed that many commonly available IDDE fecal bacteria testing methods may produce false positives or false negatives for human fecal bacterial contamination. This can lead to wasted resources or undetected contamination. Attendees also toured the McLellan Lab to gain a deeper understanding of advanced methods used to identify human-specific fecal bacterial markers.

This workshop marked the launch of a new project by Sweet Water and the McLellan Lab, aimed at developing a standardized process to help municipalities more effectively identify and eliminate sewage contamination. With support from the Fund for Lake Michigan and the McDougal Family Foundation, the team will conduct human marker bacteria testing over the next two years through IDDE programs in participating Milwaukee-area MS4 Permittees.

Bridging the gap between academic research and on-the-ground water quality management will help create a science-based, practical approach that can be widely adopted by MS4 Permittees across the state. If interested in learning more, please contact Erin Povak at povak@sweetwater.org.



Photo Credits: Sweet Water



Topics

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Pool Water Discharge Considerations

As the weather warms up, many pool owners begin to prep and maintain their swimming pools, which may require the discharge of pool water.

Discharging pool water into surface waters is extremely harmful to aquatic life because of the high chlorine levels. Therefore, pool owners should read [these recommended actions](#) before draining their pool water.

If the resident's only option is to directly drain the pool water to surface water, the discharge will require a Swimming Pool and Water Attraction General Permit. Instructions on how to apply for coverage under this general permit can be found on the [DNR website](#).

Municipal Road Reconstruction Projects: Common Questions

If my community is planning for road repaving or resurfacing, does the project need a DNR Storm Water Construction Permit?

Full-depth road reconstruction projects that expose or disturb 1 acre or more of soil require coverage under a DNR construction site storm water discharge permit. However, road repaving or resurfacing projects would not require permit coverage as long as the pavement and base material are not fully removed to expose the subsoil. For road repaving or resurfacing projects that include adjacent work areas (e.g., road widening, sidewalks, terraces, ditches, etc.), permit coverage is required for the adjacent work areas if the land disturbance in these areas is 1 acre or more.

State vs. local funding for road projects – How does the permitting work?

Although state and local funded road project applications are submitted through the DNR's ePermitting system, applications for state highway projects and local road projects with WisDOT funding are submitted to the DNR using a [specific application](#) (scroll to bottom of page) for [WisDOT construction sites](#). Applications for all other local road projects can be submitted to the DNR using the [ePermitting system](#) for storm water construction sites.

Minor road reconstruction exemptions – What do I need to know?

Most local road reconstruction projects meet the [NR 151.21\(5\)\(b\)](#) definition of minor reconstruction. Minor road reconstruction projects are exempt from post-construction storm water performance standards other than the protective area performance standard in [NR 151.24](#).

However, road reconstruction projects that include the replacement of a vegetated drainage system (e.g., swales, filter strips) with a non-vegetated drainage system (e.g., storm sewer piping) are not eligible for the minor road reconstruction exemptions. For these projects, a post-construction storm water plan must be developed to provide 40% total suspended solids reduction based on the area where conversion from vegetated to non-vegetated drainage systems occurs.



Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance Cleanup Event Brings 1,745 Volunteers

On May 3, 2025, Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance (FWWA) hosted the largest northeast Wisconsin region volunteer watershed trash cleanup event.

FWWA has 65+ public cleanup sites along the Fox River, Wolf River, Lake Butte des Morts, Lake Winnebago, Lake Winneconne, East River, Bay of Green Bay and more throughout the basin.

This year, FWWA reported participation of 1,745 volunteers. In total, volunteers picked up 8,644.6 pounds of trash across the watershed.

FWWA recorded the types of trash and other litter collected during the cleanup. They found plastic bags (total of 1,714), recycling bags (220) and straws (1333) were the most common items picked up.

Additionally, several tires (total of 35), electronics (total of 44) and syringes (total of 60) were collected as part of the cleanup efforts to be properly disposed of.

To learn more about the event and future events, visit [FWWA's webpage](#).



Photo Credits: Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance

City Of Racine: Root River Report Card

The city of Racine Public Health Department has released its 2024 Root River Report Card, an online tool that provides the public with up-to-date water quality data and actionable ways to support local watershed health. The [report card](#) evaluates indicators of water quality, including *E. coli*, turbidity, pH, temperature, conductivity and dissolved oxygen. It offers a transparent assessment of river health and promotes community involvement in protecting this vital resource.

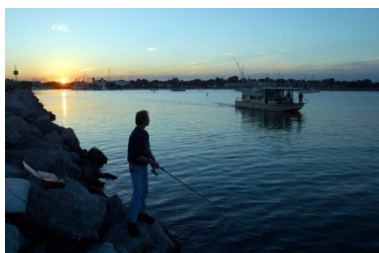


Photo Credit: City of Racine Root River Report Card

To strengthen monitoring efforts and fill gaps in weekly sampling, the city of Racine's Public Health Department has also installed a real-time water quality sensor at Lincoln Park upstream from the Steelhead Facility. This sensor collects data every 5 minutes, capturing dynamic changes that occur during storm events, peak temperatures and diurnal oxygen cycles. This data is publicly accessible through the report card or [online](#).

Real-time monitoring enables earlier detection of pollution spikes, supports smarter restoration decisions and helps residents, researchers and policymakers better understand river conditions as they happen. It complements the report card by offering continuous insight between routine monitoring visits.

The city explained this project is made possible through funding from the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office for Coastal Management, under the Coastal Zone Management Act, Grant #NA24NOSX419C0009.

Waupun's "Eddies & Etchings" Sculpture Project: Connecting Art, Water And Community

The city of Waupun is turning to public art to spark community conversations about water stewardship, storm water education and environmental sustainability along the Rock River. With support from a Protect Wisconsin Waterways Water Quality Education and Involvement Mini-Grant, Waupun will install Eddies & Etchings, a reflective outdoor sculpture designed to highlight the vital relationship between people and water.

Strategically placed along the Rock River in Waupun, the sculpture draws inspiration from the actual river flow near the site. The piece will feature mirrored surfaces that invite viewers to see themselves in the landscape, reinforcing personal responsibility in protecting local waterways.

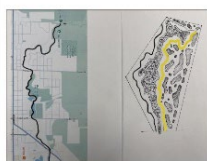
This permanent installation is a collaboration between the nonprofit Create Waupun and the Rock River Storm Water Group's mini-grant program. More than just a visual attraction, Eddies & Etchings will serve as a springboard for environmental education.

Interpretive signage, an audio tour and interactive educational programs for schools and families will provide both passive and active learning opportunities related to storm water and other water-related issues.

While the installation is planned for late summer, the official public unveiling is planned for September to align with the city's annual waterway cleanup and Wisconsin Storm Water Week. Combined with ongoing educational programming and signage, the project aims to demonstrate how creative placemaking can enhance storm water messaging and bring together municipalities, artists and educators to inspire action and reflection on local waterways, such as the Rock River.



"Eddies and Etchings" 2025



Inspired by the interactive meandering path of the Rock River's flowing waters gently moving through the area to inspire new sights and experiences.

Materials: Welded and Cut Corten Steel, and Aluminum

Dimensions: 48'x 30'x 4' Base: 48' x 30' x 18' \$5000

Photo Credit: Andrew Dahl/UW Whitewater

DNR Maps And GIS

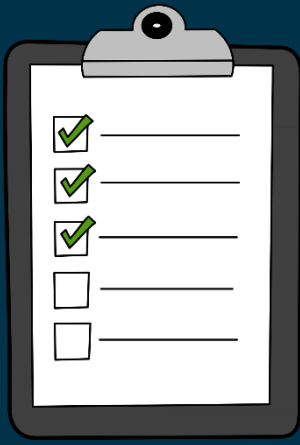
Looking for DNR program map information such as contaminated soil or groundwater locations, or Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters?

Visit the [DNR's Choose a Map webpage](#) for interactive maps.

The user can zoom in and out, add data layers, print and export maps and perform other actions to get information and make maps about specific areas and features of interest.

Additionally, the DNR has a [GIS Open Data Portal](#) – a resource for locating, viewing and downloading geospatial data developed and/or maintained by the DNR. DNR programs create and maintain a wide variety of geospatial data sets to support specific activities and services (such as the [Storm Water Permit Viewer](#), which shows submitted and approved storm water permits for construction, WisDOT and industrial storm water permittees), and they may have different requirements for providing access to their data.

If you can't find what you need on the DNR GIS Data Portal, use the search bar on the [DNR homepage](#) to find topic-specific webpages that may include links to the geospatial data



Want To Be Featured In The MS4 Fall Edition?

We want to hear about your municipality's success stories and practices.

Please reach out to Wisconsin DNR staff with stories to include in upcoming editions:

Lexi Montes

Elxius.Montes@wisconsin.gov



Upcoming Dates, Reminders And Events

- **Updated [Low Hazard Waste Exemption for Reuse of Street Sweepings Application Form](#)**

Municipalities looking to beneficially reuse street sweepings should submit this completed application, including the required \$550 review fee listed in NR 520, Wis. Adm. Code. A complete application constitutes a formal request for an exemption from solid waste regulations under s. 289.43, Wis. Stats. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

For more information, [contact the DNR regional solid waste contact person assigned to your county.](#)

- **MyWisconsin ID And Multi-Factor Authentication Implemented For DNR ePermitting**

To better protect systems, the DNR has moved to a new identity system called MyWisconsin ID and enforcing multi-factor authentication for Wisconsin DNR ePermitting.

The MyWisconsin ID and multi-factor authentication rollout began Friday, July 18. You can still access your existing draft applications and submit them using your WAMS ID until the end of the calendar year; however, all new permit applications must be created using a MyWisconsin ID.

Beginning January 2026, you will be **unable** to access the Wisconsin DNR ePermitting system via WAMS ID. For more details on the move, submit a [DNR Contact Form](#) or select "Ask for Help" in the support panel of the [Wisconsin DNR ePermitting System](#). Please fill out the required fields in the contact form and select "MyWisconsin ID" from the "Permit Category" dropdown menu.

Questions?

Visit the [MyWisconsin FAQ webpage](#) for answers to common questions or contact the MyWisconsin account service desk at 608-471-6667.

Contact ePermitting support staff by submitting a [DNR Contact Form](#) for support with the Wisconsin DNR ePermitting system. Please fill out the required fields in the contact form and select "MyWisconsin ID" from the "Permit Category" dropdown menu.

- **Free Smart Salting Workshops for Winter Maintenance Professionals**

Training focus: Roadways

Date: Tuesday, 9/10/25

Time: 8-12pm

Location: UWM School of Freshwater Sciences, 600 E Greenfield Ave Milwaukee, WI 53204

Registration and more information: <https://milwaukeekeeper.org/event/smart-salting-roads/>

Training focus: Parking Lots & Sidewalks

Date: Wednesday, 9/11/25

Time: 8-12pm

Location: UWM School of Freshwater Sciences, 600 E Greenfield Ave Milwaukee, WI 53204

Registration: <https://milwaukeekeeper.org/event/smart-salting-parking/>

- **Wisconsin Salt Wise 2025 Free Smart Salting Workshops**

This is a free training for winter maintenance professionals who remove snow, apply road salt or maintain snow removal equipment. Learn how using the right amount of salt can save time, budget and our waters.

The training will include best management practices to keep paved areas safe, guidance on determining the right amount of salt to use, the benefits of liquids and case studies from local applicators. Visit the [Wisconsin Salt Wise Workshop website](#) for upcoming dates this year!

- **Partners For Places Jobs And Inclusive Infrastructure Initiative**

The Funders Network recently launched a new pilot funding opportunity that will leverage infrastructure funds to ensure projects benefit underserved areas, including training and expanding career pathways for local workers in critical industries. The deadline to apply is Sept. 15, 2025. With this initiative, Partners for Places will award place-based grants to community partnerships advancing inclusive infrastructure projects, support cohort learning, and provide access to regional and national expertise to help communities achieve their goals. This funding is not for the physical infrastructure itself, but for the human infrastructure needed to create meaningful collaborations and center community engagement.

- [Learn more about the Partners for Places Jobs and Inclusive Infrastructure Initiative.](#)
- [Access the invitation to apply, selection criteria and other documents.](#)