

What's Going On In Our Corner?

Southeast Wisconsin MS4 Permittees



The MS4 Permit Standard

MS4 permit conditions are developed to meet the MS4 permit standard: reduce pollutants to the maximum extent practicable (MEP), protect local water quality and meet CWA standards. MS4 permittees satisfy the MS4 permit standard by complying with their permit and successfully implementing the stormwater management programs.

Stormwater quality is impacted by various urban activities. While many of these activities occur in every community, the extent of these activities and the practices needed to mitigate impacts from these activities varies.

Additionally, although practices used to mitigate stormwater pollutants may be the same throughout communities, implementation can vary, affecting effectiveness. For example, Community A and Community B experience similar volumes of traffic and, therefore, pollutants. Although both communities implement the same street sweeping practices (e.g., equipment, frequency and timing), Community A allows cars to park on the street while Community B does not. Community A may not be able to sweep the curb line, making its street-sweeping efforts less effective. Consequently, to reduce pollutants to the MEP, Community A may have to implement additional practices.



Photo Credit: Strand Associates, Inc.

Topics

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A Reminder Of The MS4 Permit
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Village & Town Of Somers: Stormwater Utility Public Meeting Brings In 150 Residents

In 2018, the Village & Town of Somers Stormwater Utility Fund was established, where funds were allocated to create a stormwater management plan with the help of Strand Associates, Inc., an engineering firm.

The Stormwater Utility held a public informational open house in June of 2023. The residents were invited through a direct mailing campaign to come meet representatives of Strand and help identify and locate stormwater issues. Educational boards were provided to inform citizens of the process and the Village's goals for the project. Large maps were laid out for citizens to identify problem areas. Stations were provided for citizens to write comments on what areas need to be addressed. Approximately 150 residents were in attendance. They provided comments and many brought their own pictures of problem areas, too.

Later that summer, the public informational meeting results were summarized into a draft Stormwater Project Prioritization Matrix. The matrix included the following metrics:

Project duration, impact to residents, synergy with other Village & Town projects, feasibility, jurisdiction and reported property impact.

The highest-ranked suggestion was for Somers to conduct a Village-Wide Flooding Model project. Based on this suggestion, in February of 2024, the Village & Town Board chose to begin their study in two areas that are prone to flooding and where potential near-term development may take place.

In early spring of 2024, a letter was sent to the residents in the two selected areas to inform them that Strand would be gathering survey information that would be used to build a flooding model. Surveying was completed early this summer and Strand will be presenting findings and suggestions to Somers this Fall.

To learn more about this ongoing project, please feel free to reach out to Jason Peters at JPeters@somers.org.

Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination: Dry weather outfall screenings

Dry Weather Outfall Screenings? Dry weather stormwater outfall screenings remain an effective way to identify illicit discharges or connections. Since flow should not be present during dry weather, determining the source of flow is critical to determine if the flow is illicit. Typically, “dry weather” is 48-72 hours after a rain event. However, based on the precipitation event and size of the drainage area, this time may vary.

What is considered flow? Often, it’s obvious if flow is present. However, sometimes flow is more difficult to determine. Overall, if flow is questionable, investigate upstream of the stormwater outfall to determine if flow is present. If so, test the flow at that upstream location for pollutant parameters required by your MS4 permit.



Standing water at outfall during dry weather. Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

Outfalls located within a low area allow stormwater to pool. Consequently, standing stormwater may be mistaken for flow. If standing stormwater is present, investigate upstream of the outfall. If flow is present upstream, test the flow at this upstream location.

It may be difficult or impossible to determine flow at outfalls that are fully or partially submerged by receiving waters or located within enclosed waterways. Like the example above, investigation must occur upstream of the outfall to determine flow.

In areas with high groundwater, flow may be questionable. To avoid testing groundwater, screenings should be avoided during times of high groundwater, such as early spring. However, as with the examples above, investigation should occur upstream of the outfall to determine flow.

Sheboygan County Participates In The 6th-Annual Random Lake Conservation Fair

On April 20, 2024, Sheboygan County participated in the 6th-annual Random Lake Conservation fair and brought their watershed model by Enviroscope.

The Enviroscope offers a hands-on approach to learning and helps individual understand how every drop of water within a watershed will interact with its surroundings. Laura Grunwald, County Conservation Specialist, stated the Enviroscope set up prompted great conversations about the many ways to protect water quality among the mixed land uses and various landowners within a watershed. During the conservation fair, Grunwald also talked about how using the appropriate amount and correct timing of landscaping chemicals, keeping well-maintained vehicles and adding a vegetated buffer between fields and waterways will help maintain healthy soils, habitats for wildlife and clean streams. Moving forward, the County plans for this to be an annual event for their team.



Photo Credit: Sheboygan County

Major, Minor And Priority Outfalls

Major and minor outfalls are based on pipe or drainage area size. For an outfall to be considered major, it must meet one of the criteria listed in [s. NR 216.002\(16\)](#). Outfalls that do not meet these criteria are considered minor.

Since major outfalls serve large drainage areas, the likelihood of illicit discharges looks greater.

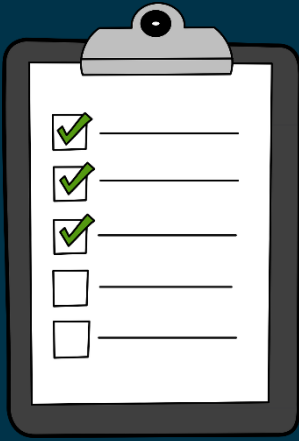
As such, MS4 permits continue to require screening major outfalls.

However, results have shown screenings should not solely be based on size. Consequently, MS4 permits have included screening requirements for minor and priority outfalls.

Though a priority outfall may fit the definition of a major outfall, priority outfalls should be based on illicit discharge potential in the contributing drainage.

Characteristics that should be considered include history of known/suspected illicit discharges, sections of storm and/or sanitary sewer that have exceeded/approaching their design life, contributing drainage areas with 80%+ imperviousness, business with frequent changes in property ownership or operations, etc.

Lastly, although the MS4 permittee determines its own priority outfalls, MS4 outfalls should routinely re-evaluated.



Want To Be Featured In The MS4 Fall Edition?

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

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

Lexi Passante

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or

Samantha Katt

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Upcoming Dates, Reminders And Events

Save The Date! Wisconsin Stormwater Week Is Back, Sept. 21-29, 2024

Stormwater Week is an awareness campaign that aims to inform, educate, and engage Wisconsin residents on the topic of stormwater pollution prevention through shared, consistent messaging. Each weekday of Wisconsin Stormwater Week focuses on different aspects of stormwater pollution prevention. [Find useful content such as webinars, social media posts and more.](#)

Get Tips On Dealing With Certain Invasive Plants

A quick primer on four common invasives, how to recognize them on the landscape and how to handle them when you do. For details on these and the 100-plus other terrestrial plants listed as invasive under Wisc. Admin. Code NR 40, check the [Invasive Species Master Resource Table](#). Or read [the article](#).

Storm Water Permit Viewer

Need to see what active construction sites with DNR permits are within your community? Or maybe you are curious to see where permitted stormwater industrial facilities are located? The [Storm Water Permit Viewer](#) provides an interactive map to explore active WPDES Stormwater Permits and much more. Select "Show Layers" in the top left corner to select different layers.

Great Lakes Basin River Water-Quality Trends

[This dashboard](#) summarizes water quality information for tributaries of the Great Lakes in the United States. Nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment concentrations are measured monthly 24 rivers that flow into the Great Lakes.

2024 Surface Water Grant Applicant Guide And Program Guidance Now Available Online

The 2024 Surface Water Grant applicant guide and program guidance documents are now available for review on the DNR's [Surface Water Grants webpage](#). Additionally, a NEW [recorded introductory webinar for new applicants](#) is available on the Surface Water Grants webpage. Pre-applications are due Sept. 15, 2024.