

# What's Going On Across The State?

## Wisconsin Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permittees

Quarterly

Winter Edition

February 2026

---

### City Of Kenosha: A GIS Asset Management Approach For Post-Construction Storm Water BMPs

Post Construction Storm Water Management (PCSWM) is an ever-evolving maze of folders, file cabinets, maps, servers and legal agreements. Like many municipalities with an MS4 Permit, the city of Kenosha's (City) program has grown considerably since its inception in 2008.

Shifts in management strategies have impacted the way legal agreements are written. Changes in the legal agreements create new long-term maintenance items or divide necessary long-term maintenance items between multiple responsible parties. Tracking these responsibilities has become a murky process that previously required rereading, re-interpreting and relocating legal agreements regularly.

With the help from the Wisconsin DNR's Urban Nonpoint Source Grant, the City developed a plan to revamp existing, stand-alone GIS stormwater data for the implementation of an integrated GIS solution. As a result, examples of new PCSWM program GIS fields to help track and manage post-construction BMPs include:

- Primary contacts
- Routine inspection responsibility
- Sounding and dredging responsibility
- Structure maintenance responsibility
- Vegetation management responsibility
- If the City can issue citations in response to neglect
- If the City can complete work and bill the responsible party in the case of neglect; and what documents provide these authorities

The new data structure, additional information and feature symbology create an interactive experience for the user to be able to parse out responsibility and ownership information immediately.

Responsibilities and contact information that used to be outlined in reams of legal paper or permits are now available via a simplified pop-up. New domains and feature class assignments enable the implementation of intuitive symbologies in the interactive map based on common queries.

All of these elements combined have created a multifunctional dataset that has set the stage for future digital integration, program management and accessible documentation.

## MS4 Annual Reports Due March 31, 2026, and MyWisconsin ID Reminder

MS4 Annual Reports must be submitted to the Department by March 31 each year. This report is required for MS4 Permittees to document and report its compliance with the MS4 permit storm water management requirements.

Annual reports must be submitted via the online eReporting System (i.e., [Storm Water ePermitting](#)). Please note a WAMS ID was used to sign into Storm Water ePermitting. However, starting in July 2025, the Department moved to a new identification system, [MyWisconsin ID](#). If you have not created a [MyWisconsin ID](#) yet, this will need to be completed in order to sign into [Storm Water ePermitting](#) to successfully submit your community's MS4 Annual Report.

## Less Salt, More Savings, Cleaner Water: UW-Parkside's Brine Success Story

As winter approaches, communities are rethinking how to keep roads safe without sacrificing budgets or freshwater. Traditional rock salt has more than doubled in cost since 2006, and each ton can cause \$800–\$3,300 in infrastructure damage. Worse, salt pollution is permanent, with just one teaspoon contaminating five gallons of freshwater.

The University of Wisconsin-Parkside is proving there's a smarter way. Since 2019, the campus has shifted from solely using rock salt to incorporating brine, a diluted salt-and-water solution applied before storms. Brine prevents snow from bonding to pavement, reduces bounce-and-scatter and cuts overall salt use while keeping sidewalks and parking lots safe.

Facilities Manager John Bruch led the charge, upgrading from a small, labor-intensive system to a custom multi-tank design built for under \$1,000. The new setup produces 1,000 gallons in just 30 minutes. This compared to the old setup saves hours of staff time while reducing costs and protecting local waterways and Lake Michigan. Last season alone, UW-Parkside produced 1,250 gallons of brine, lowering salt orders and redirecting savings to other campus needs.

Winter maintenance training events, provided through Root-Pike WIN's Respect Our Waters program, amplify this impact.

Root-Pike WIN partnering with UW-Parkside and nineteen other municipalities, the program educates communities on stormwater solutions. This year through the program, UW-Parkside hosted Wisconsin Salt Wise for a hands-on class showcasing their brine-making system. Professionals toured the operation, asked questions and learned best practices from calibrating salt spreaders to determining correct application rates.

From Oak Creek's \$50,000 savings in a single storm to Jefferson County's \$500,000 in annual taxpayer relief from reduced salt use, the benefits of brine are both measurable and undeniable. With UW-Parkside and other community leaders at the forefront, winter maintenance is becoming cleaner, safer and more cost-effective. To learn more, the [full story is available online](#).

Story provided by Laura Buska, Office Manager & Communications Coordinator at Root-Pike WIN.

## Reach Vs. Reachshed – TMDLs

For MS4 Permittee's within an approved EPA Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), TMDL wasteload allocations (WLA) are assigned by reach.

However, TMDL pollutant removal goals in MS4 permits are typically assigned by reachshed. The terms "reach" and "reachshed" are related but somewhat different. A reach is a specific segment of a stream or lake. A reachshed is the land that drains to the associated reach.

Reachsheds delineated during TMDL development are based on topographic maps. As such, the delineated TMDL reachsheds do not account for modifications in drainage areas due storm sewers systems. Therefore, it is necessary for MS4 Permittees to adjust TMDL delineated reachshed boundaries when developing its TMDL analysis.

In summary, reaches identified in TMDL reports do not change. However, reachsheds may require modifications for the MS4's TMDL analysis.

## City Of De Pere Earns 2025 Excellence In Snow And Ice Control Award

The American Public Works Association (APWA) Wisconsin Chapter has selected the City of De Pere as the recipient of the 2025 Excellence in Snow and Ice Control Award for communities over 25,000 in population. The city will be recognized at the Wisconsin Chapter Spring Conference Awards Banquet in April 2026.

This award recognizes municipalities that implement best practices to minimize road salt environmental impacts while maintaining safe roads. De Pere's winter road management approach serves as an excellent model for salt reduction through technology and training. De Pere's nomination documentation included an impressive amount of information

showing just how serious the city is about safe roads and clean water. Here are a few of the primary aspects:

- **Advanced Brine Operations:** De Pere's brine-making system can produce 6,000 gallons per hour and allows for custom chemical blending based on specific weather conditions.
- **Precision Application:** Their fleet is equipped with ground-speed-controlled dispensers and AVL/GPS technology to track real-time spreading rates and pavement temperatures.
- **Prioritizing Mechanical Removal:** Their strategy focuses on salt as a supplement to mechanical removal. Operators are trained to maximize plowing before salt application.
- **Rigorous Training:** The city conducts annual "Winter Training Days," featuring simulated plowing exercises for new staff and mandatory equipment calibration before the season.

Approaches like those used in De Pere help protect our waterways. Congratulations to Tony Fietzer and the entire De Pere Public Works team on this well-deserved recognition.

## La Crosse Community Comes Together For Seasonal Sustainability

La Crosse is taking big steps toward protecting its waterways and promoting sustainable living through a unique partnership between the city of La Crosse, Habitat for Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Region and the La Crosse Urban Storm Water Group (La Crosse Area Waters). Together, they have developed four innovative, seasonal workshops that provide hands-on learning and empower residents to make small changes that have a big impact on our environment: Salt Smart, Grow Green, Leaf It and Soak It Up Summer.

**Salt Smart:** The Salt Smart workshop teaches residents how to apply road salt responsibly, make their own brine and explore eco-friendly alternatives. By learning best practices, participants help keep sidewalks safe while protecting local ecosystems. They also receive a cup that helps with salting smart- showing that one 12 oz cup of salt is enough to cover 10 sidewalk squares.

**Grow Green:** This event encourages homeowners to adopt sustainable lawn care practices, plant pollinator gardens and explore rain garden options. Attendees can engage in hands-on activities like making seed bombs, identifying native seeds and learning about lawn alternatives. The goal of the event is to suggest and create landscapes that support pollinators, reduce runoff and enhance biodiversity. Participants go home with native seed packets to plant at home.

**Leaf It:** Every autumn, fallen leaves can clog storm drains and contribute to nutrient pollution in rivers and lakes. The Leaf It event encourages residents to mulch or

leave leaves on their lawns instead of raking and bagging. It's a simple, sustainable solution that benefits both homeowners and waterways. Signs are also available for participants to place in their yards.

**Soak It Up Summer:** Soak It Up Summer teaches residents how to build rain barrels, manage runoffs and pledge to reduce stormwater pollution. At this workshop, participants don't just learn about stormwater management – they roll up their sleeves and build a rain barrel from scratch, gaining practical DIY skills while discovering how small actions can protect local waterways. Guided by experts, attendees drill holes, install plugs, add connectors and secure a fine mesh netting on top to keep out leaves and debris.

Once complete, the rain barrel is ready to be placed under a downspout, where it will collect rainwater that can be reused for gardens and plants – reducing runoff and conserving municipal water resources.

To keep the momentum going, selected participants take home a free rain barrel and connector kit, ensuring they can continue reducing runoff and supporting a healthier environment long after the workshop ends.

Runoff isn't just an environmental concern – it's a community challenge that touches everything from municipal infrastructure to the health of our rivers.

La Crosse's seasonal workshops transform awareness into action by equipping residents with practical skills, innovative tools and visible reminders that make sustainable choices second nature. These events don't just teach – they spark conversations, foster stewardship and create a ripple effect of positive change across the community.

Story provided by Stefanie Kline, Sustainability Coordinator Habitat for Humanity.

## **IDDE Dry Weather Field Screening: Where do I take a sample?**

In the previous MS4 Quarterly Highlights (i.e., Fall 2025), information on identifying storm water outfalls was provided. It described how the location of an outfall could be located at the inlet or outlet structure of a BMP. In summary:

- The MS4 outfall is located where the MS4's storm sewer system terminates.
- If the Permittee's storm sewer system discharges into its municipally owned or operated BMP, the outfall is the outlet structure.
- If the MS4's sewer system discharges into a BMP not owned or operated by the Permittee, the outfall is the inlet structure.

However, in the context of illicit discharge detection and elimination (IDDE) dry weather field screening, there are situations where an MS4 permittee may not be directly collected at the outfall.

For example, if an outfall is submerged by a receiving water, the sample should be collected upstream (e.g., manhole). This ensures the receiving water is not diluting the collected sample.

Similarly, this is why a sample should be collected from a BMP's **inlet** structure. If outfall screenings are conducted at a location other than the MS4 outfall, this should be clear within your documentation

## Upcoming Dates, Reminders And Events

- 2027 Targeted Runoff Management Grant Applications Now Available

Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) grant applications for projects beginning in 2027 are now available on the Wisconsin DNR's [Grant Program webpage](#).

- 2027 Urban Nonpoint Source Construction Grant Applications Now Available

Urban Nonpoint Source & Storm Water (UNPS & SW) Construction grant applications for projects beginning in 2027 are now available on the Wisconsin DNR's [Grant Program webpage](#).

- Clean Rivers, Clean Lake Conference: Feb. 10, 2026 at Discovery World, Milwaukee WI

For over 20 years, Sweet Water's annual Clean Rivers, Clean Lake (CRCL) Conference has been a hallmark occasion for the watershed community of practice in southeastern Wisconsin. Participants from public, private, nonprofit and academic organizations gather to discuss strategies and projects to improve the health of our shared watersheds. Visit the conference [webpage](#) for more information.

- Fox Wolf Watershed Conference: March 3 & 4, 2026 at Lambeau Field, Green Bay WI  
Conference registration is now open for one of Wisconsin's largest watershed Conferences. Past attendees have included stormwater engineers, professors, community leaders, government entities, local elected officials, concerned citizens and more. Topics range from regulation and guidance, green infrastructure, community engagement and much more. Visit the [conference webpage](#) for more information.

- Red Cedar Watershed Conference: March 12, 2026, at UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI  
Join community leaders, educator, conservation partners and residents and be part of land and water stewardship in the Red Cedar Watershed. More information, along with registration info can be found on the [conference webpage](#).

- Upcoming Floodplain Training Opportunities

The DNR will be offering a regional floodplain training to local officials for all Village, City and County floodplain managers in the West Central Region. The training will be held in Eau Claire and will include the following floodplain topics:

- Ordinances, Mapping, Permitting, Violations & Enforcement, CAV Overview, Post Disaster Actions, Mitigation Funding, NFIP & Private Insurance

More information will be sent in the coming months through GovDelivery. Please be sure you are subscribed to the "[Floodplains](#)" GovDelivery list in order to receive this information.

## Want To Be Featured In The MS4 Spring 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 at [Lexius.Montes@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Lexius.Montes@wisconsin.gov)

